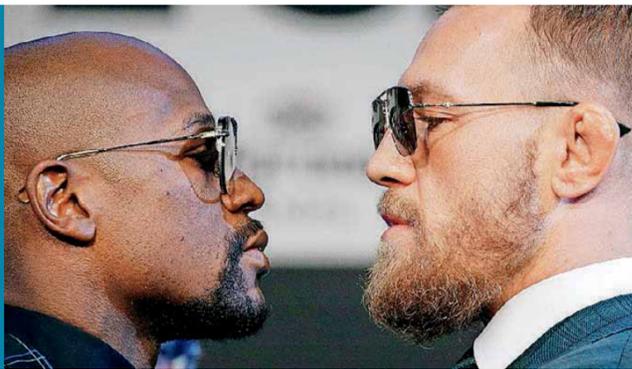


Bookmakers worried about matchup

Las Vegas bookmakers are nervous about Saturday night's fight. They could lose millions of dollars if McGregor knocks out the undefeated boxing champion.

Page 2B



Will Tulsa test OSU's secondary?

Oklahoma State and its reconfigured defensive backfield will face a usually dangerous Tulsa passing attack on Thursday. How will the Cowboys fare?

Page 3B

SPORTS

B

Friday, August 25, 2017

NEWSOK.COM | OKLAHOMAN.COM

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: A CELEBRATION OF HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Power Grab: How Destiny Christian earned respect outside of OSSAA



Jacob Unruh
junruh@oklahoman.com

HIGH SCHOOLS

DEL CITY — Joe Biddle expected more as he stood on Destiny Christian's football field that featured more dirt than grass six years ago. The small, independent private school's new defensive coordinator

INSIDE
Scrimmage coverage as well as district previews for A-5 and A-6. **Page 8B**

watched the four kids on the field for spring practice, turned to then head coach Rusty Stone and asked where the other players were. Stone's answer: Kids wouldn't commit. "I was a little discour-

aged," Biddle said. A year and eight improbable wins later, Biddle was named head coach. The previous spring stuck with him. He wanted commitment and respect for the program.

Following five straight championships, Destiny Christian is no longer the overlooked program heading into Friday's season opener at Class B Carnegie.

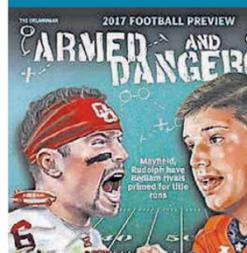
SEE DESTINY, 5B



Destiny Christian coach Joe Biddle talks to his team during practice this week. Destiny Christian has won a championship in each of Biddle's five seasons as head coach.

[PHOTO BY CHRIS LANDSBERGER, THE OKLAHOMAN]

IN BRIEF



COMING SUNDAY

2017 COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Baker Mayfield and Mason Rudolph have Bedlam rivals Oklahoma and Oklahoma State primed for a postseason run. Pick up a copy of The Oklahoman's college football preview "Armed and Dangerous" in Sunday's newspaper.



NFL

Preseason continues

The NFL preseason continued Thursday night, including a matchup between the Philadelphia Eagles and Miami Dolphins. **PAGE 4B**

DODGERS

Dodgers open home stand

The Oklahoma City Dodgers started their final regular-season home stand on Thursday night against the Omaha Storm Chasers at Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark.

For game coverage, go to www.oklahoman.com/sportspage.

THUNDER

Russ to release book

Russell Westbrook's first book, highlighting the Thunder guard's personal style, is available for preorder and hits bookstores Sept. 5. **PAGE 5B**

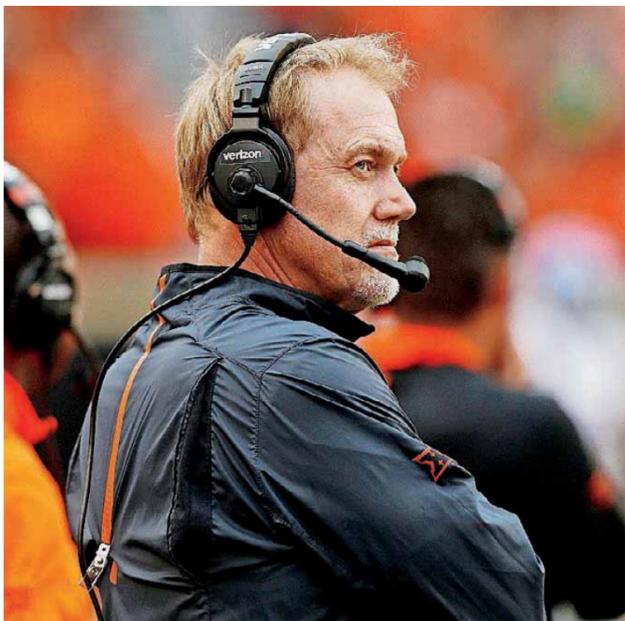
ON NEWSOK

Live chat with Jacob Unruh

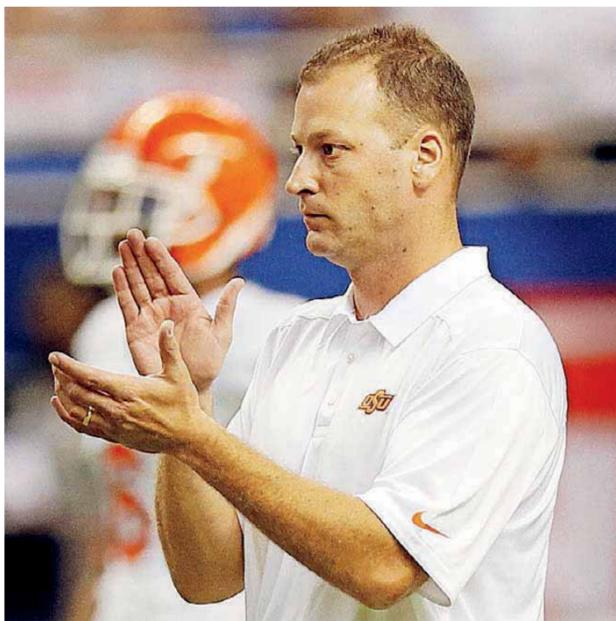
Join Oklahoman high school beat writer Jacob Unruh at 11 a.m. Friday for the Power Lunch live chat. Jacob will take your questions about the high school football season, which starts Friday with a limited number of games. Who are the teams to beat? Who will surprise? Ask Jacob by logging on at NewsOK.com/sports.

OSU FOOTBALL

STABLE CONDITION



Glenn Spencer eyes the field during the 2015 OSU-Kansas State game in Stillwater. [PHOTOS BY NATE BILLINGS, THE OKLAHOMAN]



Mike Yurcich encourages the Cowboys before kickoff of his second OSU game, Sept. 7, 2013, at Texas-San Antonio.

Mike Yurcich and Glenn Spencer provide newfound stability for OSU football

TULSA VS. OSU

- **When:** 6:30 p.m., Thursday
- **Where:** Boone Pickens Stadium, Stillwater
- **TV:** FS1 (Cox 67)
- **Radio:** KXXY-FM 96.1

STILLWATER —

A week before Valentine's Day 2013, Mike Gundy hired Mike Yurcich to run the OSU offense. Yurcich got the job for the worst of reasons. No one else on the Cowboys' level would want him. The worst of reasons has become the best of results.



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COMMENTARY

OSU's offense is riding high, and the Cowboy staff has uncommon stability. We're less than a week

from opening kickoff of a promising 2017 season, and expectations soar. OSU is in the preseason top 10 for just the third time in its history, and continuity is a major reason why. Gundy hasn't always maintained a stable staff — assistants seem to come and go with regularity — but now he has some of

the most stable leadership in the sport.

Yurcich and defensive coordinator Glenn Spencer both are starting their fifth season on the jobs.

Only eight of the 128 NCAA Division I-A schools sport coordinators who have held those

SEE TRAMEL, 3B

OU FOOTBALL

Ruff Time: How Ruffin McNeill is coaching on and off the field



Brooke Pryor
bpryor@oklahoman.com

NORMAN — Walking through the halls of the Switzer Center in between team meetings and classes Wednesday, linebacker Ogonnia Okoronkwo ran into defensive tackles coach Ruffin McNeill. The two crossed paths for a

just a couple minutes, but that was plenty of time for McNeill to impart another one of his stories to the senior.

"Anytime he's ready to tell a story, I'm ready to listen because

SEE RUFFIN, 4B



Defensive tackle coach Ruffin McNeill uses stories and anecdotes to teach players life lessons. [PHOTO BY STEVE SISNEY, THE OKLAHOMAN]

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THUNDER JOURNAL

Westbrook book hits shelves Sept. 5

Before **Russell Westbrook** hits the court again as the Thunder's point, he'll hit the bookshelves as a published author.

"Russell Westbrook: Style Drivers," the MVP's fashion-oriented hardcover tome, will be available in bookstores on Sept. 5, according to Rizzoli New York, the book's publisher.

A news release says the book — which will have three cover options — is a "collection of stylish and inspiring images and text that provide a rare glimpse into Westbrook's world."

The book promises to reveal how Westbrook "uses style as a psychological weapon on and off the court and how he has redefined the



THUNDER

role of a contemporary athlete turned cultural figure."

It will feature photographs documenting the "bold and cutting-edge outfits" Westbrook has worn during the NBA playoffs in his career and images of his "collaborations with global style brands," according to the release. It also will contain "original quotes and interviews with fellow athletes, designers and creative figures that inspire Westbrook."

Though the book won't release until early next month, it's available for preorder now at Amazon.com, whereas of Thursday it was the No. 1 best seller in the "Fashion Photography" category.

Award-winning artist **Raymond Pettibon** — a sports fan who came to prominence in the Southern California punk-rock scene in the 1980s — did the original artwork for the book's three covers.

"Russell Westbrook: Style Drivers" has a suggested retail price of \$55, which also is the Amazon preorder price.

Blue acquires two

Marcus Paige, the former North Carolina point guard

who played for the Thunder's Summer League team in June, is coming to Oklahoma City to join the Blue.

OKC's affiliate in the developmental G League acquired **Paige** on Thursday in a trade with the Salt Lake City Stars, for whom **Paige** played last season. The Blue sent guard **Michael Qualls** to Salt Lake City.

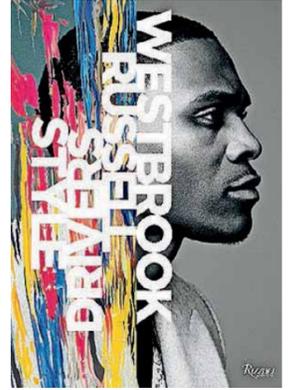
The 6-foot, 164-pound **Paige** averaged 12.1 points, 2.2 rebounds and 2.2 assists per game last season for the Stars.

In a separate trade, the Blue acquired small forward **Casey Prather** from the Erie Bayhawks in exchange for a first-round pick in the 2017 G League Draft. The

pick originally belonged to the Maine Red Claws, and the Blue acquired it in a previous trade with the Fort Wayne Mad Ants.

The 6-foot-6 **Prather** played last season for the Perth Wildcats in Australia, averaging 19.5 points, 4.6 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game. **Prather** played college basketball at Florida under Thunder coach **Billy Donovan**.

In the G League expansion draft, the Blue lost the rights to guards **Bryce Cotton** and **Will Cummings**. It reacquired the rights to **Cummings** from the Agua Caliente Clippers in exchange for OKC's first-round pick in the 2017 G League Draft.



One of three covers for "Russell Westbrook: Style Drivers," a hardcover book from the Thunder guard that is scheduled for a Sept. 5 release.

(PHOTO PROVIDED BY RIZZOLI NEW YORK)



Destiny Christian's **James Fellers**, left, **Dalton Willis**, coach **Joe Biddle**, **Tim Owen** and **Josh Johnson** each hold a championship trophy from the past five seasons. Despite not being an OSSAA member, Destiny Christian has become a booming location for eight-man football in the heart of the Oklahoma City metro. (PHOTOS BY CHRIS LANDSBERGER, THE OKLAHOMAN)

DESTINY

CONTINUED FROM 1B

Located on SE 29 St. next to MTM Recognition, Destiny Christian has become a booming spot for an eight-man football program despite not being a member of the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association — the state's governing body for high school sports.

Respect has come.

"There's a lot of pride," senior linebacker **James Fellers** said. "I have friends that play 6A, and they point out I play eight-man. But I say, 'I have my rings. How many do you have?'"

It's been a winding road for the school to reach this point.

Originally founded in 1983 as Mid-Del Christian School, football quickly became the heart and soul of the school. But there was little to offer.

No bleachers. No press box. No lights. Games were played immediately after school each week.

"We have to cut corners, and we have to do everything we can," longtime athletic director and basketball coach **Chris Hamel** said. "I feel like we've taken what we have, done the best we can and been blessed for it."

One parent could weld and another donated some pipe. That led to bleachers. Another was a carpenter, which led to a press box being built.

The school also bought used lights from the



Quarterback **Tim Owen** leads the team into football practice this week as Destiny Christian prepares to open Friday at Carnegie.

University of Central Oklahoma.

Then in 2007, an ice storm caused the school's gym roof to collapse. The salvaged gym bleachers were moved to the football field.

Just this year, a new high school building opened.

This all aided the success on the football field under **Biddle**, who took that first year and used it as a building block.

He doesn't accept less than 100 percent commitment. He got more players on the field, while letting go of some talent that didn't follow his lead.

That first year Destiny Christian won a title. Over the next four, it won 33 straight games at one point — including wins over several OSSAA members — while winning the Oklahoma Christian Schools Athletic Association state title each year.

The conference changed names this year to the Heartland Christian Athletic Association after it expanded to Arkansas and Kansas. But Destiny Christian remains focused on

gaining respect within the state. It's schedule has been beefed up with five OSSAA members, including traditional powers **Alex**, **Tipton** and **Seiling**.

"We try to seek out opponents that want to play us and are going to be tough," **Biddle** said. "Win or lose, I want our guys to see the very best that way we know what we've got to do to get there. Then when we do win a state title that's not necessarily an OSSAA state title we can say we deserve this."

Players say they're better for the tough schedule. They now understand the value of winning.

It's become addicting to them, too, a far cry from that spring six years before.

"You have to continue to do it," senior quarterback **Tim Owen** said. "If you have one great season and drop off the next then nothing matters. You've got to keep pushing and keep proving yourself every year."

"Obviously, we'd like to go undefeated but the ultimate goal is to win six straight."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL NOTEBOOK

Kentucky LB Love poised to have another good year

Courtney Love chalks up his promising season anchoring Kentucky's defense to finally getting the chance to regularly play.

Now, the senior middle linebacker's goal to help make the Wildcats one of the Southeastern Conference's best defensive units.

Love was the Wildcats' third-leading tackler in 2016 with 76 stops, which he believes should have been higher. But it provided an encouraging baseline for the Nebraska transfer, whose leadership has already earned the attention of national award committees.

"I have more familiarity with the plays and can recognize things better and quicker," said **Love**, who's on the watch list for the Lott IMPACT trophy that recognizes leadership and community service.

"I'm just trying the take right steps toward stopping the pass, recognizing formations and seeing the offensive line better."

The Wildcats quickly came to trust **Love**, one of four Kentucky players from Youngstown, Ohio, along with coach **Mark Stoops**. **Love** had six tackles in 12 games for the Cornhuskers in 2014 before transferring to Lexington seeking a bigger defensive role.

Kentucky ended up providing everything **Love**

wanted.

"He wants to be successful because he wants his team to be successful," **Stoops** said of **Love** this summer. "Anybody that has a heart like that is going to get better and play to the best of his ability. And I can't tell you the affect he has on our football team, not only between the white lines, but when we're off the field."

Testaverde will transfer again

Vincent Testaverde, the son of Heisman Trophy winner **Vinny Testaverde**, is leaving Miami.

The younger **Testaverde** transferred into his father's alma mater in January 2015, and never took a snap for the Hurricanes.

He was not in the top four quarterbacks on Miami's depth chart this fall behind **Malik Rosier**, **Evan Shirreffs**, **N'Kosi Perry** and **Cade Weldon**, and told Hurricanes coach **Mark Richt** on Thursday that he wants to try for playing time elsewhere.

Tongamoia cleared to play

Iowa State says junior college transfer **Kamilo Tongamoia** has been cleared to play this season.

The junior defensive lineman chose the Cyclones over Oklahoma State, Arizona State, Colorado, Oregon and

Texas. But **Tongamoia** had class work to finish up at Merced Community College in California, delaying his debut for Iowa State.

Iowa State opens the season at home against Northern Iowa on Sept. 2.

Florida players cited for marijuana possession

Two Florida football players have been cited for misdemeanor marijuana possession.

Receiver **James Robinson** and linebacker **Ventrell Miller**, both freshmen from Lakeland, were cited for possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana early Monday. According to the University Police Department, **Robinson** and **Miller** were found with the drugs at their dormitory after a smell of marijuana emanated from their room. Both were given a notice to appear in court.

A team spokesman says **Gators** coach **Jim McElwain** "is aware and it has been dealt with."

Miller is one of seven players under indefinite suspension for misusing university funds.

Robinson, a late arrival on campus because of academics, was cited for misdemeanor marijuana possession during his official visit to Ohio State in January.

FROM WIRE REPORTS



Kentucky senior linebacker **Courtney Love**, right, participates in fall camp drills, Tuesday, in Lexington, Ky. (AP PHOTO)

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCOREBOARD

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

Class 2A
Colcord 27, Fairland 0
Class 3A
Central Sallisaw 27, Checotah JV 6
Cordell 59, Elk City JV 14
Class C
Timberlake at Covington-Douglas

FRIDAY'S GAMES

Class 6A
Bartlesville at McAlester
Edmond Memorial at Ponca City
Guthrie at Enid
Midwest City at Muskogee
Owasso at Jenks

Sapulpa at Duncan
Tulsa Washington at Edmond
Santa Fe
Class 5A
Clinton at Altus
Coveta at Metro Christian
Tulsa East Central at Collinsville
Tulsa Hale at Tulsa Webster
Class 4A
Chr. Heritage at Tulsa Rogers
Lone Grove at Cache
McLoud at Harrah
Plainview at Broken Bow
Class 3A
Adair at Dewey
Alva at Blackwell

Bridge Creek at Madill
Dickson at Marietta
Eufaula at Henryetta
Frederick at Comanche
Heavener at Haskell
Jay at Verdigris
Kellyville at Pawhuska
Langston Hughes at Beggs
Lexington at Lindsay
Luther at Bethel
Manford at Morris
Marlow at Kingfisher
Muldrow at Vian
Oklahoma Christian at Jones
Okmulgee at Tulsa NOAH
Perkins at Cushing

Prague at Chandler
Roland at Checotah
Seminole at Wewoka
Seq. Claremore at Inola
Sulphur at Purcell
Washington at Pauls Valley
Westville at Stigler
Class 2A
Chouteau at Summit Christian
Commerce at Sarcouxie, Mo.
Community Christian at Elmore City
Crooked Oak at Dibble
Fairview at Perry
Hartshorne at Kingston
Holland Hall at Casady
Hugo at Tishomingo

Kansas at Oklahoma Union
Ketchum at Chelsea
Minco at Chisholm
Okla. Christian Aca. at Hennessey
Salina at Nowata
Stratford at Hobart
Stroud at Okemah
Talihina at Atoka
Valliant at Coalgate
Walters at Apache
Warner at Panama
Class A
Barnsdall at Yale
Cashion at Crossings Christian
Drumright at Quapaw
Gore at Porter

Healdton at Wayne
Kiefer at Hulbert
Merritt at Beaver
Okeene at Watonga
Sayre at Hooker
SeeWorth Aca. at Oklahoma Bible
Velma-Alma at Hollis
Woodland at Crescent
Class B
Alex at OKC Patriots
Allen at Fox
Arkoma at SW Covenant
Cherokee at Canton
Destiny Christian at Carnegie
Dewar at Wilson (Henryetta)
Kremlin-Hillsdale at Garber

Mt. View-Gotebo at Bray-Doyle
Temple at Empire
Tipton at Laverne
Turpin at Springfield, Colo.
Wesleyan Christian at Depew
Class C
Bluejacket at Wright Christian
Boise City at Wiley, Colo.
DC-Lamont at Sharon-Mutual
Olive at Bowlegs
Independent
Graham-Dustin at Life Christian
SATURDAY'S GAME
Class 6A
Tulsa Union at Broken Arrow