

Hillcrest Huskies 2009 preview

By Michael Black
Deseret News

MIDVALE — There is a part during the movie Remember the Titans where coach Herman Boone (Denzel Washington) is at training camp watching a player do up-downs. He gets down low in the player's face and when his player comes down he tells him, "Fourth quarter, fourth quarter, fourth quarter."

For Hillcrest's football players, it is a scene they know all too well.

"One thing about playing here is that you know you are going to be given an opportunity to get out on the field — a lot," said senior **Danny Thompson**. "We don't have as many players, so we have a lot of guys going both ways. One of the things that means is that we better be in better shape than anyone else because we are not going to get a chance to rest. We have been working really hard to try to get in the best shape we can."

Up-downs, sprints, suicides, hitting the weights, you name it, the Huskies have been busy getting it done.

"We've got a good group of guys that have worked really hard," said coach **Kirk Merhish**. "There are a lot of

At a glance

Coach: Kirk Merhish is entering his fifth season as the head coach. He has a 10-28 record over four seasons, but is still looking for his first playoff berth.

Key Players: **Danny Thompson** is a wide receiver/strong safety two-way player that will also see time on special teams. **Bridger Dallimore** started at free safety last year as a junior, and will play both there and at receiver.

Nick Merhish led the team in tackles last season as a sophomore, and he is back bigger and stronger to try to duplicate that feat as a junior. **Matt Augustyn** was injured for most of last season, but in his short time on the field showed glimpses of his talents. He will look to impress this season. **Aaron Colborn** has been waiting and playing through the Hillcrest system all his life for this season to take over as the varsity quarterback.

Strengths: Every player or coach from Hillcrest talked about being able to compete because they should have the horses up front. The offensive line is big, averaging around 270 pounds this season. If they can stay healthy and fresh, there should be better offensive production.

Weaknesses: Depth. One thing about playing for Hillcrest is you will get plenty of opportunities to be on the field. Many players go both ways offensively and defensively. Plus, quite a few are on special teams. About the only thing they don't do is concessions during the game.

Last year: 3-7, did not qualify for the state playoffs.

Prediction Region 4 finish: Seventh

Postseason possibilities: Making the postseason would be a tremendous accomplishment for this squad. Severely undermanned when it comes to numbers as Hillcrest is certainly on the lower side of student enrollment in 5A, and definitely in participation, the Huskies have the added task of playing in what is probably the toughest region top to bottom in the state as well.



young guys that are going to play this season, and they have done a good job following the lead of the experienced guys. There is the potential there for us to come in and compete."

For the Huskies to reach their potential, they will rely heavily on their returning starters. **Bridger Dallimore** started as a free safety and wide

Started as a free safety and wide receiver last season, and is expected to fill both those roles again this season.

"I'm excited for what we can do this year,"

Dallimore said. "I am a little more prepared this season. It took me a while

Continued on next page

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Linebacker Nick Merhish led Hillcrest in tackles in 2008 as a sophomore.

Continued from previous page

to get used to things last year, but I expect to be able to step in where I left off last year."

Thompson was the strong safety and a receiver and will be expected to make plays.

"He is one of our better athletes and leaders," said Merhish. "I expect a lot out of him, and so far he has delivered every step of the way."

Of course, Merhish expects even more out of his returning tackler from a season ago — his son Nick.

"I just love to get out there and compete," said **Nick Merhish**. "Football is fun, it gives you a chance to go out and hit people. I expect an even better season out of us this year. I really think we have the players to get it done."

Matt Augustyn is looking for some redemption. Last season he injured his arm Early in the season and couldn't ever truly

show what he could do.

"It will be nice to be healthy and play this year," he said. "I think I can help us to compete in this region.

We need to play well, but we can do it."

Aaron Colborn takes over the reigns as the quarterback for the team, it may be his first year starting, but he feels he is ready for the challenge.

"It is something you dream about all through little league," said Colborn. "You wait your whole life for the chance to get out on the field under the lights on Friday night and show what you can do. I have been playing quarterback for a long time, and now is the chance I've been waiting for."

Along with the important cogs, the Huskies expect big — and big is the key word — from their lines. If things come together, just like the Titans did in their camp, Hillcrest hopes to be in the mix for a playoff berth.