

Lone Star Varsity ranks the area teams most likely to advance from the area

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Lone Star Varsity ranks the area teams most likely to advance from the area round of the playoffs with No. 1 being the most likely.

1. Crosbyton (10-0): Several things could happen that would derail a meeting between Crosbyton and Seagraves three rounds from now, but a loss to Sunray (5-6) is not one of them. The Bobcats have not competed with the elite Class 2A teams on its schedule during the regular season and Crosbyton certainly falls into that category.

2. Seagraves (10-0): The Eagles are the only area team to crack the Associated Press' high school football rankings this year, landing in the No. 10 spot in Class 2A. Steve Heryford's team hasn't been challenged in weeks and features running back Cory Kyle (one of four area players with more than 2,000 rushing yards), improved quarterback play from Tanner Rodriguez and a stingy defense. Gruver cast Springlake-Earth aside, but this will be a much different result for the Greyhounds.

3. Shallowater (10-1): The Mustangs are simply too much of a handful and they haven't had to be diverse yet. With quarterback Chris Contreras back, the option to pass more with his sprint-out tendencies is there. Up until this point, a bulk of the carries to Cooper Ogle has been the answer.

4. Abernathy (10-0): Unlike Seagraves and Crosbyton, the Antelopes got a little more resistance from their Class 2A schedule during the regular season, particularly in district play. Hawley (7-4) isn't a pushover opponent considering it beat Colorado, which topped Brownfield earlier this year and lost a tight game to Post.

5. Cooper (8-3): El Paso Eastlake (8-3) has had a commendable season, but it will not stop the Pirates. Palo Duro, which beat Plainview twice this year, abused Eastlake 35-0. In its matchup with Plainview, Cooper took the game. There is too much skill at too many positions on Max Kattwinkel's team and this game in Pecos is not where Cooper's season will end.

6. Estacado (9-2): The notion that Stephenville (7-3) has been completely debilitated by losing Texas Tech-commit Jarrett Stidham to injury is wrong. The Yellowjackets finished the year 1-2, but scored 57 points against Big Spring in a loss and put up 66 points against Decatur in a win. The Matadors will certainly move the ball against Stephenville. Estacado's secondary, which is a portion of its defense that hasn't been impacted heavily by injuries, has the mobility to challenge Stephenville.

7. Muleshoe (8-3): The Mules offense with Keagan Gonzales at quarterback has been more run-heavy than it was before Danny Campos was injured, but its not bereft of passing ability. If the Mules get ahead early, Breckenridge (6-5) will struggle to close the gap because it is reliant on the run.

8. Frenship (9-2): If Abilene High (8-3) had standout running back Abram Smith for the entire season, the complexion of this matchup would be different. A knee injury knocked Smith out for the season against Permian, yet Abilene High managed to roll, beating Arlington Lamar in the bi-district round. Frenship is aided by playing this game at Lowrey Field and its running back pairing of Grant Sandercox and Ronald Awatt has been a strong complement to a consistent defense.

9. Idalou (8-3): A small school with great football tradition and a go-forward approach. Sound familiar? That's because there are two of those teams in this game. Idalou drubbed Henrietta in a surprising

blowout and although Sonora (8-3) played a tight game with Denver City this year, the Wildcats have seen more skilled teams often.

10. Denver City (8-3): After playing an outlaw football schedule last year, Brock (10-1) has performed extremely well in its first season in a district, just as the school's basketball and baseball teams have in the past. The Mustangs speed, particularly on the edges with Daniel Garcia and Cole McLeroy, will definitely test Brock.

11. Monterey (5-6): San Angelo Central is potentially the best team of any classification in West Texas and it is coming off a come-from-behind win against Arlington Bowie. The Bobcats (10-1) beat Frenship, which downed the Plainsmen 63-28, easily. Vincent Johnson has been outstanding and quarterback Baylor Mitchell has developed nicely into a role he didn't initially intend to play, but a win in this contest would be an enormous feat.

12. Brownfield (7-4): The Cubs performed admirably against Childress, scoring 35 unanswered points after being down 28-0. Freshman Jaelyn Nolan has improved drastically since he inherited the job in August and the Cubs play with unparalleled enthusiasm. In this matchup against Wall (10-1), which was ranked third in the AP's Class 2A poll and played Cisco to a six-point game, Brownfield will be strained in all facets.

13. Levelland (5-6): It's been remarkably fun to see Jared Sanderson's team improve and win a playoff game for the first time in 18 years. Sophomore quarterback Nick Gerber is a player of the year candidate and has utilized the skill pieces around him effectively. Abilene Wylie (9-2) has defeated Big Spring and Stephenville and has the potential to overwhelm the Lobos.

14. Seminole (5-6): The Indians have to play Graham (9-2), the same team that leveled an ultra-talented Estacado team in last year's playoffs. Coach Kent Jackson has come into Seminole and gotten the most out of his team, but this year's version of Graham might be more potent than last year's.

15. Post (8-3): This isn't a put-down on the Antelopes, which topped San Angelo Grape Creek convincingly in the bi-district round. It's the reality that they have to face Cisco (11-0), which has sat comfortably atop the Class 2A Associated Press rankings this season.

Compiled by Phil Terrigno