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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**LED BY ZUBEY, ST. MARY'S SEEKS RETURN TO FOOTBALL PROMINENCE**

PHOENIX, AZ (July 31, 2009) – Eddy Zubey can feel it in his bones. He's not sure when it will happen, but he knows it will happen.

The second-year football coach at Phoenix St. Mary's is seeking to return the program to its former prominence on the Arizona scene. St. Mary's is not necessarily doing it with big steps, but smaller ones that people might not notice at first glance.

Zubey took over the program from the legendary Pat Farrell in April of 2008, leaving Mesa Westwood. There wasn't much time to get the players ready for spring ball and make the transition to the fall. St. Mary's finished 3-7, but Zubey felt the program made strides.

Now the players have had more than a year to get used to Zubey and his staff.

The team has had a consistent weight-training and conditioning regimen, including passing leagues and a recent camp at Heber in central Arizona. The team begins official practice on Aug. 3, along with many other schools around the state.

"Everything is good. Everyone is working hard. We have shown great improvement," said Zubey, a former graduate assistant at Arizona State and a member of the De La Salle High team from Concord, Calif., that won every game in each of the four years he played.

Zubey said he expects to have 46 varsity players this season, an increase of about 10 from a year ago.

"That is a good sign," he said.

"We are doing it through hard work, consistency and commitment.

"Someone once told me that some of the most important aspects to keeping your program going are getting the kids who are coming out for the team to stay out and having the players who came out as freshmen stay with the program and not transfer somewhere else. We feel we are reaching that stage.

"It is a team concept. We try to do everything together."

The team concept includes the relationships between the players and coaches.

"They are buying into what the coaches are trying to do, what we are trying to teach them. They realize that it is not an "us vs. them" situation," Zubey said.

The five days spent at the camp in Heber also were good in terms of team bonding.

Zubey said there were four practices a day. Players received a 5 a.m. wake-up call and had to have lights out by 10:15 p.m.

“It required a lot of mental toughness,” Zubey said. “There were a few guys who wanted to quit, but we wouldn’t let them. In the end, I think they came to see that it wasn’t as bad as they thought it might be.”

He is expecting significant contributions from senior tight end-defensive end Josh Fulton, senior tailback-cornerback R.J. McGill and senior wide receiver-defensive back Tregg Waters.

Fulton has given an oral commitment to ASU and had 10 sacks last season. McGill accounted for nearly 1,000 yards combined on rushing attempts and pass receptions.

St. Mary’s has a tough schedule. It includes the season opener on TV against defending Class 5A Division I champion Chandler Hamilton on the road, as well as games against Catholic rival Phoenix Brophy Prep, Scottsdale Desert Mountain and Scottsdale Chaparral.

St. Mary’s faced Hamilton in passing league a few times and came up short, but Zubey said his green-and-white-clad Knights will not back down.

“We’re excited about it. It’s on TV and if you can’t get motivated to play Hamilton . . . it’s a definite motivating factor. It’s David vs. Goliath, but hey, you never know what can happen. We are excited,” Zubey said.

So, too, is the team’s long-time legion of fans.

The people have made Zubey feel right at home.

“We had our home field (Phoenix College) filled almost every game and we’re looking for that again,” he said.

“The people in the community have made me feel like family. It has been like that from Day 1, welcoming me with open arms. It reminds me a lot of De La Salle. Everyone is starting to get that feeling (of success) again.”

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