

By EARL WATT

• Daily Leader

Last year's Western Athletic Conference opener was the first for Liberal head coach Wade Standley and Hays coach Ryan Cornelsen.

For the Redskins, it was the one that got away when a late kick-off return for a touchdown gave Hays the 21-17 win.

The Redskins reached the red zone four times and came away empty.

After that, the Redskins didn't win a WAC game.

Hays, on the other hand, won their first WAC title in recent memory.

But this is a new season, and both programs will be entering their sophomore seasons with their coaches, which generally means more familiarity for the players with the system.

For Cornelsen, he has followed in his father's footsteps, developing both a football and track program at Hays. The Indians won the 2010 state track title.

Cornelsen will look to put that speed and strength on the field Friday night when the 2-0 Indians host the Redskins.

But the Redskins aren't the same team they were a year ago, either.

Quarterback Slader McVey is a seasoned veteran in the shotgun, and he helped orchestrate a thrilling comeback victory over Guymon last week.

The two styles are at opposite ends of the football playbook.

Hays plays a deceptive counter-style offense with action close to the line of scrimmage.

Liberal lines up in the spread shotgun set.

For the Redskins, the challenge of containing the option of Guymon will be a good challenge leading in to the game with Hays.

But the Redskins spread can cause trouble for Hays.

Liberal will have to eliminate turnovers to have a chance against the Indians. The Redskins committed four turnovers against the Guymon Tigers, and two of those were returned for touchdowns.

But the Redskins have been a fast-striking team in the first tow games of the season. Liberal has scored on its first two possessions.

Liberal will face the Indians on the turfied field of Forth Hays State University at 7 p.m. Friday.

Liberal opens WAC season on the road

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