

By EARL WATT

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Cliff Abbott is off to his best start at the helm of the Redskin program with a 2-0 record, but he isn't ready to say that the glory days are back for the Redskins.

From 1991 to 1997 the Redskins played in seven straight Class 5A championship games and qualified for the playoffs 18 out of 20 seasons.

Abbott has yet to coach a playoff game, and two weeks into the season it is too early to look ahead eight weeks.

But where are the Redskins in trying to get back to that level of play?

"It is hard to tell," Abbott said after the 56-0 blowout over Guymon. "I am excited for our kids. They competed. There were a lot of distractions — weather, deaths — a lot of distractions and they pushed through and stayed the course."

The death involved a sudden illness that claimed the life of former Redskin Robbie Cano. He was 16 when he dies last week, and many of the Redskin players were friends with Cano.

To honor Cano, the Redskins wore a sticker with Cano's No. 55 on it.

The weather had also changed from 90-plus degrees for 21 straight days of dry sunshine to the 60s, cloudy and rainy.

But the Redskins did their jobs on the field, and while the product is improved, Abbott is not ready to say his team played at the optimum level after Week 2.

"We haven't hit our top yet," he said. "We made quite few mistakes with penalties and alignments. It is on us. We will have a good week of preparation to correct those."

The shock and awe offense led to a quick lead and a blowout by halftime. That allowed Abbott to play a number of reserves for most of the second half.

"We played a lot of people tonight," Abbott said. "We played some freshmen. It was a good night for the Redskins."

Quarterback Britton Abbott and receiver Trenton Hammond helped build the quick lead with three first-half touchdown passes and catches.

"Trenton and Britton have been together a long time," Abbott said. "They can look at each other now, and nod, and they know, here it comes. If that is a blue call or a check, their chemistry is really strong for their senior year."

A pounding running attack from Rex Heronemus also helped build the large lead and provide second half playing time for the back-ups.

"We had Jared (Hasik) last week," Abbott said. "He is a different type of back. He likes to slice and dice and use his vision. Rex is a muscle back. He stuck it up in there. He was able to compete. He earned his money tonight. They didn't back off him."

Hasik was out with a broken collar bone, but Abbott said the varying running styles will cause defenses a problem.

"It's good to see that change-up ball at running back," he said.

For the defense to hold Guymon scoreless, despite short-field opportunities due to the onsides, was a testament to how well they played.

"I was proud of the defense," Abbott said. "With our type of play, they will be in tough situations — field position — they wouldn't want it any other way. They knew that going in."

Abbott will look to move to 3-0 in the Western Athletic Conference opener with Hays.

"The WAC is very unpredictable," he said. "It changes from week to week. We are not where we used to be, but we are not where we want to be."