

Eagles' Dynamic Offense Gives Fans a Fun Year

By Bruce Smith
MatchupUT.com

Skyline High School's history has proven that big things are expected from its football teams.

The 2009 season had a lot of promise. There was a new region, a bruising running back, a quarterback who could also throw the ball, a track star, proven receivers and more.

The Eagles could also get to the goal line, finishing second among all 5A teams in scoring and giving their fans plenty of excitement. When it ended, Skyline had a 7-4 overall record and finished in third place in Region 2. Coach **Roger Dupaix's** team also made the playoffs for the 24th straight year.

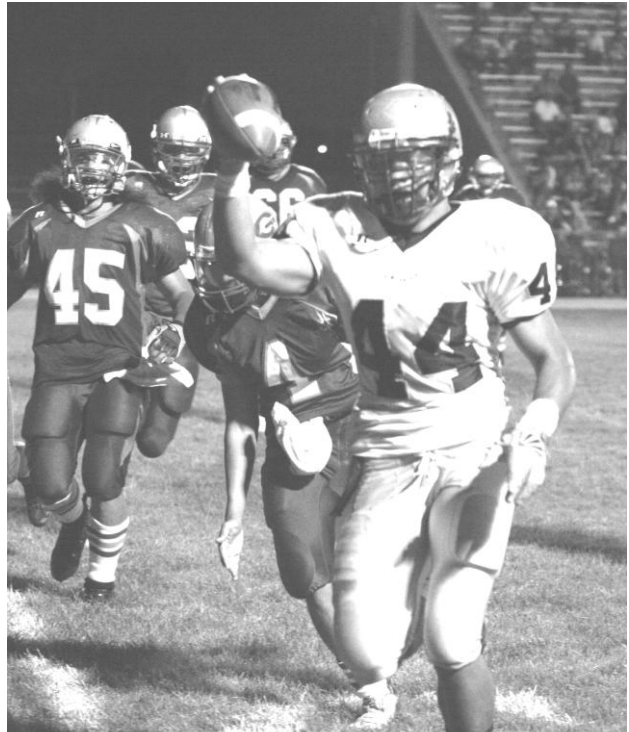
There are plenty of teams that would be happy with that, and Dupaix insisted he had a "fun year." Skyline had talent at every position, but injuries proved to be too much to overcome and led to the end of the season after just one post-season game.

"I thought it was an excellent year," Dupaix said. "I had a lot of fun coaching these kids. If we could have had everybody healthy ... who knows what would have happened?"

Skyline certainly started the season with plenty of talent. Running back **Algernon Brown** ended his three-year varsity career by rushing for 783 yards. He also averaged an amazing 8.5 yards per carry, and had 13 touchdowns.

Speedster **Andy Rounds** ran through and around opponents and averaged almost seven yards per carry. So, even though Skyline had just nine players over 200 pounds, it was not noticed on offense. The team averaged 6.5 yards per carry.

Quarterback **Chase Dunford** had a good season running the ball, and quickly proved to be even more. Dunford became one of Skyline's single season passing leaders, throwing for almost 1,400 yards and 17 touchdowns. Even more impressively, he averaged a touchdown pass for every five throws.



Algernon Brown was Skyline's leading rusher in 2009, averaging 8.5 yards per carry and scoring 13 TDs.

"He had a great season, but we've had a lot of great quarterbacks at Skyline," said Dupaix. "But a quarterback is only as good as his receivers."

Through the first eight games, Dunford's favorite target was **Brian Orr**, who was headed for a record-breaking season until he suffered a freak accident during the season that ended his high school football career. Orr still caught 28 passes for 671 yards – and he broke a school record with 12 touchdown receptions.

"When he played, it really opened things up for us," said Dupaix, noting that Brown and Jared Hultquist also had solid seasons receiving. "We were very good on offense."

Skyline started the year on a shaky note,

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SKYLINE FOOTBALL: 2009 season in review



Dunford



Hultquist



Hymas



Kaelin



Orr



Rounds



Salehi



Battaglia



Brown

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holding off 3A power Hurricane and then losing to rival Olympus, and handing the “Rock” to the Titans for the first time since 2003. Going into the Highland game, it appeared Skyline would be another typical running time that grinded it out on long drives.

Instead, the team really cut loose.

Against Highland, Brown and Dunford had big nights running the ball, but Dunford also burned the Highland secondary several times and that resulted in a huge 41-21 victory and ended a five-game losing streak to the Rams.

“Highland was our best game of the season,” said Dupaix, who began his coaching career there. “We had most of our guys play that game and the offense put up a lot of points.”

Skyline put up points in bunches. With defenses never knowing what the Eagles were going to do, Skyline averaged 35 points per game. While it was not a school record, it was among the best in the school’s 47-year history. In region, Skyline scored almost 43 points per game.

The region games, however, also resulted in a negative effect. The team was smaller than usual and had little depth, and then injuries to Orr, **Anthony Salehi, Carson Hymas, Michael Kaelin, Andy Rounds, Garrett Battaglia** and several others took its toll.

“We never played a team that was smaller than us,” Dupaix said. “Teams would run right at us and try to push us back, but our guys played their guts out.”

The Eagles lost to Cottonwood 43-28, but the score was tied at halftime before the Colts seemed to just wear them down. And, in reality, the

Season results

<u>Opponent</u>	<u>W/L</u>	<u>Score</u>
HURRICANE at Olympus	W	27-14
HIGHLAND at Granger*	L	14-28
WEST*	W	41-21
at Cottonwood*	W	50-6
CYPRUS*	W	36-19
at East	L	28-43
HUNTER*	W	49-19
at Murray*	W	41-7
at Syracuse#	L	34-35
	L	59-35
	L	7-31

* - Region 2 games.
Home games in CAPS. # - 5A playoffs

game provided some great memories as Brown twice connected with Orr for a pair of long touchdowns on halfback passes. Brown added a couple more passes for scores in other games.

The Eagles had another tough loss against eventual region champion Hunter. The game went back and forth, but the Eagles lost 35-34 when an extra point went awry late in the game.

“That was a tough one. But it was fun to play some of those teams again,” said Dupaix. “There were 3

or 4 of those teams that we hadn’t played in years and years.”

Skyline’s 4-2 region mark gave the Eagles a No. 3 seed going into the playoffs and the Eagles were sent to play at Syracuse. Skyline lost 31-7. The team might have had a chance playing at full strength, but another big injury – this time to Brown – left the team without enough weapons.

The Eagles had confidence going into the game, knowing that it had won two playoff road games the previous season.

Dupaix said Skyline will get another chance at the same teams next season, as the only changes in the schedule will be the game sites. Skyline will open the year with an overnight trip to Hurricane.

“We should be pretty good,” Dupaix said. “We will lose some guys, but there are a lot of good players in this program.”