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OPSU Ready to Kick Off Football Season

Goodwell, Okla.—It's about that time of year football fans...football season is upon us. This Saturday night, the Oklahoma Panhandle State University Aggies head to Rolla, Missouri for their first regular season game against the Miners of Missouri University of Science and Technology.

After a strong showing in the Aggies scrimmage last week, the coaches and players are ready for this game to be underway. The first games of the season are always the most important for the team as they are a great sign of what is to come for the rest of the year.

This game, like every other on the schedule, is no walk in the park. The Missouri Miners had a strong season last year going 6-5 and running the ball was where they shined as they averaged 141.2 yards per game. They look to continue that success on the ground this year with their same cast of big men up front. The weak spot to look at for the Miners is their secondary as three of their four starters from last year completed their eligibility and are looking for their young guys and transfers to step up this year. The key player to watch out for on the Miners squad is by far senior wide receiver Smook Thomas. Thomas was named to the USA Football News pre-season All-America team for NCAA Division II and will be a threat as a receiver and in the special teams department.

The Aggies, on the other hand, are basically starting fresh this year with a new head coach and a lot of fresh faces on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball. Head coach Russell Gaskamp brings in his own style of quick-paced, smash mouth football to the Aggies and looks forward to starting his career here at OPSU. This is not the same team as in recent years and that is always tough going into a season with players still learning how to play with one another.

The Aggies go into this season without several starters from last year and one of those is quarterback Kevin Lauchland. Now look for transfers Caleb Holbrook and Justin Billiot to battle it out for the starting spot this year. The one notable returner for the starting offense is running back Justice Patterson. He came onto the scene late last year and will be a key role player to start this year. On the defensive side of the ball, the Aggies are without their top two tacklers from last year, but have several returners hungry to get back on that field. Look for senior linebacker Chase Boyer to lead the defense this year for the Aggies.

This game should be a good test for the Aggies and battle to the last whistle. It is scheduled to start at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 1. Fans can listen live on KPSU radio, 91.7 FM or tune into the broadcast at www.minerathletics.com. Live stats will also be available on that website.

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