

UIL switches stance, reschedules regional track meets

By CLAY WHITTINGTON
Staff Writer

After scrapping the regional track meets, the UIL had second thoughts.

It took much collaboration between the UIL, the University of Texas and all 20 of the regional meet hosts but, in the end, the meets were put back on the calendar.

"At that time, we were simply trying to save the state track meet,"

UIL executive director Dr. Charles Breithaupt said in a press release last Thursday. "We believe this schedule represents the best opportunity for the most students."

For the Badgers, the move might have saved the seasons of six athletes.

Under the original format created in reaction to the recent outbreak of swine flu, cancellation of regional meets meant the athletes with the top four showings from each region in each event

automatically would advance to the state meet. State qualifiers would be based on district meet results.

An official list of state competitors was never released under the proposal, but there was a very strong possibility all six Lampasas athletes would not qualify.

"Now, all have a second chance at state."

"That wasn't a fair way to do it," Lampasas High School Athletic Coordinator Joey McQueen said. "I

think they re-evaluated, and that showed that they do care."

"They could have stuck to their guns and said, 'No, we're not doing it.'"

Lampasas' Region IV-4A meet, originally scheduled for May 1-2, will now take place May 15-16 at Alamo Stadium in San Antonio.

The state meet was pushed back from May 15-16 to June 5-6. It will be held at Myers Stadium on the University of Texas campus as originally intended.

"The decision to suspend competition was not a decision we took lightly," Breithaupt said in the release. "Much effort and consideration was given to resurrect the regional track meets and change the dates for the state meet."

"With the cooperation of our regional sites and the University of Texas, we are now able to hold the regional and state track meets as we had originally intended."

For Lampasas, late is better than

never. Brode DuBose (shot put), Kooper Liverman (110 and 300 hurdles), Kelby Jones (pole vault), Aaron Reyna (long jump), Jessica Sterling (pole vault) and Andrea White (shot put and discus) have an opportunity to earn a spot at state.

For any athlete, that is all they can ask for.

"I'm satisfied with what they did because it gives our kids a chance to compete," McQueen said.

Badger T.O.U.G.H.

Lampasas' football team prepares to turn program around under leadership of new head coach

By CLAY WHITTINGTON
Staff Writer

On his first day as Lampasas' new head football coach, Joey McQueen arrived at the high school campus with a brand new, shiny steel trash can in hand.

He had to clean his locker room of all its clutter.

But the coach was not looking to pick up debris left from previous workouts. There was no athletic tape on the floor or little paper water cups crumpled in the corners.

McQueen was there to remove a different kind of garbage.

He was there to eliminate excuses.

McQueen sat down his varsity squad, gave them each a piece of paper and asked a simple question. What is wrong with this team?

One by one, the players were called upon to reveal their answer.

Then it went into the trash can.

Once the final excuse was wadded up and thrown away, the coach brought out a baseball bat and told his team to eliminate the waste.

"They beat the dog out of that trash can," McQueen said. "The first one hit it [against its side] and knocked it about 20 feet over. I said, 'Whoa, wait a minute. We have to beat down on that thing.'"

And they did. Repeatedly.

The crumpled trash can remains inside the locker room. The discarded pieces of paper are still inside, serving as a reminder of the Badgers' commitment to turn around the program.

"[Sometimes] I have to tell them, 'We talked about this; no more excuses,'" McQueen said. "You threw them away."

Over the past three years, the team posted only four wins and when the season opens on Aug. 28 against Manor, the Badgers will be looking to snap a 20-game losing streak.

This week, Lampasas takes its first steps toward 1-0 as spring football practice begins.

Perhaps nobody is hungrier to taste victory than McQueen.

"I'm not a very patient person," McQueen said. "I want to win now."

The coach endured the past three seasons from the sidelines, serving as the school's athletic coordinator — a position he still holds — before replacing Ryan Bailey after last season's 0-10 campaign.

"When things started going bad, instead of us digging in, we didn't dig in," McQueen said. "[Human nature is typically] when things go bad, we [cover]. And not only just athletes, but coaches and townspeople and everyone."

"I think when coaches believe in kids and kids believe in coaches, and when parents believe in kids and parents believe in coaches, then you'll start having a winning program."

McQueen (102-96-4 career record) turned around several programs in the past. His most recent revival came at Smithville, where he led the Tigers to three victories after erasing a 31-game losing streak.

In addition to Smithville,



PHOTO BY RICHARD AKRIDGE
Lampasas head football coach Joey McQueen poses next to a trash can full of excuses his players pulverized with a baseball bat earlier this year. The mangled trash can remains in the Badgers' locker room, serving as a reminder to the players of their commitment to the program.

McQueen, beginning his 19th season as a head coach, has made successful stops at San Angelo Lake View, Reagan County High School, Mason, Howe and Bells with his teams making the playoffs 13 times.

Part of the Badgers' problems of late stem from being in a difficult district that includes Killeen, Pflugerville, Hendrickson, Dripping Springs, Marble Falls,

Hutto and the defending Class 4A state champion Lake Travis Cavaliers.

But, to McQueen, that is just another excuse.

He knows his team must become tough to overcome. More accurately, his team and his community must become Badger T.O.U.G.H.

The acronym stands for "together our unity grows higher," and it will

serve as the team's rally cry this season.

"The parents, the community, the kids and [the coaching staff]. When those four entities are working together then our unity will grow higher," McQueen said.

On the field, however, the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulder pads of his players.

Spring practice will be much the same.

McQueen expects his players to have specific plays memorized coming into each session, so the team can quickly run through the daily drills without wasting time.

Those planning to visit the practices that lead up to the spring game on May 22 should not expect to be sitting on the edge of the bleachers.

"I think the word 'boring' is good," McQueen said. "If you're bored, that means you are doing it over and over and over. That's what we need to do."

The highly organized two-hour practices begin at 4 p.m., consisting of 11 five-minute segments for offense followed by 11 five-minute defensive segments. Between the two periods, the squads get a 10-minute break.

The freshman and junior varsity teams will play on the same side of the ball, lining up across from the varsity Badgers.

If everything goes according to

Spring Football Schedule

Practice
May 4-21
(Off Sundays)
4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Spring Game
May 22
JV @ 6 p.m.
Varsity @ 7 p.m.

* Times are subject to change.

schedule, the squad will have its base plays memorized and ready to run flawlessly when the spring game kickoff flies into the air.

McQueen feels certain the extra preparation off the field will help the Badgers grab the win that has eluded them over the past two years.

But he knows what might happen if the losing continues.

"I had someone earlier tell me that they were sad to see me take the football job, and I asked why," McQueen said. "They said, 'If you don't win then you'll be gone in two years, and I like you.'"

"You can't look at it that way. You've got to look at what you're going to do to help that program and make it better."

Anything else is just an excuse.

The Quarterback Club will hold its first meeting Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. inside the Lampasas High School Library.

Varsity Badgers' 2009 Schedule

August 21
@ Glen Rose (Scrimmage)
TBA

August 28
vs. Manor

September 4
@ Rockdale

September 11
@ San Marcos

September 18
vs. Gatesville Sweetheart

September 25
BYE

October 2
@ Hendrickson

October 9
vs. Lake Travis

October 16
@ Dripping Springs

October 23
vs. Marble Falls Homecoming

October 29 (Thursday)
@ Killeen 7:00 p.m.

November 6
vs. Hutto Parent's Night

Bold = District 25-4A opponent

All games scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m. unless indicated otherwise.



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