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Apache Junction Gold Canyon Superstition Mountain Country



**Stuck In The Woods**  
 Thanks to TNT's coverage of the first two rounds of the PGA Championships, we got to see every shot, chip, putt, water-ball and penalty drop from a guy who finished tied for 116th and missed the cut by seven strokes. Wish I could say the same for the guys at the top of the leaderboard.

**Camera Angle**  
 I guess I was a little too close to the action during a tackling drill conducted by the Apache Trail Wolfpack players last week at Prospector Park. With both hands on my camera, peering through the lens, and with clipboard tucked under my arm, I got "pancaked" to the ground. Yes, the two players went a little wide of their designated tackling area, and no, Coach Greg Garland never tooted his whistle to stop the drill gone awry. I suffered a bruised tailbone and pain from my right elbow to the shoulder, but, just for you, I still managed to get the shot.

**ATHS Wolfpack Football Looks To Bounce Back In 2011**

With 13 returning starters, Apache Trail hopes to get back to their winning ways

By Chuck Baker  
 The News

Two years ago, in just their second season of eight-man tackle football, and with a roster loaded with seniors, the Apache Trail Wolfpack captured an Arizona Charter Athletic Association (CAA) state championship title going 11-1. It was such a dramatic turnaround from their inaugural 2008 season when they went just 2-6 but still had a shot at making the playoffs in their final game.

Last season, with a roster comprised of mostly sophomores and juniors, the Wolfpack finished 3-7 in the 2A Division, losing in the first round of the playoffs.

Flash forward to 2011. Fifteen seniors from amongst

the thirty or so players out for the preseason, thirteen returning starters, a new triple option offense, and the Wolfpack appear poised to make another run at a state title.

Apache Trail head coach Greg Garland would likely cringe and tell you "Whoa, hold on a second, pardner," with talk of another state championship run. "One game at a time."

With school starting this past Monday, the Wolfpack were holding their first after-school team practice at Prospector Park in preparation of their season opener on Saturday, August 27 at Mesa Prep. Back in the 2A Division of the CAA, Apache Trail, in the least, has to be considered a solid division

contender, and certainly capable of posting a winning record.

Returning senior Kris Stein, last season's leading tackle as a linebacker on defense, has taken over as quarterback in 2011 and will lead the triple option offense that Coach Garland borrowed from a successful Michigan high school, and then adapted it for the eight-man game.

"My brother, who lives back in northern Indiana, suggested that I take a look at the triple option used by Muskegon High School," Coach Garland said. "I did that, and then spent most of the summer trying to figure out a way to adapt the offense from the eleven-man game

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At left, Wolfpack player Shane Wlotzko (#10) tries to tackle Cole Pordon (#16) during a practice drill at Prospector Park while other Wolfpack players look on. Above, Apache Trail head coach Greg Garland (in sunglasses) watches intently as his offense gets ready to run a play. With fifteen seniors on this year's roster, and with thirteen returning starters, Apache Trail appears primed to return to their winning ways in 2011, and make a solid run at the Arizona Charter Athletic Association 2A Division post season playoffs.



## 'Pack, continued from page A-7

game to the eight-man game."

Muskegon has won 17 state titles dating back to 1920 and is one of the most successful schools using the triple option offense. The Big Reds, as they are known, won their last state title in 2008.

Last year's starting quarterback for Apache Trail, junior Brian Gutierrez, has moved to a wideout position with the offense and is one of the prime motion guys in the triple option. In 2010, Gutierrez completed 33-of-58 passes for 561 yards and seven touchdowns and rushed for another 292 yards and four scores. He will serve as the backup QB to Stein, and with his throwing and running abilities, even from a wideout position, it gives Coach Garland that many more options with the offense.

It has been a challenge implementing the triple option and Coach Garland will be the first to tell you that the team has focused mostly on running plays thus far.

"We plan to slowly introduce some passing options with this offense," Garland says. "Right now we have a tight end check-off, and we may be adding a couple of screen passes."

Lining up directly behind Stein in the fullback/running back slot will be return-

ing seniors Cole Pordon and Joe Ramos. The two combined for 828 yards and nine touchdowns on the ground in 2010.

At the other wideout spot opposite Gutierrez is returning senior Alan Keeton, perhaps the fastest player on the roster. He too will go in motion often with this offense.

Up front, you have senior Del Mathews at center, seniors Steve Hoelbl and Zack Crismon on the line, and senior Shane Wlotzko at tight end. Mathews is a newcomer, and while not the biggest lineman on the Wolfpack roster, Coach Garland says he may be one of the smartest players and most agile. Hoelbl is a returning starter and even played some quarterback a year ago, Crismon is a transfer from Apache Junction High School, and Wlotzko is a solid all-around returning player who can run, catch passes and play defense. He was third on the team with fifty tackles last season.

Also factoring into the passing game when it becomes more developed will be tight end Brandon Carlson, who a year ago caught 13 passes for 222 yards and four TDs, senior Shawn Wlotzko, Shane's twin brother, and Pordon and Ramos out of the backfield.

On defense for Apache Trail, five of their six top



Wolfpack players Joe Ramos (#25) and Del Mathews (#40) participate in a practice drill last week at Prospector Park

tacklers from last season are returning. Stein, according to Coach Garland, may be moved from linebacker to a safety position in the hopes of keeping him a little less active on defense, thereby keeping him more rested to run the offense. Shane and Shawn Wlotzko combined to make 88 tackles in 2010, Pordon had 34 tackles, and Keeton was in on 24 tackles.

Also helping out on both sides of the line will be seniors Kevin Apodaca, Kyle Scholz, Steve Absher and Ed Walters, all returning players.

Additional returning players this season include junior Sean Kencharek and sophomores Robbie Darras and Steven Conn, all listed as wide receivers/defensive backs, and some of the newcomers to keep an eye on are freshman Jacob Bohn, the younger brother of former Wolfpack star Jon Bohn, and Bradley Soward, who looked impressive in practice and could have an impact.

After opening the season August 27 at Mesa Prep, Apache Trail will host (Gilbert) Desert Hills on Friday, September 2 at Prospector Park, and then play cross-town rival Imagine Prep on



ATHS quarterback Kris Stein cuts through a hole created by offensive lineman Steve Hoelbl (in red undershirt)

Friday, September 9, also at Prospector Park. The rest of the 2011 schedule includes Thursday, September 15 at Tucson All Sport Academy, Friday, September 23 versus (Surprise) Arizona Charter Academy at Prospector Park, Friday, September 30 versus (Bullhead City) Mo-

have A.L.C. at Prospector Park, Friday, October 14 at (Phoenix) NFL Yet, Thursday, October 20 at (Phoenix) Crestview Prep, and Friday, October 28 versus (Tempe) James Madison High School at Prospector Park. Kickoff

for all games will be at 7:00 p.m.

For more information about the CAA and eight-man tackle football, including schedules, scores and league standings, visit their official website at [www.azcaa.clubspaces.com](http://www.azcaa.clubspaces.com).

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