

# Surprise? *The Lions are back*

Eighth-place prediction inspires the team to reach heights not seen in many years

By Bruce Smith  
Matchup

The answer was unanimous among SIC football coaches in 2012. Who was the league's surprise team?

The Borah Lions.

The Lions' rise this season, where they roared to a 7-3 record, finished tied for first place and earned the league's top seed in the 5A state playoffs astounded the prognosticators, who had predicted them to be eighth.

"We were lucky to be SIC champions and unlucky not to be state champions," said coach Darren Corpus. "I expect always to do well. My expectations for next year's group are higher than this year.

"I wanted to set up a blueprint on how to play football at Borah and this group moved us to a new level. Now we need to go the ultimate level."

Corpus was named the league's top coach, and the Lions had eight players on the all-league team, more than double any other school.

"It was a pretty cool season," said senior Hunter Kenyon, who led the league in rushing with 1,168 yards. "My dad played when they (the Lions) were a powerhouse and won state championships. I also got experience when my brother played and they were 0-9.



Senior **Hunter Kenyon** led the Lions in rushing with 1,168 yards and was one of eight players to make the all-SIC team in 2012.

"It was nice to bring it (success) back and be on the winning side again. It was cool."

Borah had a 5-4 mark in 2011. It was the Lions' first winning season since 1995, but there was still some regret because they missed the playoffs. Corpus was named the head coach the previous May after 24 years at nearby West Junior High.

"I knew we would have a good year," said Corpus. "When you work with kids, and you're around them longer than a spring and a summer, you can start developing. You can understand what your strengths

## 2012 results (7-3)

Date	Opponent	W/L	Score
Aug. 24	at Boise*	L	24-38
Aug. 30	at Centennial*	W	28-21
Sept. 6	MERIDIAN*	W	33-28
Sept. 14	Open		
Sept. 22	MTN. VIEW*	W	35-21
Sept. 28	TIMBERLINE*	W	31-21
Oct. 5	at Eagle*	W	24-21
Oct. 11	VALLIVUE*	W	38-21
Oct. 19	CAPITAL*	L	34-35
Oct. 26	at Rocky Mtn.*	W	27-17
Nov. 2	HIGHLAND#	L	34-41

\* - SIC games. # - 5A playoffs  
Home games in CAPS

and weaknesses are."

Corpus said winning the SIC was this season's highlight. In the process, though, there was some drama and heartbreak, but it all faded with a 27-17 victory at Rocky

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## Team awards

*Awards given at team's post-season banquet:*

<b>MVP</b> - Hunter Kenyon	<b>Mr. Offense</b> - Cole Skinner
<b>Most Inspirational</b> – Hawkins Mann	<b>Mr. Defense</b> - Carlton Strough
<b>Most Improved</b> - Justin Coburn	<b>Best DB</b> - Davis Bitton
<b>Scout Team Player</b> - Kade Dustin	<b>Best LB</b> - Nick Burt
<b>Coaches Award</b> - Wilson Kroll	<b>Best DL</b> - Hawkins Mann
	<b>Best RB</b> - Hunter Kenyon
	<b>Best WR</b> - Kion Williams
	<b>Best OL</b> - Colton Streufert

**LEFT:** Tyler McCurdy celebrates Borah's comeback win over Meridian.

**MIDDLE:** Coach Darren Corpus

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Mountain in the regular-season finale.

"The (SIC) coaches picked us eighth," he said. "I don't know how you can do that legitimately. When you pick a team, there's more to it than losing seniors. Our JV team only lost a couple of games the yebefore and we had good seniors left. Polls are polls. They can probably motivate you more than anything else, but other than that, it's just writing on paper."

The Lions season started slowly. The heavily hyped opener against Boise at the new Dona Larsen Park field was a disaster. Borah was never in the game and lost 38-24. Afterward, the team hung around for a strongly worded pep talk from its coaches – and then won six straight.

"It starts with senior leadership," Corpus said. "If you have that, you have guys working day in and day out and it rubs off the other younger guys."

Another turning point came against Meridian. It was just the third game of the season and the Lions trailed 28-6 at halftime. Spurred by a dramatic locker room speech by junior lineman Hawkins Mann, the defense stiffened and Borah scored four straight touchdowns en route to a 33-28 victory.

"Coming back to beat them was pretty good," Corpus said, "and we showed the ability to go to Eagle and win. That was huge."

Earning the league's top seed didn't do Borah any favors, though, as the Lions drew Eastern Idaho's best team – Highland – in the opening round. The team had to deal with several injuries and, despite leading most of the game, Borah lost 41-34. The

dream season ended, but set the table for the future.

"Highland was the best team we saw. I'm not going to say they were the toughest, but they were the best. If we were healthy and each team plays the best they can, it would have been the two best teams in the state."

Highland lost the following week to defending champion Coeur d'Alene, which then fell to Madison in the 5A title game at Pocatello's Holt Arena.

Corpus said the league – as well as the state's other 5A teams – were pretty balanced. What set Borah apart was its balance.

"The key to any football team to be successful is you have to be able to run the ball and be able to stop the run," he said. "At midpoint of the season, we were doing both. We forced other teams to pass the ball."

The offense was balanced, led by Kenyon and junior quarterback Cole Skinner. Corpus said Skinner had an "unbelievable" season, throwing for 25 touchdowns. Kion Williams gave the Lions a big-play threat and he and tight end Justin Coburn tied with 51 receptions each. Trey Dennis and Kadeem Torgeson also their share of big plays.

On defense, Carlton Strough and Nick Burt were the leading tacklers, but there was no disputing the impressive play of the Mann brothers – Hawkins and Colter.

In all, 2012 was a great year for Borah football, but it's likely even better seasons are still to come.