



25 FOOTBALL PLAYERS TO WATCH IN WESTERN KANSAS



Joel Bellows

JOEL BELLOWS, GARDEN CITY

The 5-foot-11, 185-pound linebacker led the Western Athletic Conference with 99 tackles last. He had 10 tackles for loss, two interceptions and one blocked punt for the Buffaloes. Bellows was a first-team pick on the All-WAC team. He'll anchor a defensive unit that allowed 20.3 points per game last year. The Buffaloes went 3-6 last season. Garden City opened with a 20-6 loss to Manhattan.

DYLAN BICE, THUNDER RIDGE

The Longhorns have size at quarterback in the 6-foot-3, 190-pound Bice. The junior has already established himself as a dual threat. He completed 86 of 146 passes for 1,394 yards and 15 touchdowns while rushing for 974 yards and 14 scores last year for the 5-4 Longhorns.



Dylan Bice



ASHTON DOWELL, HOXIE

Dowell completed 97 of 181 passes for 1,632 yards last year. He threw 22 touchdown passes with just four interceptions. The 6-foot, 185-pound senior is one of four returning starters on offense for Hoxie, which went 9-2 a year ago and reached the Eight-Player Division I semifinals. "Returning [Dowell] is a big plus for us," Hoxie coach Lance Baar said. "Hopefully we can be balanced running and passing and be successful."

Ashton Dowell

TERRELL ELLIOTT, GARDEN CITY

The 6-foot-1, 275-pound defensive lineman was a second-team All-WAC selection last year. He logged 34 tackles and four tackles for loss. He'll help anchor a defensive unit that returns nine starters. Garden City coach Brian Hill said a big emphasis for the Buffaloes' defense will be to force more turnovers this year. Elliott has offers from Army and the Air Force Academy.



Terrell Elliott



CHRISTIAN ERIVES, DODGE CITY

A 5-10, 250-pound defensive tackle, Erives earned first-team All-Western Athletic Conference honors last year as a junior. He recorded 76 tackles, three tackles for loss, two fumble recoveries and scored a defensive touchdown. Erives and the Red Demons will be adjusting to a 4-4 defense from a 3-4 under new coach Glenn O'Neil. Dodge City opened the O'Neil era with a 28-6 win over Wichita West.

Christian Erives

BEN HANSEN, PLAINVILLE

Hansen was a first-team All-Mid Continent League selection as both a receiver and a linebacker last year as a junior. Hansen logged 80 tackles and caught 22 passes for 184 yards and three touchdowns. He had a 19-yard touchdown run during the Cardinals' season-opening 34-7 win over MCL foe Phillipsburg on Friday. The Cardinals are coming off a 5-6 season but return key weapons from a year ago.



Ben Hansen



Colton Haresnape

COLTON HARESNAPE, SMITH CENTER

The 6-foot-1, 240-pound senior lineman is a key cog up front for the patented wishbone attack of the Redmen. Smith Center averaged 253 yards per game on the ground last year. Haresnape had 25 tackles on defense. The Redmen opened with a 26-7 win over Norton. Smith Center is coming off a 9-2 season, falling to Oakley in the Class 1A quarterfinals.

KADE HARRIS, TMP-MARIAN

The quarterback/defensive back was one of the big reasons why the Monarchs notched their best record since 1988, going 7-2 last year. Harris, listed at 5-foot-11, 180 pounds, completed 60 of 113 passes for 1,212 yards with 16 touchdowns while rushing for 860 yards and nine scores. He led Class 2A in total offense. He logged a team-high 98 tackles and picked off two passes.



Kade Harris



Braxton Harrison

BRAXTON HARRISON, CIMARRON

Harrison threw for 927 yards and eight touchdowns and rushed for 881 yards and 12 scores last year. The 6-foot-1, 185-pounder, is also a standout linebacker for the Bluejays. He intercepted five passes a year ago and added 55 tackles. He was a first-team GWAC selection. Cimarron went 6-3 last year but was unable to play in Week 10 because of COVID-19 issues.

OWEN HERD, SOUTH CENTRAL

Herd will be one of the senior leaders for the Timberwolves. The linebacker/running back helped South Central go 7-3 last year. He logged 61 tackles and rushed for 349 yards and five touchdowns on 57 carries, averaging 6.1 yards per attempt.



Owen Herd



Jaren Kanak (Photo courtesy Kim Reel)

JAREN KANAK, HAYS

The Clemson commit lived up to the hype in the Indians' opener against Wichita East. Kanak ran for 240 yards and three touchdowns while passing for 166 yards, including a 98-yard touchdown pass to Jordan Dale. Kanak will play linebacker at Clemson but took over quarterback duties this year for the Indians after Dylan Dreiling opted to sit out the football season to focus on baseball. Kanak, 6-foot-2, 210-pounds, saw his recruiting blow up last spring during track season when he ran a 10.37 in the 100-meter dash. He was first-team All-WAC last year.

LEVI KNOLL, HOLCOMB

Knoll caught 40 passes for 702 yards and nine touchdowns last year, earning All-GWAC honors. He added 60 tackles and two interceptions on defense. The Longhorns went 7-2 last season. Holcomb is off to a good start this year, opening with a 23-16 win over Cimarron. Knoll, 5-10, 180 pounds, intercepted a pass in the victory.



Levi Knoll



Christian Koch

CHRISTIAN KOCH, OAKLEY

The Plainsmen lost most of their offensive production from last year, but Koch will be a key returner on the offensive line and at linebacker. Koch, 6-foot, 200 pounds, logged 66 tackles in 10 games for Oakley last year. The Plainsman enjoyed a breakthrough season, going 10-3 and reaching the Class 1A title game.

KADEN JOHNSON, HOLCOMB

Johnson, a 6-foot-3, 195-pound senior quarterback, is coming off a season in which he completed 113 of 189 passes for 1,751 yards with 21 touchdowns. Johnson also rushed for 621 yards and 10 touchdowns. He was first-team All-GWAC. Johnson threw for 160 yards in Holcomb's season-opening 23-16 win over Cimarron on Friday.



Kaden Johnson



Gavin Meyers (Photo courtesy Kim Reel)

GAVIN MEYERS, HAYS

Another big-time prospect in Hays, Meyers has a handful of FBS offers including Kansas State, Nebraska, Washington State, Louisville and Colorado. Meyers, 6-foot-2, 215 pounds, logged 87 tackles, 13 tackles for loss, three sacks, two interceptions and two forced fumbles. Meyers was a first-team All-Western Athletic Conference selection last season. He helped the Indian defense get off to a strong start, locking down Wichita East in Friday's 35-6 win.

IAN ROSALES, COLBY

The senior anchors a Colby offensive line that returns five starters. The 6-foot-3, 260-pounder was first-team All-GWAC on offense and defense. Rosales, who moves well for his size, can bench press 315, clean 325 and squat 455. Colby is 23-6 over the last three seasons and went 6-3 last season.



Ian Rosales



JAKE SASSE, SMITH CENTER

Unfortunately for the Redmen, Sasse is injured and won't be available early in the season. They hope to get the junior running back/linebacker back at some point this season. He led the team with 821 yards rushing with eight touchdowns last year, averaging 5.2 yards a carry. He had three 100-yard rushing games last year. Sasse had 79 tackles on defense.

Jake Sasse

GRANT SCHOENROCK, VICTORIA

Schoenrock enters his third year as Victoria's starting quarterback. He rushed for 1,100 yards and 22 touchdowns while throwing for 794 yards and 14 touchdowns last year for the Knights, who went 11-1 last year, falling to St. Francis in the Eight-Player Division II semifinals. The 5-foot-10, 183-pounder is also a standout defensive back. He logged 110 tackles and intercepted three passes a year ago.



Grant Schoenrock



MASON SCHURR, OSBORNE

Schurr highlights a group of eight returning starters for the Bulldogs. The 5-foot-7, 150-pounder is a standout running back/defensive back. He played a key role on Osborne's state championship team in 2019 as a sophomore. The Bulldogs lost a big senior class off that team and dropped to 4-5 last year but figure to be much improved. Schurr ran for 1,057 yards and 15 touchdowns last year. He had 81 tackles.

Mason Schurr

JACE SCHOEN, LAKESIDE

Schoen caught 52 passes from quarterback Kylan Cunningham and finished with 943 yards receiving and 14 touchdown receptions last year as a junior. Schoen, listed at 6-foot-3, 165 pounds, averaged 18.1 yards per reception. On defense, Schoen finished with 81 tackles, six tackles for loss, five interceptions, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery. Lakeside went 5-4 last year. The Knights opened with a 64-18 win over Logan-Palco.



Jace Schoen



Colby Stull

COLBY STULL, LA CROSSE

The 5-foot-9, 160-pound senior is coming off a monster season on the ground, rushing for 1,519 yards with a staggering 32 touchdowns. He also had three receiving touchdowns. Also a standout defensive back, he recorded three interceptions last year. The Leopards went 5-4 in their first season of Eight-Player football. Stull was a first-team All-Central Prairie League pick on offense and defense.

JONATHAN TEMAAT, OAKLEY

Temaat, listed at 5-11, 195 pounds, was a first-team All-MCL selection as an offensive lineman and linebacker. Temaat had 82 tackles a year ago. On the O-line, he helped pave the way for Oakley to average 222 yards per game on the ground. He had nine tackles in the Class 1A title game in which Oakley took a 14-0 loss to Olpe.



Jonathan Temaat



Jett Vincent

JETT VINCENT, WHEATLAND-GRINNELL

The speedy 6-foot-2, 180-pound junior has been a ball hawk for the Thunderhawk defense the last two years. He recorded an eye-popping 22 interceptions in his first two seasons. At receiver, he hauled in 44 passes for 809 yards and 15 touchdowns last year. Wheatland Grinnell is coming off back-to-back eight-win seasons. The Thunderhawks fell to Victoria in the sectionals last season.

TREY VINCENT, WHEATLAND-GRINNELL

The 6-foot-1, 170-pound senior quarterback is coming off a junior campaign in which he threw for 1,739 yards and 27 touchdowns. He also ran for three touchdowns on the ground. Vincent, who has started since his freshman year, will have plenty of weapons at his disposal including his younger brother, Jett, and running back Isaac Mendez. He entered this season with 3,280 career passing yards.



Trey Vincent



Figure 1Jace Wentling

JACE WENTLING, TMP-MARIAN

Wentling, listed at 6 foot, 190-pounds, was the Monarchs' top receiving threat last year as a junior. He had 433 yards receiving and seven touchdowns. A highlight for Wentling last year was a game-winning pick-six against rival Ellis. Wentling received All-MCL recognition in four different categories. He was first-team all-league as a place-kicker, second team as a receiver and honorable mention as both a defensive back and a punter. Wentling is also a standout baseball player and was the Class 3A state champion in the long jump last spring.