



Experience should help Shells bounce back in 2017

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ROXANA – Last season's Roxana football team had a good number of young players, players that lacked varsity experience, and it showed at times as the Shells had a 2-7 season.

Those young players, however, gained valuable experience, and that experience should help them this coming season, felt RHS coach Pat Keith as the Shells began preseason workouts Monday in preparation for their Aug. 25 opener against Piasa Southwestern at Charlie Raich Field.

“I've been really happy with how things have gone so far,” Keith said. “We've got about 50 kids out right now, and that's some really good numbers for us. We had a very good summer, and we've got guys who have experience back for us; we're coming along very well and we'll see how things go for us.”

Chief among the returning Shells this year include quarterback Marcus Hartnett and running backs Joey Johnson, Michael Cherry and Wyatt Kirkpatrick. “We'll have some experience back on the offensive line with Ryan Harris, Robby Williams and Riley Whipper back for us this year,” Keith said.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Shells will return Chase Nasello, Drew Huff and Michael Ilch.

“What we want to do be prepared as best as we can and be ready to put our best foot forward,” Keith said. “We want to be paying attention to the details; we think we've got a good team this year and we want to be ready to go when the season gets started.”

The Shells will be playing defending South Central Conference champion Carlinville on the road in Week 5 (Sept. 22) and finish up their home schedule against Litchfield Oct. 6; the final game of the season is Oct. 20 at Staunton, with other possible key SCC games at Pana Sept. 1, at Vandalia Oct. 13 and at home against Greenville Sept. 29.





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)