

Bears will be playoff contenders in '09

BY MICHAEL ADAMS
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The Bastrop Bears enter the 2009 season with a full-year under head coach Gerald Perry's offensive system.

With a new defensive coordinator - Todd Patmon - and the explosiveness of the Bears offense, Bastrop should have the pieces in the right places to contend for a playoff spot in 2009.

Bastrop's offense tallied 3,426 yards and averaged 26.2 points per game, but the Bears won just two games.

Underlying their 2-8 record in 2008 is the fact that Bastrop's margin of defeat was 10 points.

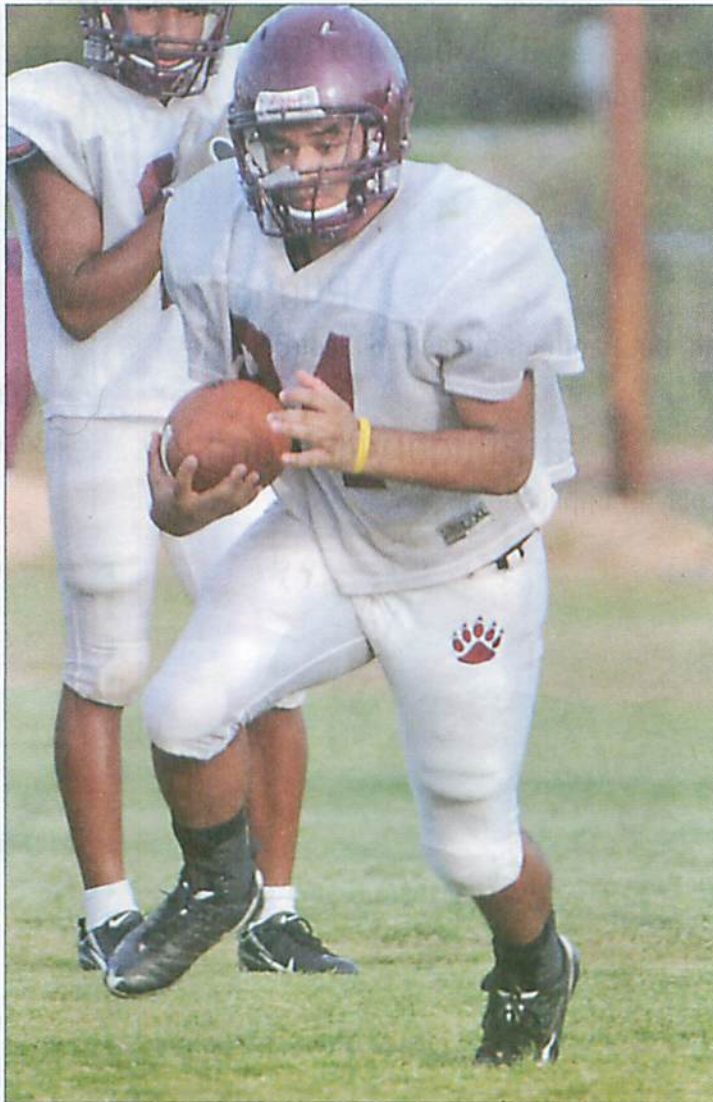
The Bears were never really "blown out," with the largest margin of defeat being 21 points, twice — Bowie and Killeen Shoemaker.

It was a big improvement from the 27 point average of Bastrop's losses in 2007.

"When you score that many points, you expect to win," Perry said. "Last year was still a learning process. I think with the addition of coach Patmon and the experience from the players coming back will be a strength for us and you'll see the amount of points we have to score to win diminish."

Players to Watch

QB **Josiah Monroe** returns to be the full-time quarterback after an impressive 2008 season. Monroe only played in five full games as the starter,



Staff photo by Michael Adams
Running back Mark Jackson works through drills during a recent practice.

but threw for 1,649 yards with a completion rate of 56 percent.

WR **Auston Shipley** provides a lethal offensive weapon while DBs **Pete Rodriguez** and **Bernard Blake** provide the Bears with a lot of speed in the loaded secondary.

Keep an eye on line-backer **Kyle Myers** and

defensive linemen **Grayson Hernandez** and **Darrell McCloud**.

Offense

At the end of spring drills, Bastrop was loaded at running back. The depth got a little deeper in the summer with the move-in of **Adam Mack** from Smithville. The battle

between Mack, **Mustafa Akbar**, **Mark Jackson** and **Marcus Reed** is one the coaching staff welcomes.

"That's a good problem to have," Perry said. "Practices have to be competitive and there is a lot of competition at the running back position."



ADAM MACK

Chris Fletcher will more than likely offer Monroe another outside weapon at the wide receiver.

The only question mark may be at the offensive line, where Perry had to replace all five starters. Senior **Jose Lerma** is the Bears' top offensive lineman and leads a unit that had a pretty good summer, qualifying for a state lineman competition.

Defense

Bastrop's defense only had one way to go after 2008.

The Bears gave up 275.2 yards rushing per game and allowed 29.9 points per game.

This year will be different, with an experienced group that includes seven starters.

The secondary is loaded with Rodriguez and Blake while the linebacker corps is led by Myers.

Akbar brings added speed to the secondary while McCloud and Hernandez are the strength of the defensive line.