

Grogg, Spartans Moving Forward

By Dave Morrison, Sports Editor
The Register-Herald
Thursday, June 23, 2005

FAIRLEA - Want to know just how far Greenbrier East's football program has come in the last year?

About 40 players and 95 pounds.

"We had a guard last year who started for us as a sophomore who bench pressed 145 pounds," coach Andy Grogg said. "Right now he's up to 240 pounds.

"Last year at this time we had 10 to 15 players out here for summer practice (Grogg was hired on July 13). The program was in pretty bad shape."

But they have shaped up. Literally and figuratively.

Some 55 players have showed up daily for the three-week summer practice period schools are allowed to conduct.

And the offseason weight program drew 40 to 53 players on any given day.

"This is the first organized weight program they've had here in eight or nine years," Grogg said. "These kids have never had to do this before. Five or six guys would show up, lift if they wanted to. They'd come in the front door, go out the back door."

No more.

Grogg has issued a no-holds-barred decree and his players have bought into the system.

Last season, no player could power clean 200 pounds. This year, 17 did it. Four kids bench pressed 200 last year. Now, 21 do it and three are over 300 pounds.

"It was tough to get people out," defensive back/wide receiver Derrick Counts, one of the 10 to 15 that showed up daily last season, said. "They were lazy, I guess. Things are going a lot smoother this year. We have 50 people every day to lift and practice. It's hard to believe, but coach has done a great job getting people here."

"At the end of last season we had a meeting and told the parents if their son was going to play, they need to be here," Grogg said. "They've done a great job getting them here. When our kids weren't playing another sport, they were in here. We had anywhere from 40 to 53 this winter."

Jacob Coleman, a part-time starter as a freshman, missed just one workout last winter. And he made that up.

Tommy Mutter, Isaac Vess and Josh Massie were all everyday guys.

"These kids just don't miss," Grogg said.

"This is what we needed," Counts said. "It's more like a team now. It's more like a football

program."

Want proof that the Spartans are moving in the right direction?

Jay Dyche, who was an assistant under Homer Criddle, has returned to coach at the school.

"He liked what we were doing and I asked him to help and he jumped at the chance," Grogg said. "We're doing things right."

Grogg was a longtime assistant at Riverside, a perennial Class AAA power formed from the consolidation of Class AAA power DuPont and Class AA power East Bank.

It was an eye-opener.

"I didn't know the program was this bad and there is no reason for it to be this bad," Grogg said. "The facilities and the administration and teachers are 100 percent behind us. The community, these parents, they want football."

"The one thing they didn't have (at Riverside) and I don't think they'll ever have is the support. Our parents are great. Our school is a lot better working environment. We don't have the great athletes, but we have hard-working kids. I don't have to get on these kids for loafing."

The proof is in the sweat left in the weightroom, if not in the initial record.

"We're going to be better," Grogg predicted. "We're going to be stronger and we're going to be faster. Now whether we win any more games, that depends on what everybody else has. Our schedule is going to be tougher this year (East is now in the Mountain State Athletic Conference). But I think we can be competitive. Are we where we want to be? No. But we are moving in the right direction. We'll give people a run for their money because we are stronger."