

No happy endings

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- Coach Judd Benedick

Mavericks' hot finish showed how good they could be, but it wasn't quite good enough to make the postseason

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

Ending the season on a three-game win streak, whipping one of the league's top teams, being rated the league's top offensive team ...

Sounds like the results of a great season, doesn't it?

It really does, but it wasn't viewed that way by most of the Mavericks who, despite a 6-3 record, didn't make it to the 5A playoffs. In a league full of parity, it seems that every year there is a deserving school that's left out and this year it was Mountain View's turn.

"It's real disappointing," said coach Judd Benedick. "We were playing our best football at the end of the year. I even had other coaches in the (Southern Idaho) Conference tell me that. We could have gone a long ways (in the postseason). We were playing better than anybody.

"We hit our stride at the right time, but it just ended up being too late."

SIC coaches and the media pegged Mountain View to finish in second place at the start of the season, mostly because the Mavericks had one of the best returning quarterbacks – junior Kai Turner – and had come off a successful year. Turner didn't disappoint, but the Mavs also had to deal



Josh Buss is greeted by Tristan Spooner after scoring a touchdown against Eagle.

with a lot of youth and inexperience at other positions.

"We knew we would have to mature to be the team we wanted," Benedick said. "We hoped it would happen quickly. Guys needed game experience to get better."

The team had a new look – in more ways than one. In the

opener, the Mavs revealed new uniforms, which were a big hit with the players and the fans. Benedick combined the best ideas of college teams (Miami, Fla., Oklahoma State, Oregon and, of course, Boise State). Later, Benedick said one website

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MOUNTAIN VIEW FOOTBALL: 2012 season recap



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2012 results (6-3)

Date	Opponent	W/L	Score
Aug. 20	at Meridian	W	33-24
Sept. 7	CAPITAL	L	19-26
Sept. 14	TIMBERLINE	W	38-13
Sept. 22	at Borah	L	21-35
Sept. 28	BOISE (<i>homecoming</i>)	W	48-28
Oct. 4	at Rocky Mtn.	L	6-20
Oct. 12	CENTENNIAL	W	53-22
Oct. 19	EAGLE	W	48-22
Oct. 26	at Vallivue	W	47-20

Home games in CAPS



LEFT: Collin Sale brings the hammer and introduces the Mavs' new uniforms in the opener.

MIDDLE: Junior QB Kai Turner

RIGHT: Senior lineman Dylan Garcia

had the Mavs' uniforms among the best among high school teams in the country.

"I'm an art teacher, so I had a lot of fun. I thought it would be fun to go after a new look. The kids loved them."

Once that excitement ended, Benedick said the highlight of the season was how the team finished. After six games, the Mavs were 3-3 and "scratching our heads," but then caught on and finished strong.

The biggest win was a 48-22 victory over Eagle, which seemed headed for first place. In that game, Josh Buss ran for a school record 244 yards and the Mavs won in a blowout, 48-22.

The week before, Mountain View had whipped Centennial, 53-22. The team knew its future following the Eagle win, but still performed at a high level in beating Vallivue, 47-20.

So, what made the Mavs a different team?

Certainly, it was Turner's consistency, but also the play of Buss, who was the team's leading rusher but also proved to be a threat as a receiver and at returning kicks.

"Our offense kind of took it upon themselves that they had to score a lot of points," said senior lineman John Munger, who joined Lane Chadwick and Hunter Temple on the all-state team. "Kai and

Buss just blew up. They became a scoring machine."

The Mavs also were helped by Justin Ruttko, a junior halfback who showed some spark on the JV team and was promoted to the varsity at midseason. Benedick said he played a big role in helping the Mavs' running attack improve.

Wide receivers Colin Sale and Connor Armstrong combined for almost 100 catches and a dozen touchdowns. Mountain View averaged a school record 34.8 points per game and, with the exception of a 20-6 loss at Rocky Mountain, constantly provided thrills to its fans.

"Josh was definitely the guy we wanted to have the ball in his hands," Benedick said. "There were also plenty of other guys doing their jobs. Kai, of course, had a good year and will hold a lot of records when he's done.

"Those guys really made our offense click."

The low point of the year came early. Benedick said a 35-21 loss to Borah at the city's new Dona Larsen Park was an odd game.

"It was on a Saturday and it had a weird feel (smoky skies)," he said. "We weren't prepared. We just didn't show up."

All three of Mountain View's losses were to teams that made the postseason, which caused the Mavs to be the team disappointed.