

They're fired up to be back on the field

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The Canton Chiefs began their quest to defend district and regional crowns with a grueling, conditioning-heavy practice in the 90-degree heat on Monday.

The eagerness to finally hit the gridiron spread like wildfire to the players, who are preparing for their season opener on Aug. 26 against Dearborn Fordson in the annual Prep Kickoff Classic held at Wayne State University. "I just love playing with my team, seeing my coaches, everyone is working hard and having fun," senior Julian Thornton said.

According to head coach Tim Baechler, this year's team brought energy and enthusiasm in the first week of practice which has led to both sides of the ball being "ahead of schedule."

"In the first two days of practice what stands out is that we are a little ahead of schedule compared to where we were last year on both sides of the

ball,” Baechler said. “That’s why it’s so fun; the enthusiasm is good and the kids are fired up to be out there.”

Last season’s run to the Division 1 state semi-finals made an impact on the program and left the players and coaches hungry to reach the next level. “I think they had so much fun on that run last year that ‘who wouldn’t want to repeat that?’” Baechler continued. “I’m sure that’s been motivation. It was close enough that they got a taste of it.”

Hungry for more

Directly following their loss to Cass Tech in the Division 1 state semi-finals, the Chiefs began their offseason weight room program.

“Literally a week after we lost to Cass Tech, we got back in the gym and started lifting,” Thornton said. “Everybody has been lifting hard ever since.”

Junior Lou Baechler paralleled Thornton’s praise of the offseason weight room program translating to the field in the first few practices.

“After the tough loss last season (Cass Tech) we had one week off and came right back. We have been working hard and are hungry to make another run at it,” Lou Baechler said.

Quarterback Jake O’Donnell returns as the starter from last season’s playoff run and enjoyed returning to the field for his senior season.

“This whole offseason the boys really came together and built great team chemistry,” O’Donnell said. “I’m just really happy to be back out here on the field.”



Getting in some snaps during Tuesday morning’s practice are Canton quarterback Joel Foster and center Max Mulvaney. *(Photo: Bill Bresler | staff photographer)*

With the opener against Fordson looming in less than three weeks, effort and attention to detail must be at an all-time high, according to senior David Gunnis.

“It is going to be hard, they’re really strong and powerful,” Gunnis said. “It’s all going to come down to our work ethic in practice.”



Veteran Canton football coach Tim Baechler makes a point during Tuesday morning’s practice. (Photo: Bill Bresler | staff photographer)