Pats going for second unbeaten season

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This could be the second unbeaten regular season under the tutelage of head football coach Wes Shank at Miyamura High School. That is quite an accomplishment for a town like Gallup, even though they are not consecutive seasons, not known for its prowess on the gridiron.

The difference is the head coach, not the players although the Patriots have many good ones in uniform. A quick look at the statistics on maxpreps.com assures the local naysayers and probably puts a little fear in the hearts of the opposition. Both are good things.

“Farmington is a real test for us,” said Shank. “We are bigger than them but they may be faster. They have at least five receivers that run 4.7 seconds or better in the 40, but I like our chances.”

Starting quarterback Matt Chavez has completed 63.7% of his passes (107 of 168) for 16.5 average yards per catch and 220.5 per game. He has accounted for 23 touchdowns through the air with only four interceptions and a QB rating of 128.6. And he has a senior backup that does a very respectable job when called on, Brett McFarland. Chavez has missed at least 20 quarters of games as his team builds huge leads early and McFarland, with lots of help from the defense, knows how to keep the other team in place. And let’s not forget the defense that has held opposing teams to very few points per game, allowing the opponents to score only 117 points while the offense scores 345. Only once this year has an opposing team scored over 30 points and that was last year’s state champion.

Back to the offense, Miyamura has used 17 running backs to carry the pigskin on 210 carries for 1,247 yards. That averages out to 5.9 yards per carry and an average of 155 yards per game. As on most high school teams, some players are utilized in different ways, either as a receiver or a rusher, and some play in both directions, offense and defense.

The receiving corps is also plentiful and sure-handed, and has amassed a total of 1,868 yards, averaging 16.1 yards per catch and 253.5 yards per game. The big target is Brandon Vidal, a six foot, four inch speedster but there are 16 more targets for Chavez to spot during any game. All have the ability to break the game open. Vidal has racked up 13 TDs by himself on offense and has intercepted three passes from opposing quarterbacks.

Farmington is unbeaten in District play as well, which makes this game even more important. The Scorpions have lost only to Roswell (44-16), Belen (35-28) and Piedra Vista (17-14) this season and would consider a win over the Patriots a real season-changer.

For Miyamura, the prize comes in the form of a higher seed at state, meaning their first game will likely come against a foe that has several losses. The ultimate prize might be a promise made by coach Shank to his team. A 20-point win by the Patriots over Farmington would result in every player eating steak instead of hamburgers, and paid for by the coach. Nice!

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