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COVER STORY

Out with the old, in with the new Bastrop

Monroe ushering in the new era

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There is a new Bastrop football team in town and Josiah Monroe is ushering in that new era.

With a new stadium, new uniforms and new expectations, Monroe will be looked to as the leader.

After all, a quarterback is expected to be the field general.

If last year's performance was any indication, Monroe is ready for that role.

"I just want to lead this team to wins and get into the playoffs hopefully," Monroe said. "My numbers and stats aren't as important as wins. This is a team game."

The junior started 2008 sharing time with Matt Homesley at quarterback.

By the halfway point in the season, Monroe had become the full-time

starter.

Playing in just five games as the full-time quarterback, the slippery Monroe racked up 1,649 yards passing, averaging 235 yards per game.

He was just as dangerous with his legs.

Monroe was the leading rusher and scoring leader with 434 yards rushing and 118 points.

Quarterbacks coach and co-offensive coordinator Chris Olson said he is looking to have Monroe move into more of a quarterback role than a do-it-all kind of player.

"Last year he was more of an athlete," Olson said. "He is a very gifted athlete and has that 'it' factor. But we want him healthy and he took too many unnecessary hits last year."

Monroe was a human highlight reel last year, making spectacular plays.

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File photo by Michael Amador

Bastrop's Josiah Monroe, right, was impressive last year despite starting just five games. With a full season ahead of him as the starter, expectations are high for the junior quarterback.

MONROE: Bears' QB impressed in '08

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Against Pflugerville in the district opener, Monroe leaped over two Panthers' defensive players to get a first down on a 4th-and-1 situation.

He was injured on the play and Bastrop was without him for the rest of the game.

The next week against Connally, Monroe had to leave the game at half-time due to back spasms from the previous week's injury.

But he healed and then went on an offensive rampage, racking up 448 yards of offense against Westlake.

It was his coming out party in a way.

Monroe averaged 342 yards of total offense per game and threw for 1,335 yards in the Bears final five district games.

His high was 324 yards against Bowie in the season finale.

Now that Monroe is no longer a well-kept secret, Olson and Bastrop's coaching staff are preparing the junior for a lot more attention.

"With all the attention he is about to get, the biggest thing we have

"He's about to get a lot of media attention and opposing defenses are going to be gunning for him."

— **Chris Olson**

Bastrop co-offensive coordinator

worked on is preparing him for the upcoming year," Olson said. "He's about to get a lot of media attention and opposing defenses are going to be gunning for him."

Even Monroe said he is working on staying humble through it all.

"I just let it go in one ear and out the other," he said. "This is a team game and what I do is just part of the team winning."

Monroe's personality is a big part of what makes him a special player.

He is known as a "happy, go-lucky" player. Olson said he's always smiling and keeps practices fun.

"The kids love playing with him," Olson said. "This year, his personality will be instrumental to our success."