

The Humble Servant

Royal's Wiley Allred Guides State's Most-Successful Prep Football Program

There is no doubt that Royal City has the most successful high school football program in the state, regardless of classification.



Wiley Allred

Last December, they captured their ninth state title (since 1996) and fourth in the past five seasons.

Like any successful program, there are many people who have contributed to the Knights' current success.

The community of 2,230 people is an anomaly. They are 25 miles from Othello, (the nearest city) and even farther from Moses Lake.

Founded in 1956, it has a short history but is a tight community, based on farming and have a high low-income and minority population.

There are other challenges too, but when it comes to football, they have found a winning formula.

The architect, or perhaps driver behind the program is head coach, Wiley Allred.

He isn't the person who built the program (they were already winners), but when he succeeded Bob Nielsen in 1999, he took the program to new heights.

Deeply religious, Allred is not one to say, "Look at me."

He is extremely humble

and he speaks in a very thought-out manner.

A farmer by trade, he was a multi-sport standout, who now says, "That was a long time ago."

Under Allred they have made the state playoffs for 20 straight years, won eight state titles and placed second twice.

Their 229-27 win/loss record under Allred may not change as we head into the fall season.

As a member of Grant County, Royal is under Phase 2 of the state's COVID-19 plan which allows them to do workouts, but very limited.

To defend their title, the county would have to be in Phase 4. With the start of the fall season recently moved back to September 5 by the WIAA, that leaves about eight weeks between now and then to see if fall sports plays.

Despite the uncertainty, Allred keeps doing what he can, under the rules, modifying his schedule to keep his players focused and ready if the season happens.

It's the same type of issue that has challenged him as a farmer. Commodity contracts have been reduced causing some last-minute changes and increasing costs.

But, he continues to adapt.

"There is a lot of uncertainty in the marketplace, but we are lucky to still be working," said Allred, a statement that doubles for his football program.

"It (COVID) has changed the process," he stated. "But, we are using whatever methods and means available to share our workout plans."

One example was sharing a couple of workouts via Hudl. Allred used one player from his farm shop using water jugs and a modified workout program.

"Our players generally have a strong work ethic," he said. So, you can bet most were doing whatever they could to stay in shape for an upcoming season that is unlikely to happen.

That mindset may be a key to why Royal and Allred have seen so much success, posting an 18-1 playoff record since 2015.

Last year, coming off a 31-28 playoff loss to Colville, many of the key players graduated.

But as they say, you never rebuild, you reload.

"Our players worked very hard and matured both physically and mentally," explained the humble Allred. "They also

had an extremely strong belief in each other and trust in what we were teaching."

With only one returnee on offense, it appeared to be a challenging season. But the Knights continued to hit on all cylinders.

Originally, there were three, but Royal lost their two guards who transferred to California before the 2019 season began.

Senior Lorenzo Myrick (the lone returnee) was moved from receiver to running back and he was sensational.

Quarterback was a battle with junior Caleb Christensen winning the

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Allred was elected to the 2019 Washington Football Coaches Hall of Fame.

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-  Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
-  Avoid contact with people who are sick.
-  Stay home while sick and avoid close contact with others.
-  Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash hands.

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job from sophomore Derek Bergeson just before the season-opener against Ellensburg. (Christensen was 18 of 30 for 279 yards in that game.)

Christensen wound up the state's 1A Player of the Year completing 68% of his 241 passes for 3,019 yards and 50 touchdowns.

Bergeson, who was moved to receiver, actually tossed a 66 yard TD pass to junior Cooper Christensen (No relation to Caleb.) to open up the scoring against E-Burg while adding four catches.

One of several two-way standouts, Bergeson was also a first-team linebacker and led the defense with 80 tackles while fellow sophomore Avery Ellis had 75.

Another key on the offensive attack was junior wide out, Cooper Christensen, who caught 55 passes for 1,357 yards and 22 TD's.

He got the thrill of a lifetime this past April when he was driving a tractor, spraying chemicals in his family's orchard, and received an interesting call.

It was Air Force coach, Mike Theissen, who offered him a football scholarship to the D1 school. (The team's first since Kaden Jenks got one from Weber State in 2016.)

An outstanding student with a 3.5 GPA, Cooper was a two-way all-state player last fall. (He has also been

contacted by Cornell, Columbia and Weber State.)

There were several other stars on last year's team and Allred actually pointed his finger to the defense when asked what might have been the key to their success.

The Knights posted seven shut-outs, while allowing only 68 points in their 14 wins. (22 came in the state championship against Lynden Christian, who they came-from-behind to win 26-22.)



Gary Winston

Allred feels his players are the most important reason for Royal's success but adds, "Parents, the community plus administration, coaches, Grid Kids and middle school all

contribute."

He singled out defensive coordinator, Jeremy Scoggins for his work as well.

"Players trust and believe and therefor put the work in," Allred stated. "High expectations were started before I became the head coach."

"But you have to (also) have a certain amount of skill and talent to win games," he continued. "We have been blessed with both. You can't win the Kentucky Derby on a donkey."

NOTES: Royal has a new athletic director; Gary Winston, who was a multi-star for them in high school. He played basketball at Portland State 2010-2015 and was a coach at Walla Walla College.

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