

Do or die: Calhoun in must win game against Triopia

by John Hough, Sports Writer
October 19 2017 10:00 PM



HARDIN - Week Nine in the state of Illinois is upon us, and that has many teams grappling for a playoff spot. It's also the time when hope becomes heartbreak or happiness. That's what's on tap for the Calhoun Warriors.

"You lose you go home," Calhoun head coach Aaron Elmore said. "We know what's at stake and we're working, so our season doesn't end."

The Warriors own a 5-3 record, and to be eligible for the playoffs a team requires five victories, however that doesn't guarantee an automatic spot. As it stands, Calhoun will not be going through with a 5-4 record with not enough opponent wins meaning they need to succeed tomorrow night against the Triopia Trojans.

Last week, Calhoun was seemingly in the playoffs as they led Unity-Payson 28-0 late in the third quarter, but the Mustangs offense came alive, while the Warriors turned the ball over too many times. Unity eked out a 31-28 come from behind victory making this week do or die for Calhoun. Despite the devastating loss, the Warriors moral hasn't dampened.

"Attitude's been great. Our kids responded have well," Elmore said. "We were disappointed because we put ourselves in a good situation. We did play really well, but whenever you turn the ball over that many times in a row, you're not going to be successful against teams in the WIVC. We put ourselves in that situation, and it's been emphasized this week. They've turned it up a notch. These kids have been through some tough times in the past, and they know what they need to do to be successful. We're looking to have a great week and be ready on Friday."

Triopia is in the same situation as Calhoun with a 4-4 record, thus making this an unofficial playoff game.

The Trojans are coming in averaging 27 points per game and have a couple of threats running the ball. Junior running backs Michael Burns and Zach Thompson have rushed for a combined 1,612 yards. Burns has racked up 848 yards on 151 carries and 13 touchdowns. Thompson isn't far behind with 764 yards on 110 carries and ten touchdowns. Fullback Zach Rouland has rushed for 387 yards on 96 carries and two touchdowns.

"They're very quick. offensive line is very disciplined, and they get off the ball and have great angles on their blocks. We know it's going to be a challenge for us."

The Warriors are a bit bigger than the Trojans and hope to take advantage of that. They won't get a whole lot out of bruising fullback Jacob Watters who has been playing with a torn ACL.

"We have some bigger guys, but we're going to have to get off the ball as well as they do to be successful," Elmore said. "If we do that then they're going to have a hard time moving us."

One of the star players for Calhoun this season has been quarterback Ty Bick. A two-year starting quarterback, but has been starting on offense for three seasons, Bick has accumulated 1,157 total yards and 15 touchdowns.

“He’s a leader and wants to win,” Elmore said. “Whenever he’s putting everything in then the rest of the guys come up to his level. I’m expecting big things from him this week.”



Scout White has rushed for 497 yards with four touchdowns, and Watters has managed 365 yards and six touchdowns despite his injury. An x-factor for Calhoun is wingback Cole Lammy. He’s tallied 547 yards, six touchdowns, and averages 7.2 yards per carry.

Calhoun has been here before. Two years ago they shocked the state with a victory over undefeated Brown County that granted them a playoff berth at 5-4. A year ago, the Warriors seemed to play to their potential whenever their backs were against the wall in the playoffs. We will see what Calhoun is made of tomorrow night on senior day and according to Elmore, all signs are positive as Week Nine is the unofficial start to the playoffs.

“We’ve treated it like one. The practices have been kind of like they were last year at this time. It’s really the first time we’ve been that way. I just think this sense of urgency is at a high level. Whenever you have that you’re more attuned to what you need to get accomplished I’m hoping it translates into a good game this Friday.”