**Shidler Calls It Quits on Football Team**

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SHIDLER — The year 2008 marks the end of an era at Shidler High School.

For the first time in more than 60 years, Shidler will not field a football team. The decision for the Tigers not to compete on the gridiron was approved recently by the Shidler Board of Education, according to Tiger athletic director Matt Holland.

At the same time, efforts were begun to enter an agreement with Woodland High School in Fairfax for Shidler's football players to be a part of the Woodland team.

And that effort came to fruition this week when the Woodland Board of Education gave its approval to forming a football co-op.

All that remains to be done is for the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association (OSSAA) to agree to the proposal.

Several contributing factors led to Shidler's closing its football program. One was that Tiger coach Dustry Yauk resigned a month ago to accept a position on the Beaver coaching staff. At the time Holland indicated that the school administration was looking into possible solutions.

Another factor was declining numbers of football players. Yauk's teams started with approximately 12 players on the roster in each of the past two years. Injuries helped lower that number to where being able to find eight healthy bodies to put on the field became a weekly concern.

By entering into a co-op agreement with Woodland, the Tigers join one of the state's top Class A programs in recent years. The Woodland Cougars participated in the Class A state championship game last season, losing to defending champion Okeene.

Holland estimated that five or six players from Shidler are interested in reporting for duty at Woodland. The opening day of fall practice will be Aug. 12.

Woodland coach and athletic director Joe Turner said he welcomes the addition of Shidler players to the Cougar roster.

"I welcome them to come down here to play," Turner said. "They all will get a fair shot at playing for us."

Turner added that the cooperative agreement between the two schools for football "is a good fit for everyone."

One concern was that the combined enrollment of the two schools would bump Woodland to a higher classification. The recently released OSSAA average daily membership for Woodland was 158 and Shidler's was 69. Together the co-op would have an ADM of 227, which would still be lower than the numbers for Pawnee and Tonkawa, both Class A schools.

Turner said the co-op would also apply to middle school students.

"That's a good thing, because that will give the younger kids (in Shidler) an opportunity to learn our system. It will be quite an adjustment for the older kids, making the change from their system to ours and from eight-man to 11-man at the same time."

Shidler's program was initiated in the early 1940s according to a Shidler High School alumni Web site. The Web site indicates that a death occurred on the field and the sport was dropped until 1946.

The coaches with the longest terms at the Tiger helm were Holland, who served from 1989-1999 and Bob Cotham, who was head coach from 1970-1980.

Again according to the Web site, some of the more memorable teams and their records were 1974 (9-1), 1982 (9-2), 1983 (9-2), 1984 (8-2), 1989 (9-2), 1992 (82), and 2003 (8-4). The 2003 team reached the quarterfinals of the Class C playoffs.

Shidler was assigned to District C-3 for the 2008 and 2009 seasons. The Tigers' absence will leave the district with eight teams — Deer Creek-Lamont, Covington-Douglas, Coyle, Kremlin-Hillsdale, Medford, Wesleyan Christian of Bartlesville, Seiling and Timberlake. Those teams will have to have open dates to fill where Shidler had appeared on their schedules.

Shidler had a 1-9 record in each of the past two seasons.

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