

Growing pains

Now familiar with success, Grizz tried to live up to their high expectations

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

The last two seasons at Rocky Mountain High School taught the Grizzlies something. Despite the newness of the school, they expected to win.

Sixteen victories, a pair of dominating wins over their biggest rival (Eagle) and two playoff appearances will do that. Coming into the 2011 campaign, coach Jason Warr figured a lot would have to go the Grizzlies' way for that good fortune to continue.

"But we had struggles with injuries, youth and just opportunity," he said. "You add those things together, and the season didn't meet our kids' expectations.

"It wasn't disastrous. It was a great learning opportunity for our kids in perseverance."

The Grizzlies finished 3-7 overall and didn't make the postseason. The highlight was a late-season 24-17 win over rival Mountain View. It put a big smile on the kids' faces.

"They'll always remember the feeling of what they did," Warr said. "It was a great feeling that night and one they will remember. That was our biggest win of the season – by far."

Rocky finished tied for seventh place – with Timberline – in the 10-team 5A SIC. Warr said a season-opening loss to Coeur d'Alene got the season off on a downward trek, even though the Grizzlies gave CDA one of their toughest battle.

Rocky, however, expected more. The Grizzlies' players had only experience success and every player believed they would avenge the loss to the Vikings that ended their season in 2009. CDA ended up being a lot better and won the 5A state title.



2011 results (3-7)

Senior
Roc Pilon
points out
something
to a special-
teams mate
during the
Grizzlies' 24-
17 victory
over
Mountain
View.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>W/L</u>	<u>Score</u>
Aug. 26	COEUR D'ALENE	L	24-37
Sept. 2	at Borah*	L	28-41
Sept. 9	at Timberline*	L	20-39
Sept. 16	VALLIVUE*	W	44-40
Sept. 23	at Meridian*	L	41-51
Sept. 30	at Boise*	W	40-27
Oct. 6	CAPITAL*	L	23-28
Oct. 14	at Mtn. View*	W	24-17
Oct. 21	EAGLE*	L	7-52
Oct. 28	CENTENNIAL*	L	2-21

* - 5A SIC games
Home games in CAPS

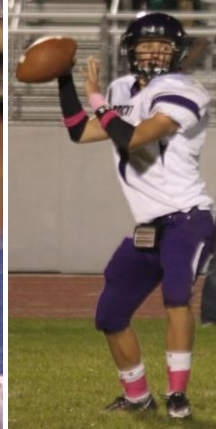
At the time, few understood that fact. It took a while to recover from the 37-24 defeat. Unfortunately, Borah and Timberline took advantage.

With a 0-3 record, the Grizz tried to start over.

"We had our chances," Warr said. "In the Borah and Timberline games we were in shock, but we got back into it. We played well offensively against Meridian and then we had some injuries."

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ROCKY FOOTBALL: 2011 season recap



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The biggest was probably to sophomore quarterback Riley Bradshaw. He had the offense in high gear, but a high ankle sprain against Capital limited his effectiveness. After that, Rocky relied on its defense to keep it in games. Blake Thoren, Tanner Kauffman, David Trompke and several others ended up having great years.

The 5A SIC was very competitive. Only the top four teams made it to state. Borah, which finished 5-4 and had its best season in 17 years, failed to make the postseason.

“At times, we showed some very good things,” Warr said. “We ended up getting a lot out of the season. We got a lot of experience with some younger kids and everyone fought like crazy.”

Bradshaw should be back next year and make Rocky one of the few teams with an experienced QB. Charlie Malouf took over in his absence and drew a lot of attention. His late-game pass completion to Ryan Boothe led to Trompke’s touchdown run that gave Rocky its win at Mountain View.

The Grizz also had one of the league’s best kickers. Ty Prince, taking advantage of former Boise State kicker Kyle Brotzman’s tutelage, came in off the soccer team and broke the school’s field goal record.

Warr called him “one of the best in our league.”

Rocky had six players on the all-SIC team and no all-state players, but 25 of the team’s 66-man roster made all-academic.

Overall, the season didn’t have the success of its past two predecessors. Warr, however, called the developments of the year unusual. Better times on the football field will again be on its way.



TOP LEFT: Riley Bradshaw winds up to fire a pass downfield early in the season.

TOP MIDDLE: Nathan Gaul

TOP RIGHT: Blake Thoren

LOWER LEFT: Charlie Malouf

LOWER RIGHT: Khalil Oliver

ABOVE: Landry Batis and Jason Crimmins celebrate a touchdown against Borah.