

Depth at RB is keeping practice very interesting

BY MICHAEL ADAMS
Sports Editor

There will be a lot of attention on the running back position when the Bastrop Bears line up for their first and only scrimmage Friday.

In one of the most competitive position battles during Bastrop's fall practice, Bears coaches have something that is vintage Bastrop football — depth at the running back position.

The competition for the starting spot is something head coach Gerald Perry is fairly happy about.

"It's pretty hot," Perry said. "There is a lot of depth at that position and some really good running backs battling for that spot."

One of those backs is Smithville transfer Adam Mack, who had more rushing yards in 2008 than any running back on the Bears 2008 roster.

Mack had 544 yards and averaged 7.9 yards per carry.

Quarterback Josiah Monroe led Bastrop in rushing with 434 yards, but averaged 4.72 yards per carry.

Still, Mack is currently working with

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the second team offense in practice while Mark Jackson works with the first team offense.

Jackson, along with Mustafa Akbar, are the only two running backs that return from 2008.

Jackson had 62 yards on 16 carries in 2008 and one rushing touchdown.

Akbar, a junior that also plays defense, had just six carries for 17 yards.

Marcus Reed and Trae Bunton, who were on the junior varsity last year, are also battling for the position.

"It's going to do nothing but help us out," said running backs coach Stephen Mayberry. "This is how Bastrop used to be. They were always loaded at the running back position."

The Bears were definitely not a rushing team last season.

Dominic Brown and Bubba Johnson combined for 596 yards on the ground.

Both graduated in May leaving the question as to who would be the running back in Perry's pass-happy spread offense.

Bastrop threw the ball 293 times compared to 268 rushing attempts, but 92 of those attempts on the ground came from the quarterback.

This year, that all could change with the depth at the running back position.

There is more speed than in the past.

Mack and Akbar were both regional qualifiers in track and field in the spring, both in sprint events.

The Bears averaged just 4.3 yard per carry on the ground last year, but that number should increase significantly this year.

With Bastrop's passing game and the athletic abilities of Josiah Monroe no longer a secret, the running game might be the key to the Bears ending their playoff drought.

