

Fairfield Football, 2013...(9-0), Ranked #6 IN THE STATE!

Written by Roy Peterson

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Is This Year's Team the Best Ever? by Roy Peterson

The 2013 edition of "Eagle Grid Iron Warriors," through the first 9 games at least, is in this writer's opinion, the best I've had the privilege and enjoyment of watching in my 23 years as a Freestone County resident...and I write as someone who has been a fan, a player and a student of this wonderful autumn pastime for most of his nearly 66 years of life!!

I'm sure that the members and parents of the the 1988, '91, '99 and 2002 teams might have some valid justification in taking exception to that bold statement, because they were very good squads. Not sure of all of them, but I remember that the '99 team was ranked about 7th in the state and undefeated when they lost unexpectedly in the Bi-District game.

However, when one considers all the variables from an unbiased perch, this season's team simply stands out on a plateau of rarefied air that few teams in any classification or any era are able to occupy!

This version of "Eagle football" is not only highly state ranked, but they are also the top scoring team in all of Class 3A(182 schools) by a considerable margin, rolling up the points at the rate of 58 per game !! In fact, when you take into account the more than 1,000 schools in all 5 UIL classifications in Texas, they are 2nd...behind only mighty Aledo, the defending and future 4A state champions, who could defeat all but a very small handful of Class 5A schools...1000 teams Eagle fans!! Aledo, who has racked up NASA style scores of 84 and 91 already this season, average 64 pts/game and have been accused, understandably so, of "bullying" other teams.

In that vein, though, Coach John Bachtel and his very able staff have been merciful to their opponents this season despite the 522 points scored thus far. With the exception of Madisonville and state power, Navasota, they could easily have racked up even more gargantuan numbers...and some of us "arm-chair quarterbacks," wanting to see more offensive fire power, wished they had.

Instead, orders were given to simply hand off straight ahead, or take a knee, even after putting in the 2nd team and reserves for much or most of every 2nd half. In at least one instance, coaches agreed to just let the clock run constantly the entire 3

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quarters, when Fairfield could have quite easily ran up 100 pts or more on a lesser opponent!

Despite these gaudy, otherworldly numbers on the offensive side of the line, the main ingredient, that allowed this Fairfield Eagle football team to manhandle the defending state 3A Champions from Navasota, holding them to just 188 total yards(in the friendly confines of their own stadium), where they had been averaging more than 500/game, and that enables them to be a really serious threat to still be playing football games in December, is their voracious and fast defense!!

Coach Kevin Childer's crew has really developed, especially over the last 5 games, to a true "Championship caliber" squad.

They were certainly no slouches coming into the aforementioned game with the then #2 ranked Navasota Rattlers, but in that game they truly came into their own as the type of defense, that enables teams to win really tough battles in the later rounds of those highly coveted state playoffs. Besides the low yardage output, the only reason the high-scoring

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Rattlers had more than a paltry 10 points, was two very uncharacteristic fumbles inside our own 12 yard line. Navasota had to go only 20 total yards for 14 of their points. The final score of 44-24 was certainly not indicative of the great defensive effort.

Since that watershead game, not only have your Eagles received ever increasing state wide attention, they have held their last 4 foes to a meager 2, inconsequential TDs...outscoring them 243 to 14 !!!

Now, the real serious part of their schedule looms on the near horizon, beginning with the Lance Angel coached, Palestine Wildcats, who will most probably be (7-2) and an undefeated (3-0) in district play. I'm sure Coach Bachtel would tell us that this game for the District 19-3A title is THE most important game of the season thus far, and is all he is contemplating at present...and he should, rightly so.

This scribe would, however, like to suggest that, if this currently undefeated Fairfield grid iron team plays like they are capable of doing, and like they actually did against Hwy 84 rival Mexia in their last game(they held the improving Black Cats to a meager 50 yards of total offense for the entire game!!), they will not only head into their Bi-District game as (10-0) district king pins, they will also come very close to keeping their state leading scoring average intact and be the kind of playoff team that truly has a real chance of...dare we think it...playing a Dec. 20-21st game at "Jerry World!"

These next few weeks could be a really exciting and "heady" ride for High School football fans in Fairfield and Freestone county (them Teague Lions are pretty darned good, themselves). All you Eagle fans make an extra big effort to fill up the visitor side of Wildcat field in Palestine next week, and come prepared to make a lot of noise for our undefeated Eagle team...it could be the beginning of something we've never been a part of before...