

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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A10

## Stanfield's new football coach is ready for battle

Stadley working to build a championship football program

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — James Stadley knows he is young and dipping his toes into the shark-infested waters of the Blue Mountain Conference, but the Stanfield football coach is confident his team will be ready when the season rolls around.

"Any of that nervousness I had has been washed away by excitement," he said. "I'm going out and building a program people can be proud of."

Stadley, 20, is a 2019 graduate of Stanfield High School, and was an honorable mention selection his senior year as a lineman in the BMC.

Stadley replaces Davie Salas, who stepped down with two games remaining last season after failing to follow Oregon's mandate that required teachers, staff and coaches to be vaccinated.

Stadley said he saw there was an opening and it seemed like a good time to throw his hat in the ring.



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Stanfield High School's new football coach James Stadley on Thursday, June 30, 2022, prepares for a new season. Stadley discussed his excitement for the community to watch his team hit the field.

"I saw they were hiring and thought now was as good a time as any," he said. "I have a job with a flexible schedule. I didn't know when it would come up again. I also wanted to wait until anyone I played with in high school had graduated so they wouldn't view me as just a friend."

Stadley works as an information technology and marketing manager for Boylan Realty in Hermiston. He keeps

the website fresh, takes drone photos of homes and takes care of the business's social media.

"It's enjoyable to be able to do this as a living," he said. "I go out and make the home seller's dreams come true."

Stadley said his age came up in the interview, but in the end it wasn't an issue.

"My age was a concern," he said. "They thought that may arise in the community. Everyone who was part of the

interview, I have had conversations with. They know my character and commitment. That erased any shadows they may have had."

### Switch to nine-man-football

The Tigers play in the Blue Mountain Conference, which has the likes of powerhouse Heppner, Weston-McEwen, Union and Grant Union.

This year, 2A teams are

switching from 11-man football to nine-man, which will help programs with smaller teams, such as Irrigon, Riverside, Umatilla and Stanfield.

"As far as nine-man goes, there isn't a lot of information about it," Stadley said. "It's exciting more than anything. We will be able to have a JV program and allow underclassmen to get playing time. I'm excited for the whole season to see these kids grow. You hope as a coach you coach the players as the next man up, whether it's graduation or injuries."

When the team held an informal meeting in the spring, there were 24 youths who showed interest. Stadley has had about eight players show up for summer workouts, but that is not unusual.

"Seniors and juniors have jobs, there is All-Star baseball and stuff," he said. "I'm excited to get more and more kids out."

Key returners Stadley has put eyes on are defensive back/kicker Gator Goodrich and defensive lineman Bodie Braithwaite — both who were first-team conference selections last year.

The Tigers will need someone to step into the quarterback role that was held by Kaden Combe for three years.

"There are some young guys who are interested," Stadley said. "It will come down to the effort they put in come game time."

Stanfield Athletic Director Lorena Woods brought in coaches Steve Pyne and John Guthrie from 2021 6A state champion Central Catholic in June to hold a three-day clinic for Stadley and assistant coach Cody Griffin, also a 2019 Stanfield graduate.

"It was amazing to have that opportunity and learn so much from a decorated coach," Stadley said of Pyne.

Woods said her coaches will keep in touch with Pyne and Guthrie throughout the year.

"They will mentor them throughout the school year," she said. "It was really awesome. They talked about building a championship culture. We are happy to have them aboard with our kids."

Stadley also will take a little of what he learned from Salas and meld it into his coaching style.

"I love the mentality of controlling what you can control that Davie brought, but I am also looking forward to bringing in my own culture," Stadley said. "I want to start strong with a culture that people want to play for."

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