

Early games will be toughest part of Rocket schedule this season

The Rockcastle County Rockets of 2001 have a lot of questions to answer on both sides of the ball.

And they have a lot to live up to if they are going to even come close to the mark the team set a year ago.

After the first weeks of the season the Rockets will have a very good idea how they are going to stack and most of the unanswered questions will be penciled in.

The Rockets open the season at Danville in the Bob Allen Pigskin Classic where they will take on Washington County - a team the Rockets have never faced.

"They have always had a pretty good football team and they have a new head coach - so they will be hungry - they will want to make a good showing, so we've got to be ready," defensive coach Tony Saylor said.

Game time is 6 p.m. Advance tickets are \$7 and can be purchased at the Rockcastle County High School.

Tickets will be \$8 at the gate.

The second week of the season the Rockets will take on South Laurel in their home opener.

South Laurel is always a tough opponent and has 4A athletes.

Rockcastle defeated them a year ago - but their wide open offense always makes for a good contest with the Cardinals.

Week three - the Rockets will travel to Jackson, where they will take on the Breathitt County Bobcats in the Honey Bowl.

The Bobcats have two state titles under their belt and Head Coach Tom Larkey said it is almost impossible to beat Breathitt on their field.

"It is always tough up there, and with it being a Bowl game - we will have our work cut out for us," Larkey said.

The Bobcats are also a passing team, who throws the ball more than they run it in most contests.

It will be the first time the Rockets have hooked up with Breathitt County.

Week four the Rockets will return home to take on Lincoln County in the Renfro Valley Jamboree Bowl.

The Rockets defeated Lincoln County last year in a game played in Stanford on opening night 24-14.

The Rockets defeated Lincoln County last year primarily because they were in better physical condition, but Lincoln County is a team that usually plays themselves into shape and with it being week four -

the Rockets will have their hands full.

Week five the Rockets will return to Estill County where they will take on the Engineers.

Except for a couple of seasons in the past the Rockets have dominated the Engineers

and last year they totally dismantled them on their own homecoming night.

Saylor said that Estill would be much improved because they were so young a year ago and because they have some

new members on their coaching staff.

One of those members is former Rocket player and assistant coach Johnny Poynter, who has taken over the defense, at Estill.

Week six the Rockets are open and on week seven they will begin district play when Knott County Central comes to the ROCK.

Rockcastle defeated them by 80 points last year.

The Rockets will travel to Perry County Central in Hazard on week eight.

Perry County Central has replaced Whitley County in the Rockets' district and should be a fairly easy opponent for the ROCK.

Week nine the Knox Central Panthers come to the ROCK.

Knox Central has been down for several years, but Saylor said they should be better this year because they too had a lot of young players last season.

Cawood will be the last home game of the season in week ten on Oct. 19th and should be much better than they were a year ago.

"Cawood had a new quarterback and some new members on their coaching staff as well," Saylor said.

The Rockets will find themselves in Middlesboro the last week of the season to take on Bell County.

The Rockets defeated Bell County last year at home, but they have never beaten Dudley Hilton, the Bell County coach who left for a few years and

went to Bourbon County.

Hilton has returned to the Bobcats and they should be Rockcastle's toughest district opponent.

Rockcastle has been picked to win the district by most, but according to Larkey, no one knows what will happen during the eleven weeks of a high school football season.

"We've just got to work hard and take each opponent one game at a time," he said.

Larkey said that he also felt like the other teams in the Rockets' region, Sheldon Clark, Lawrence County, Ashland, Greenup County, Magoffin County, Boyd County, Johnson Central and Rowan County were much improved from a year ago.

Except for the Washington County game, all regular season games will begin at 7:30 p.m.

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