

By SHAWN YORKS

• *Daily Leader*

Forgan head football coach Doug Bowles has watched his team defeat traditional Oklahoma 8-man powers Shattuck and Waynoka in recent weeks. But it was an underrated Sharon-Mutual Trojans team that gave the Bulldogs the most headaches in a 14-8 overtime win last week. "You can't be up the same every week," Bowles said. "I was afraid that was going to happen against Waynoka and it didn't. Waynoka is not as good a football team as Sharon-Mutual." The Trojans came ready to play and the Bulldogs were flat. Forgan also committed an uncharacteristic 14 penalties and lost three fumbles.

"Every time we did something good on offense we had a penalty," Bowles said. "I really didn't think we were ready to play."

The Bulldogs will need to be ready this week. The Deer Creek-Lamont Eagles visit Forgan in a non-district clash and possible playoff preview. The teams are ranked Nos. 1 and 2 in the Coaches Aid poll, and DCLA returns the bulk of the team that ended Shattuck's 91-game winning streak a year ago. That team was a state semifinalist like Forgan, in 2009.

"I think the players are excited," Bowles said. "We're approaching it like we did Shattuck. When you play good people, you've got to play well, and when you don't play well, you're going to get hammered. You've got to play your A-game and we're looking at it as a challenge."

The Eagles are physical and match Forgan's size. DCLA features a sophomore quarterback, but everybody else is experienced. They lost one of their running backs to a torn ACL earlier this season, which took away some speed, but they have a strong power running game and aren't afraid to air it out.

The Eagles run a 4-2 defense, which is different than the 3-2 run by most Panhandle 8-man teams.

"We'll try to spread them out some and see if we can get them out of the 4-2 and into a 4-1," Bowles said.

That goes against Forgan's traditional power running game. The most passes Forgan's thrown in a game was 15 against Shattuck.

"I think this week we may have to air it out some," Bowles said.

SW Heights (1-5) @

Scott City (6-0)

If life hasn't already been tough for the young Southwestern Heights Mustangs, it's about to get a whole lot tougher. The Mustangs hit the road Friday night to take on an unbeaten Scott City team that has big wins over the likes of Garden City, Colby and Goodland to its credit.

Heights head coach Matt Scripsick said that in order for the Mustangs to compete, they'll have to play mistake-free football.

"We'll have to control the clock, we'll have to try to force them into a few mistakes and capitalize on those mistakes," Scripsick said. "We'll have to play basically a perfect ball game."

The Mustangs are coming off a tough 21-20 loss to Hugoton last week.

"We're just a young team," Scripsick said. "We make mistakes at inopportune times. We're struggling with a few different things."

Scott City will perhaps be the biggest test of the year for Southwestern Heights.

"They're solid in the quarterback position, good up front on the line," Scripsick said. "They're a good team. They run a lot of play-action and will line up and run right over you."

Buffalo (2-4) @

Tyrone (4-2)

They're making history in Tyrone.

The Bobcats are 4-2, one of the best starts in at least 30 years. And one could point to a Week 2 win over then-No. 4 Buffalo in 2009 as one of the key turning points in the Tyrone football program.

The Bison get a chance at a little revenge Friday night, returning to the scene of last year's crime. After an 0-4 start, the Bison have won their last two games. And Tyrone head coach Josh Bell said that 2-4 record is deceiving.

"Their first four weeks they've played some really tough teams," Bell said. "That 2-4 record is not reflective of how good a team they are."

The Bison are 2-3 in District C-1 play and Tyrone is 2-2, so a win is important to both teams. For Buffalo, a win brings the Bison back into the thick of the district race, and for Tyrone, a win gives the Bobcats a leg up, especially with Shattuck and Sharon-Mutual looming in the next two weeks.

Look for the Bison to run multiple formations.

"That's what we're prepared for," Bell said. "We're trying to look at different formations, key off of different things and will try to slow them down a little bit."

Tyrone played solid in last week's 42-12 win over Balko, jumping to a 20-0 lead en route to a 42-12 win.

"We finally came out and played a good first quarter," Bell said. "The kids just played extremely hard and well. When you get a quick start like that, it carries through to the rest of the game."

Turpin (4-2) @

Texhoma (2-4)

The Turpin Cardinals are hoping to regroup.

After losing its first District A-1 contest at Thomas-Fay-Custer last week, the Cards find themselves in the middle of the pack in the district race. And they're traveling to face a Texhoma squad Friday night that's been bitten by the injury bug.

But that doesn't mean the Red Devils of first-year coach Reade Box are any less dangerous. Texhoma has kept the Cardinals out of the playoffs the last two years.

"Texhoma is still playing hard," said Turpin head coach Mario Mendoza. "They play hard and do good things."

In a 48-0 loss to Enid Oklahoma Bible Academy last week, the Red Devils committed several turnovers, and only managed a little more than 100 yards of total offense. But OBA is ranked No. 9 in the state.

"I'm hoping they're in a giving mood this week," Mendoza said. "We respect those guys."

The Red Devils lost starting quarterback Skylor Rodriguez in Week 3 against Stratford, Texas. Rodriguez had a long touchdown run to give Texhoma a brief lead, but a few plays later was injured, and he hasn't played since. Top running back Enrique Duran missed the OBA game last week. It's unknown if either of them will be back tomorrow night.

"We're preparing like they're going to be ready to go," Mendoza said. "We're preparing like (Texhoma) is going to be full squad."

Mendoza said Turpin has had a good week of practice, will be at full strength, but must play error-free football to beat Texhoma at Wheatbowl Stadium.

"I told the kids to play every play like it's your last," Mendoza said. "Go hard every play. You go hard and something good will happen."

In last week's loss to Thomas-Fay-Custer, it was the Cardinals who were in a giving mood. "We had turnovers and mistakes," Mendoza said. "You can't do that against good teams."

Hooker (1-4) @

Beaver (6-0)

The Dusters take on a Hooker squad that has been snake-bitten this year. After breaking a 31-game losing streak with a win over Booker, Texas in Week 1, the Bulldogs have lost their star running back Joe Bean and receiver Payson Slater to injuries, and have lost four games in a row.

Beaver is having its renaissance season and is ranked No. 7 in the state according to OKRankings.com.

Plus, it's Homecoming for the Dusters, so it might be another long night for the upstart Bulldogs.