

VHS Fall Sports Preview

Football – The Vernonia Loggers have a new head coach and a new outlook this season.

Reed Watson, who coached the middle school team for the last three years, has taken over for the departed Thor Ware. Ware led the team to an 11-1 record and a Northwest League Championship in his only season as the Logger's head coach.

Watson inherits a team that lost several seniors at key skill positions, along with several underclassman that defected to Rainier High School, but he remains optimistic about his team's chances in league play this year, and is very excited about some of his returning players, along with several young players that he expects to play important roles.

"I'm very encouraged by their attitudes and their skill set," said Watson in recent interview. "We have guys that really get along well. They really try hard. Our concern is that we are very young and will have at least four or five freshman starting. I think we'll compete in our league and we'll be alright. And I think this is going to be a team that the community can be proud of and feel good about coming out to support."

Assisting Watson this season are John Murray, Patrick Thompson, and volunteer coach Devon Shay.

Watson will be depending on seniors Brett Elliot, Jake Butcher



New Logger head football coach Reed Watson has the team off to a 1-1 start.

and Luke MacCallum, along with underclassman Gavin Everett, to step up and be leaders on the team this year.

The Loggers were very competitive at the season opening League Jamboree, beating Gaston, Nestucca and Neah-Kah-Nie, and playing evenly against Knappa. The Loggers lost their season opener 40-7 to non-league opponent Mt. Douglas, a large school from British Columbia, on September 2, but rebounded with a big 38-14 win over 3A Warrenton on September 9. The Loggers led 38-0 at half time.

Elliot, who played wide receiver in the past, will take over at quarterback this season, and has looked very sharp

early in the season. "He's a tremendous athlete, maybe the best all-around athlete in our league," says Watson. "He's getting better at reading the defenses and seeing down field." Against Warrenton, Elliot threw for several touchdowns to different receivers.

At running back Watson is excited about the dynamic play of freshman Josh Rice who led the team in rushing yardage with 104 against Mt. Douglas. "He's a great runner and he has the biggest heart I've ever seen in an athlete," said Watson. "You're going to see him be a star here for the next four years, no doubt about it!" Jake Butcher and Bailey Morrison will also see time in the back field, but will also split out wide in the "Logger Look" open back field, spread offense. Morrison received recognition from coach Watson for his outstanding performance against Warrenton, for running the ball, catching several touchdowns, and for his strong play on defense.

MacCallum will be one of the featured wideouts in the offense.

"Luke is very tall and strong, has a good sense for the ball, and has great hands, so we'll be throwing the ball to him a lot," says Watson. Jake Patton is a new player who has returned to the Vernonia community. Vernonia football fans will remember Patton from his Little Guy football days. "He's a good athlete that understands the game," says Watson. "He was pretty instrumental in our opening game and caught three passes."

The line will be anchored by Everett, along with freshman Calvin Clapshaw, Camren Depue and James Watson. "They've been working hard in the weight room and they've been getting stronger," says Watson about his young group of linemen. Against Warrenton the line showed great improvement and gave quarterback Elliot a lot of time to throw.

On defense look for Rice to play middle linebacker; he led the team in tackles in the opener with ten. "He was all over the field," says Watson. Butcher, Patton, and Morrison round out a solid linebacking crew. Elliot will likely play

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Scaponia Park Sign Vandalized



The sign at Scaponia Park, part of the Columbia County Park system, located on the Scappoose-Vernonia Highway, was vandalized in late August. The sign wasn't just vandalized, it was cut down with a chainsaw. This was an

Eagle Scout project done for the purpose of making our community a better place.

If you have any information about this crime please contact Bill Goodwin at the Columbia County Sheriff's Office (503) 366-4611.

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