

EA-WR Junior Oilers Under-7 Football Team Posts 8-1 Mark, Plays In League Championship Saturday

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WOOD RIVER - The East Alton-Wood River Junior Oilers under-7 football team will be playing for the championship of their league on Saturday morning at Red Bud and will go into the game with an 8-1 record.

The Junior Oilers play in a league where they finished second in the regular season at 6-1, a game behind 7-0 Red Bud. The two teams won two playoff games to reach the championship game, which will kick off at 10 a.m. Saturday at Red Bud.

It's been an exciting and very good season for the team, and head coach Nate Kamp is looking ahead to Saturday's final.

"Absolutely," Kamp said in a phone interview. "It's been exciting and fun. The biggest thing is that these boys are learning the fundamentals and learning the love of the game. The winning has been the added bonus on top of that."

The Junior Oilers have had a very successful season with a virtually-short handed roster, which makes the season even more amazing.

"The biggest thing about that is that we only have 14 kids on the team right now," Kamp said. "So one of the nicknames we have for ourselves is the Wolfpack. The most important thing in our success is the team effort. Everyone and everybody's contributed."

The two key players for the Junior Oilers have been both quarterback Zach Babb, who's thrown 24 touchdown passes thus far, and running back Gunter Marshall, who's run for 13 touchdowns going into Saturday's final. All the players have made tremendous sacrifices and contributions to the team's success this season.

"It's a huge commitment for six- and seven-year-old boys," Kamp said, "and I think that they're all enjoying it. I think a majority of them will stick with football and play high school in the future."

The Oilers have also enjoyed the support of the administration of East Alton-Wood River Community High School. along with the players and coaches of the Oilers team as well.

"The whole positive culture of the high school program has been tremendous," Kamp said.

The positive culture that comes from the EAWR high school program has also rubbed off onto the junior players as well and it's something that Kamp and his coaches instill in his players as well.

"We're teaching them more than football," Kamp said. "We want them to be the leaders of their grades and classes, we want them to be role models for the other kids and we're teaching them life lessons that we hope will stick with them."

The Junior Oilers will be practicing under lights from 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday at EAWR Memorial Stadium to prepare for the final. Kamp also recognized another group of supporters that are just as important as the support from the Oilers football team and community.

"We have a great group of parents as well," Kamp said. "Just in the travel and practices, we've put a pretty good burden on them and they've all come through with flying colors. I couldn't be more proud of everyone on the team."

Photos by Violet Fox Studios.

