

Otters striving for balanced attack

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Otter Valley's Brady Diaz (4) pulls in a pass en route to a touchdown during Otter Valley's home game with Middlebury this past fall in Brandon.

File photo by Jon Olender

BRANDON — Otter Valley has a history of throwing the ball back in the days of Corey Robinson, a Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl quarterback who could fling the ball.

They have also had the years of hard-charging running backs.

Coach Kipp Denis is striving for balance. A 50-50 ratio of pass/run would suit him just fine.

He's got the guys who can chuck it. There is still a position battle at quarterback between Luca Polli and Caleb Whitney.

Polli will be handed the keys to the offense for the first game at Missisquoi.

They also have the personnel who can catch it. Derek Raymond displayed a great pair of hands during last season's 7-on-7 campaign.

Those hands come on a 6-foot-1 frame that should make Raymond an inviting target for Whitney or Polli.

Another is senior Brady Diaz who will be used both as a running back and receiver.

“He is a playmaker,” Denis said.

Tucker Babcock is another receiver.

The run game is in capable hands with junior Keevon Parks and Diaz,

“Keevon is fast, he can cut and he can do some stuff,” Denis said.

Parks went down with an injury in the Oxbow game last season and did not return. His presence gives the Otters a huge lift.

Wyatt Fitzgerald figures to have a big season on the line. He went to St. Johnsbury coach Rich Alercio's O-Line Camp this summer and turned some heads there.

“Wyatt showed his commitment and dedication to developing his skills as an offensive lineman by making the trek to St. Johnsbury to work with us,” Alercio said. “He is a hard worker who plays with great energy, effort and enthusiasm.”

“He also made an impression at the Rutland camp this summer. They liked him there,” Denis said.

Fitzgerald will be at one of the tackles and the remainder of the line seems to be set with Luciano Falco at center, John Coleman and Tanner Brutkowski at the guards and Collin Blier at the other tackle.

Isaac Whitney, Caleb's younger brother, will contribute somewhere on the field.

“He is not your average freshman,” Denis said.

Noel Pearsons should see time as a safety.

Brennan and Brighton McKeighan are twins from Proctor. The sophomores played football all the way up through in the Brandon Recreation League.

Rounding out the roster are Derek Li, Cody Mulcahy, Quincy Boone, Robert Hutchins, Mark Jackson, Tucker Maranville, Kyle Pockett, Ryan Snow, James Capen, Brayden Chandler, Gavin Disorda, Noah Drew, Carter Giles, Cody and Dylan Anderson, Isaac Derepentigny, Devin Pitts, Jasper Steckler, Richard Lafontaine and Morgan Landesman.

The Otters will make the long trip to Swanton to take on Missisquoi in the season opener on Sept. 4.

Polli will be the QB. He distinguished himself as a heady quarterback with a penchant for making the touch pass during last fall's 7-on-7 season.

He has also grown several inches since that freshman season.

The home opener will be the following week against Poultney.

All of OV's games are Saturday contests with a 1 p.m. kickoff except for the regular season finale at Springfield under the Friday night lights of Brown Field on Oct. 22.