

Rockets open 2000 season in Death Valley Bowl

By: Richard Anderkin

The Rockcastle County Rockets kick off the 2000 football season on Friday night at Lincoln County, against the host Patriots.

The Rockets are playing in the Death Valley Bowl for the second straight year, but they are playing Lincoln County for the first time in several years.

History will tell you that the Rockcastle County Coaching staff has always talked down their chances for a good season.

Usually to hear them tell it, they would be lucky to go 5 and 5.

History will also tell you that the past nine years, Rockcastle County has been considered one of the top programs in this area, and, for the past 14 years they have posted winning records.

And for the past nine seasons the Rockets have made it to the play-offs and, in three of those seasons, they have played for the regional championship.

So if you want a true estimate of what the ROCK's chances are for 2000, you probably should ask one of the many Rocket opponents.

The Rockets do have a tough task on opening night.

They face a Lincoln County team that lost only two starters on offense and four on defense from a year ago, when they finished second in the district to Southwestern Pulaski.

Lincoln County also has 19 seniors on their roster and they are playing at home in front of what will be a packed house.

The last time the two schools met was in 1984 when the ROCK lost 41-6.

The second week of the season the Rockets will travel to London to take on the South Laurel Cardinals.

The Cardinals' wide open offense will present some problems for the ROCK's somewhat inexperienced secondary.

Last week the Cardinals scored 20 points in the first half against a very good Whitley County team.

The Cardinals will also be looking to avenge last year's loss to the Rockets.

The Rocket's 24-14 win over South Laurel in the Jamboree Bowl was South Laurel's only loss in the regular season.

The third week of the season Southwestern Pulaski County will come calling to the ROCK.

It will be the ROCK's home opener and it should be a barn burner.

With the help of scholarships, Southwestern has managed to build a football power in Somerset and last year they were the district champs.

The ROCK lost last year to the Warriors 42-13 in their worst loss of the season.

The Rockets will get a much needed week off on September 8 and then they will travel to Estill County.

Estill County is still in a rebuilding stage with a second year head coach. Last year the Rockets won 34-0.

The next week the Rockets will begin district play and travel to Hindman where they will take on the Knott County Patriots.

Last year the Rockets trounced Knott County 55-0 and it could have been a lot worse.

North Laurel comes to town as the ROCK's homecoming victim for 2000.

The game will also have some added flavor given the fact that Larry Welch, who is now a member of the Rockets coaching staff, was the head coach at North Laurel last season.

Week nine finds Whitley County in Rockcastle for what will be one of the toughest games of the season for the Rockets.

Last year the ROCK went into Williamsburg and escaped with a one point victory over the Colonels.

Whitley County has several starters back and they are extremely big for a high school football team.

"If everyone is healthy we have a good chance to beat Whitley, but if not we could easily get beat that night," head coach Tom Larkey said.

In week ten the ROCK will

travel to Knox Central where they will find a Panther team with a new coach.

Last year the ROCK crushed the Panthers 55-0.

In week eleven the Rockets take the long road trip to Harlan where they will take on the Cawood Trojans.

Cawood is usually a school with a good football team, but in the past few years they have been down. Last year the ROCK soundly trounced the Trojans 63-0.

However the Trojans have their head coach back after a year's sabbatical to the military and they ran all over Middlesboro in a scrimmage last week.

The final week of the regular season finds the ROCK hosting Bell County in a game that is likely to decide the district champs once again.

Last year the Rocks had to win at Bell to claim the district title, but it was Bell County

that was the better team that night, claiming the win and the district title 19-7.

This year Sheldon Clark, a team Rockcastle dismantled in the play-offs has been picked to win the region with Bell County second.

Good Luck ROCK

from

Mt. Vernon Printing

Willie and Tammi Hines, Owners

Main St. • Mt. Vernon • 256-5515

SCORE BIG. After the game.

