

2013 preview: Miners thirsty again

By Trevor Phibbs

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Bingham High is fully aware of what a drought feels like. It went 60 years between championships before the 2006 team captured the elusive trophy. Now, two years removed since their last title run, the Miners are thirsty.

"We feel that we run the type of program, and the expectations — flat out — if we don't win it it's going to be a disappointment," Bingham coach Dave Peck said. "That's not going to change this year. We have good kids, and we don't make excuses when we get beat. We do it the right way, and our expectations are to be the last team standing. We will be disappointed again this year if we're not."

For the fourth consecutive preseason, the Miners claimed the top spot in the *Deseret News* Top 25, which is determined by coaches' votes collected through questionnaires. Hype is accompanied by publicity, and Bingham has plenty of that.

Its first three games — Bonneville, Idaho (ESPNU), Herriman (KUTV) and Valor Christian, Colorado (Root Sports) — are all televised.

"In *USA Today*, we're ranked No. 41," Peck said. "If we go 3-0, we're going to be top 20 because of the type of teams we're playing."

In a recent practice, the

At a glance

COACH: Dave Peck's success with Bingham is unprecedented. In what will be his 14th year with the Miners he's garnered a 128-35 record, and in 18 years of coaching he's posted a 155-69 overall record. He is a graduate of Cyprus High and Southern Utah University.

OFFENSE: Bingham has six returning starters on the offensive side of the ball. Peck and offensive line coach Keith Chatelain described the group as one of the best the program has had in recent years.

"We have five of our front six guys, if you count the tight end, back," Peck said. "Four of them played every single game, and the fifth one started in at least half of the games. I would definitely say we expect that group to be coming along."

Center Riley Culley, guards Noah Taeatafa and Aaron Amaama, who Peck said Chatelain referred to as "the best run-blocker" he has ever coached; and tight end Dalton Schultz started every game last season, whereas Austin Bunkall started several games. Right tackle Justin Nuffer completes the group, and he started every game at the JV level.

Schultz likely will end his career as the highest recruited player Peck has ever coached, and considering the frequency of next-level players the Bingham program produces, that's astounding.

Currently, Schultz is the top-rated tight end prospect in the nation.

DEFENSE: The defensive unit is lagging behind at the pace of the offense, but as Peck explained — a panic button isn't necessary at this point.

"We're going to be pretty good, but right now the offense is moving the ball up and down the field," Peck said.

"We've got some guys that can play, but right now we just can't play against our own guys. Until you play some other team, it's hard to say: is the offense doing that well or is the defense off a little bit

Peck pegged Sky Manu, a three-year starting safety, "as good as there is in the state" and Daniel Langi, who started every game as sophomore last season. He also noted that Spencer Tauteoli and Mahonrai Toki have performed well on the defensive front.

Kade Cloward, who also started every game as a sophomore, headlines the defensive secondary while Nick Henninger at outside linebacker has gained Peck's attention throughout the offseason.

COACHES' REGION 3 POLL: First. **DESERET NEWS REGION 3 PREDICTION:** First

BOTTOM LINE: Bingham is always in the mix, but when the Miners are nearly impossible to beat is when the offensive line physically dictates the line of scrimmage. The Miners are loaded offensively, especially the five upfront. Obviously, a state championship is an approachable goal, but winning the Region 3 title may be a more difficult task.

offense scored on three straight drives during team drills while primarily using three different quarterbacks. However, Peck said that junior Kyle Gearig will be calling the shots come Aug. 24.

"He's probably the least experienced, but really cool-headed," Peck said of Gearig. "We love how he's coming along. Nobody knows anything about this kid. He wasn't even our sophomore starting quarterback. He's a great athlete, and we believe he's an All-State quarterback. We have three other good quarterbacks — we're deep at that position — but we have this gut feeling that Kyle is going to be something special."

The Miners measure athletic ability through a series of drills referring to the "Bingham Agility" circuit. Peck explained that Gearig tested off the charts.

"In 29 years, he's the fastest kid I've ever had," Peck said. "He has great natural ability. If he gets out in the open, nobody is going to catch him if he does scramble.

"But you know what? Until we actually play some games, that is going to be a question mark," Peck continued. "It could hurt us a little the first couple. If we end up being 3-0 at the end of the three games, then we're in good shape because he's going to continue to get better."