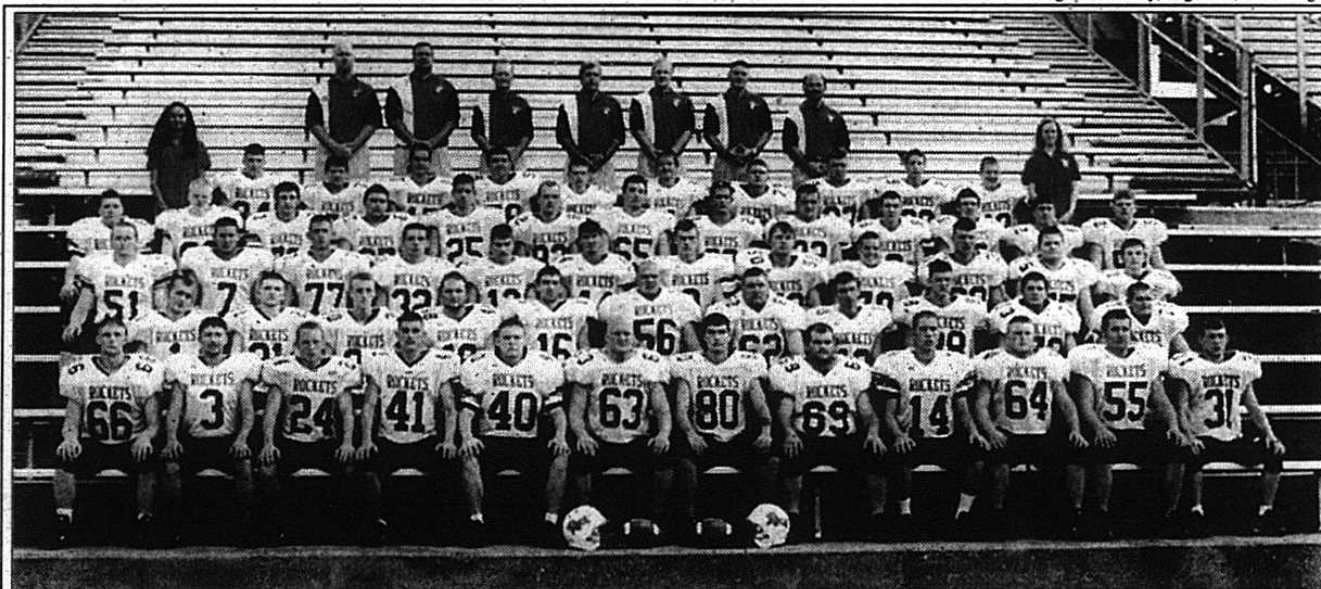




The 2002 Edition of the Rockcastle County High School Football Team

Rockets face challenge to return to the "carpet"

For many years the Rockcastle County High School football program has been successful and respected throughout the state of Kentucky.

But last year the Rockets did something no other team had ever accomplished, they played in a state championship game in Louisville.

The 2001 Rockets didn't fair so well that Saturday afternoon in December against a very good Boyle County team, but they finished with a record of 14-1 and a state runner-up title.

What about this year?

With several returning starters, a quarterback who threw more touchdown passes last year than anybody in the state, (41), and possibly the best offensive and defensive line to ever play at the ROCK, expectations are high.

Rockcastle coaches have always played upped their opponents and down played their chances, but since

Head Coach Tom Larkey arrived on the scene and Head Assistant Tony Saylor started a weight lifting program and dedicated himself to stopping all opponents on defense with endless hours of preparation the Rockets have been winners.

Larkey arrived in 1985, Saylor came a couple years earlier but they have been a successful combination.

First it was just winning seasons, then it was district titles, (a lot of them) and then in 2000, the ROCK won a regional title and played in a state semi-final game.

Last year they took it one step further by winning the state semi-final game and this year they would like to take it even further, in winning a state championship.

Larkey just shakes his head when asked about his chances, but he is confident that the ROCK will do well. Just how well remains to be seen, but he and his coach-

ing staff and this year's team have a better understanding of what it takes to win that elusive state title.

And anyone who knows coach Saylor, knows he won't say much, he just works and works and keeps on working.

This year's team has some big spots to fill, thanks to graduation and some of those spots will be filled with young inexperienced players.

The ROCK defense, which was one of the best in the state last year, lost six starters and with injuries at camp this season, Saylor has his work cut out for him.

Replacing maybe as many eight people on defense is no easy task, but as the season goes on, at least two starters from last year will be back.

Junior lineman Jason Leger, who has received a lot of attention for his size, strength and overall good play has a broken foot.

He has started for the ROCK since he was a freshman and will likely miss the first five games.

Doctors have said that he will be ready by district play, but he is being sorely missed by the coaching staff and teammates.

"Jason is a very good

player and he is a motivator, who our other kids look to," Larkey said.

Linebacker and tightend, senior Stephen Boreing is also on the injured list after hurting his knee at camp, but he will be back in the lineup much sooner than Leger.

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Good Luck Rockets!



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