

# Big 12 North up for grabs heading into final month of regular season

By LUKE MEREDITH  
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa – No. 2 Texas clarified the Big 12 South title picture by thumping No. 18 Oklahoma State 41-14 in Stillwater on Saturday night.  
The race for the North division crown, though, is more muddled than ever.  
The top five teams in the North are either 5-3 or 5-4

and have at least two losses in conference play. Kansas State (5-4, 3-2) remains the surprise leader of the division, followed by Nebraska (5-3, 2-2) and Iowa State (5-4, 2-3).  
Preseason North favorites Missouri (5-3, 1-3) and Kansas (5-3, 1-3) got off to slow starts in the Big 12. Only Colorado (2-6, 1-3) looks like it won't be a factor after

losing four of its last five.  
Missouri snapped a three-game losing streak by beating the Buffaloes, 36-17, though the Tigers could only muster a field goal in the second half.  
"At times on offense, we look like we did a year ago. And there's times on offense when we look like we can't get a first down," Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said. His

team faces Baylor this week.  
Kansas, which has dropped three straight after a 5-0 start, can make a big statement this weekend against the rival Wildcats in Manhattan. Coach Mark Mangino said Monday that senior quarterback Todd Reesing will start this week, despite being benched late in a 42-21 loss to Texas Tech.  
Mangino said the of-

fensive line's inability to adequately protect Reesing was part of the reason he pulled him. Reesing was sacked six times by the Red Raiders.  
"I think it was the appropriate thing to do," Mangino said. "I didn't want him taking any more shots."  
● **Frosh quarterbacks:** Nebraska joined a growing list of Big 12 teams playing

freshman quarterbacks when it started Cody Green in a 20-10 win over Baylor.  
Green was the first true freshman to start for the Huskers since Tommie Frazier in 1992. Though his numbers weren't great – he was 12-of-21 passing for 128 yards and an interception – Green led Nebraska to points on its first three drives.

# Ashland takes 9-0 record into playoffs tonight

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There's certainly a level of familiarity on the Ashland football team this season.  
First of all, there are seven sets of brothers on the 40-player roster. And then the Blue Jays brought back a majority of their starters from last year's 5-4 team.  
"My expectations were really high before the season," Ashland coach Matt Scripsick said. "From day one, I thought we had the chemistry and team back to make the playoffs."  
Ashland not only have made the playoffs – the Blue Jays open Eight-Man II postseason play at home tonight against South Barber – but also have gone unbeaten to this point.  
"I think it shows their work ethic over the summer and coming into the season with a little more confidence," Scripsick said of his team, which has been ranked all season and ends the regular season at No. 3. "We had a

lot of young kids that had experience from last year."  
Scripsick said one weakness the Blue Jays had last year was a lack of a running game. But this season, Ashland is averaging more than four rushing touchdowns per game.  
Ben Fox leads the balanced rushing attack with 628 yards and 13 touchdowns. In all, nine Blue Jays have rushed for touchdowns. Quarterback Corey Stebens has thrown for 993 yards.  
"It's a huge difference that we're able to run the ball," Scripsick said. "If teams try to stop the run, we can spread it out and pass it. We have a lot of balance."  
Stebens and Fox each have brothers on the team. The seven sets of brothers are Ben and Giles Fox, Corey and Chance Stebens, Ransom and Cole Gardiner, Kirk and Blake Woodruff, Adrian and Salvaor Dominguez, James and Jerald Callahan and Colton and Dalton Moore.  
Corey Stebens missed most of last year with an ACL injury. The Blue Jays have

dealt with some injuries this year. Ervin Swonger, who caught 54 passes last year, has played in only about half the games, and Jay Luerman, who filled in at quarterback last year, has been sidelined with torn meniscus.  
Luerman could be cleared to play at the end of this week, but for now the Blue Jays are concentrating on South Barber.  
"A key will be us stopping their size," Scripsick said. "They are so much bigger than us."  
● **Ranking notes** – The state's top teams were in postseason form last week as only four ranked teams lost – and all of them lost to other ranked teams.  
This will be the final football state rankings of the season until the end of the playoffs. Six of the seven No. 1 teams – Olathe North (6A), Hutchinson (5A), Conway Springs (3A), Smith Center (2-1A), Baileyville B&B (Eight-Man I) and Hanover (Eight-Man II) – end the regular season at No. 1 after being ranked No. 1 in the preseason.

# Trinity

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said. "During practice, I'm seeing a better work ethic as a team. We know we can reach the state championship game and we're fighting for that goal."  
The quest for that goal starts tonight when the Celtics, unbeaten and ranked sixth in Class 3A, host 8-1 Southeast of Saline in the first round.  
This season has continued the rapid turnaround for the Celtics.  
In 2007, Trinity went 2-7, losing its last seven games of the season. Last year, the Celtics were 7-4 and reached the second round of the playoffs.

This year, the Celtics not only are winning, but they've won convincingly on most nights. Prior to last Thursday, Trinity's offense was averaging 51 points per game.  
Meanwhile, the defense had allowed seven points in its previous six games, shutting out three straight opponents during one stretch.  
"It's nice to win, but it's even better when you get that zero," said Oberle, who is second on the team in tackles behind Mendoza.  
The Celtics returned six defensive starters from last year's team when they allowed 15.4 points per game.  
Oberle is the lone returning starter on the defensive line, but Racette said defensive ends Austin Flynn, Joseph Schrock

and Chase Jones have filled in well on the line.  
"In my opinion, the defensive line is the key to our defense. They eat up blocks so our linebackers can run free," Racette said. "We had a lot of questions that had to be answered on that side of the football. They've done a great job."  
Racette said playing adjustment-sound is the secret to this team's defense. The Celtics will allow the intermediate gain, but Racette wants to stay away from the big play.  
"If anyone is going to beat us, we'd rather see them take a 12- or 15-play drive to score than give up one big play," Racette said. "Like against Halstead, we bent but we really never did break."  
Today, the Celtics will see a

team that features a quarterback who can move the ball effectively on the ground or through the air.  
This season, Bryant Beneke has rushed for 1,060 yards and passed for 1,078. It's the second consecutive year Beneke has rushed and passed for more than 1,000.  
"They like to spread you out and then let their athletic kids make plays," Racette said.  
A win today could set up a matchup with defending state champion Conway Springs on Saturday. But for now, all of Trinity's focus is on Southeast of Saline.  
"We know they're going to come out and play hard because this is the time of season, it's win or go home," Mendoza said.

# Soccer

● From Page B1

ing to get out there and get after it. It's exciting for us and it's a big thing for our soccer program."  
Liberal has experienced a successful run under coach Lori Navarro as the Redskins have reached the state quarterfinals every year since 2003. The Redskins finished third at state a year ago after losing to eventual state champion Aquinas in the semifinals.  
Binns said being around winning programs – like Hutchinson's five-time defend-

ing state champion football team – helps the Salthawks offset their lack of postseason experience.  
"One of the things is that, when you've been around competitive programs, you see football and Hutch High in general is a winning atmosphere," Binns said. "I think we can feed off of that winning atmosphere and be fine. They're very young team. ... Our guys will come to play."  
Hutchinson came to play in last Saturday's 6-0 win over Winfield in the South Central Regional 3 championship game. The six goals tied a season-high as the Salthawks got their first goal in the opening

minute and never let up.  
Binns said his team looks to carry the momentum from that scoring outburst into tonight.  
"I think they started finishing and being mentally strong," Binns said of the win over Winfield. "They were focusing and keeping composed. That's what it's all about. When you get your opportunities, stay calm and stay relaxed."  
Another fast start, Binns said, could go along ways for the Salthawks.  
"If we come out in the first few minutes and we take it to them and show them what we're made of and what Hutch High soccer is about, then we're going to be alright."

# Buhler

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the third round of the playoffs last season, begin their postseason run at 6 p.m. today with a road game against Colby.  
This is, by far, Buhler's longest road trip of the past two seasons. Warner said his team will leave this morning, eat lunch in Hays before traveling on to Colby.  
Colby went 3-0 in district play and is 7-2 this season. A year ago, the Eagles went 6-4 and had to make a long trip to Andale for a first-round playoff game. Andale beat Colby in that game 56-6.  
"They run different formations on offense. They like to run, but their quarterback can throw the ball," Warner said. "They play physical football."  
While Buhler likes to count on senior tailback Jordan Oden, who has 2,123 yards and 30 touchdowns this season, Colby has a balanced rushing attack as four backs have more than 300 yards this season. Ethan Stickel leads the team with 660 rushing yards. Quarterback Kale Arnberger has thrown for 778 yards.  
Colby's losses this season are a pair of 2-1A teams – St. Francis in its opener and a month ago to Smith Center, which is looking for its sixth straight state title this month. Buhler started its season with wins over Andover

and Abilene, a pair of state-ranked 4A teams.  
"We hope our schedule prepares us throughout the playoffs," Warner said.  
Two other Reno County teams open their playoff play today at home.  
Trinity Catholic has a tough draw against Southeast of Saline, a team ranked in 3A before dropping a district game to Hillsboro.  
Pretty Prairie, unbeaten like Trinity, plays Udall. The Bulldogs are coming off one of their best wins of the season as they won 26-16 at Goessel last Thursday.  
Other top area games today include:  
● **Garden Plain (8-1) at Wichita Collegiate (9-0)** – As good a matchup as there is today as the Owls are ranked third in 3A and Collegiate is No. 4. Garden

Plain's only loss is to No. 1 Conway Springs.  
A year ago, Collegiate also went unbeaten during the regular season before losing 40-21 in the first round to eventual state champion Conway Springs.  
● **Tribune (7-2) at Macksville (7-2)** – A pair of Eight-Man I state-ranked teams square off – Macksville is No. 7 and Tribune is No. 9. Macksville, which reached the state semifinals last year, has won six straight since starting the year 1-2.  
● **Victoria (8-1) at Golden Plains (7-2)** – Victoria is No. 5, but had been No. 1 before losing to Otis-Bison 10 days ago, and Golden Plains is No. 10 and has won six in a row. Victoria beat Golden Plains in the first round of the playoffs last year.


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1. What is the name of the trophy given to the winner of the Kansas vs. Missouri football game? \_\_\_\_\_

2. In what year was the first Kansas vs. Missouri football game played? \_\_\_\_\_

3. In what year was there no game played between Kansas and Missouri \_\_\_\_\_

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