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OPSU Set for Home Opener Saturday Night

Goodwell, Okla.-Oklahoma Panhandle State University's Aggie football team will take on Sterling College at home this Saturday, Sept. 7. Kickoff at Carl Wooten Field is set for 7 p.m.

The Aggies aim to rise above last week's loss against D-IAA opponent Lamar University with increased mental toughness and strong focus on play execution. Look for sophomore running back Chris McClendon to hit the ground running for the offense along with junior Justin Fogle and quarterback Caleb Holbrook who combined rushed for over 100 yards against the Cardinals. Ball protection will need to be vastly improved and the Aggies will have to be much more productive in the pass game this week.

On the defensive side of the ball, sophomore strong safety Zaxier Murry will be looking for more action this week and ready to add to the 9 tackles he racked up against Lamar. Linebacker Nate Mathurin will be back on the field for the Aggies this week coming off an injury; Mathurin enters the season with 51 tackles, 4.5 sacks, and 1 interception from 2012. The defense had a number of newcomers get their first collegiate playing time against the Cardinals, and they will have to improve on the 5.6 yards per rush they gave up last week.

This will be the season opener for the Warriors of Sterling College who came out of 2012 with a record of 3-7. The Aggie defense will have their hands full with Sterling's sophomore wide receiver Dentton Hudspeth who was moved to quarterback mid-season and brought in 911 yards on 180 carries in 2012. They look to solidify the quarterback position this year with transfer Reggie Langford and last year's early starter John Cardona. Sterling also brings some sizable competition for the Aggie D with 6'5 receiver Jordan Coleman.

Coach Russell Gaskamp notes, "There are a few things we are focusing on this week: alignment and assignment on offense as well as protecting the ball. Six turnovers is a ridiculous amount; we will never win a game doing that. On defense we must improve on setting the edge vs. the run game and create more pass rush in the front seven." As the team begins preparations for Saturday's match up, Gaskamp is optimistic, "I expect we will play much better this week and we know Sterling will be a strong opponent."

The Aggies should have plenty of crowd support for their home opener with the Rock'n Red Out theme. Wear red, get rowdy, and rev it up!

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Justine Gaskamp

OPSU