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Basics, prep for Eagles and lots of fluids on agenda for Weatherford Kangaroos

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Apparently its not enough of a challenge to encounter the spectre of staring at a big and fast state-ranked squad across the line of scrimmage. Weatherford has embraced the mantra of playing Kangaroos football to assure the enemy is not itself, and the credo has taken hold for at least three of its five games so far in the 2009 campaign against some pretty fair competition.

The challenge of being mentally and physically prepared for a team like the Abilene Eagles need not be complicated by any other factors. But, guess what?

When asked about the challenges the team faces this week in the context of Abilene, Weatherford head coach Kenny Wheaton's response ... "You mean the flu?"

After time off last week to heal bumps and bruises, redress some fundamentals and tacitly prepare for Abilene, the Roos have been inundated with the bug enemy.

"We had 25 or so out on Monday and I think around 35 Tuesday," Wheaton said. "It seems like the bye week was okay, with only a couple of guys out.

"But this week has been tough. We've just been practicing with whoever shows up."

During the bye week, Wheaton had expressed desire to revisit basics to help relax the kids' minds a bit, regarding football, get some weight-room time and hit the tutorials for the classroom.

"The plans for the week worked out well, I think," Wheaton said. "You don't really introduce your kids to the opponent during that bye week, though we kind of did [with some of our drills]."

This week, with those in attendance anyway, attentions have turned to addressing the weapons the Eagles possess, and will surely be bringing to Kangaroo Stadium.

"Abilene is very fast," Wheaton said. "Probably faster than they have ever been, on both sides of the ball.

"They have played a pretty tough schedule, as well. Tyler Lee's coaches told us [Abilene] is the fastest they have seen this year, and [Lee] has played Longview and Lufkin. That will get your attention in a hurry."

The Roos' defensive tasks are simple in theory, but in practice, will no doubt be more difficult.

"We have to avoid giving up the big plays to Abilene," Wheaton said. "They can score a lot, and quickly.

"We have to make them grind it out to move the chains."

It's hard to simulate another team in practice in prep for games, to try to show the offense and defense what they might expect to see. Emulating the speed is not usually an option, so the Roos will need to adjust quickly after the kickoff.

Meanwhile, the kids will get as ready as they can, working on their own game plan to force the Eagles to adjust, as well.

"We preach to our kids that we just need to play our game and not worry about things we can't control," Wheaton said. "We can't worry about the flu or what the other team is doing, just take care of our assignments.

"And I think they have gotten better at doing just that."

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Photos



WHS fullback Jeran Gentry and the rest of the Roos' running corps hope to be at optimum strength when state-ranked Abilene visits, Friday. The senior is shown here making a run earlier this season in a non-district game against Aledo. **DAVID CLAUSEN/DEMOCRAT PHOTO/** (Click for larger image)

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