

TORNADO WARNING

New Lubbock-area adult developmental football team prepares to hit the ground running

 DALILA **KETTREY**

 **ASHLEY WIRZ**

While football season is in full swing all around Lubbock, the Texas Tornados are in their off season and are putting that time to work. The Tornados, established two years ago by owners Matt Hawkins & Ben Rojas and CEO and general manager Durand Williams, practice every Saturday and Sunday.

Crossroads Amateur Football League sponsors the team. The league is based out of the city of Victoria and has 31 teams with six divisions throughout Texas. The league has its own BCS rankings, follows NCAA rules, and has a playoff system ending with a

NOT JUST A DAY IN THE PARK
Tornado players complete drills as a part of a recent workout. In addition to putting a solid product on the field, Tornados founder Durand Williams has worked hard to ensure his team is also an asset to the Lubbock community, too.



S
MONTHLY

“This is not a bunch of guys that came off the couch. They are all in shape. They work.”

-Texas Tornados CEO & GM
Durand Williams

championship in June. The Tornados are in the West Texas division and play against teams from this region such as Amarillo, Odessa, Midland, and El Paso.

Williams has a background in arena and NFL football and wanted to put this team together for the guys who may have been overlooked, could not get a scholarship for college, or may be coming back from NFL try-outs.

Williams said there is so much talent here in the Lubbock area, but most people go outside of the city to find recruits.

“This is not a bunch of guys that came off the couch. They are all in shape. They work,” Williams said.

Assistant coach Roy Rodriguez said the talent of 20 and 30 year olds on the team is incredible considering they didn’t play in college.

Second Chance

To not give people the wrong impression, Williams said he likes to refer to this program not as semi-pro ball, but rather adult developmental football and sees this team as a second-chance team.

“We’re trying to push these guys up to another level, keep them going,” Williams said. “We don’t want to be looked at as a bunch of guys playing football for no reason. Everyone has a purpose for why they’re out there

“Everyone needs a second chance to do what they love in life.”

Williams was also able find coaches

with distinguished backgrounds. Head Coach Rodney Sims was a part of *Friday Night Lights* as a player for Midland Lee in the ’80s. Assistant Coach Roy Rodriguez coached at Texas Tech under Mike Leach from 2004 to 2005.

Corey White, who plays quarterback and cornerback, attended Eastern New Mexico University. He also played arena football, had a few NFL try outs, and later decided to move back to Lubbock after the door closed on those opportunities.

“I thought [the team] was a good idea because it was something for Lubbock and the athletes that didn’t get to go on to the next level,” White said.

Receiver and running back, Rodney Moore said he’s enjoying this new experience. He has made new friends and likes that this opportunity can lead to other things.

Community Focus

Although the team members may be pursuing career benefits from the organization, Williams said they are very much about giving back to the community and being role models to kids. He said they want to be able to show that there is positivity after high school and college, and that just because you did not get picked does not mean you cannot go further.

“They have to be involved in some kind of community activity,” Williams said.

DON'T LET INJURIES ON THE **SIDELINES!**
KEEP YOU



Dedicated to providing the finest in Orthopedic Sports Medicine, **The Sports Zone** is the fastest growing Sports Medicine Practice in the region! Established by Dr. Jason Ramsey who brings experience working with NFL, NCAA, high school, and little league athletes, **The Sports Zone** is committed to treating **every** athlete like a franchise player!

**THE CENTER FOR ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY
AT NORTHSTAR PROFESSIONAL CENTER**

The Sports Zone named orthopedic physicians:

Mark W. Scott | J. Nathan Wilson | Robert V. Carr | T. Bryan Smitheman
Kenneth A. Stephenson | Jeff D. Heatrick | Jason A. Ramsey



Dr. Jason Ramsey

4642 North Loop 289 Suite 101 | Lubbock, TX | 79416 | greatbones.com | phone 806.797.4985 | fax 806.792.8588



MAN WITH THE PLAN

Rodney Sims will serve as the Tornado Head Coach and Offensive Coordinator. Sims also serves as the Estacado Matador Offensive Coordinator in the fall months

TOSIROOFING

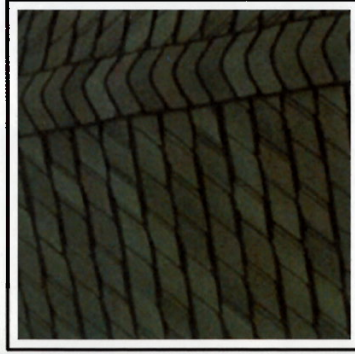
LUBBOCK, TEXAS

Re-Roofs, Repairs, Flat Roofs
(Leak, Wind Damage, Etc.)

All Shingle Types

FREE CONSULTATION

www.tosiroofing.com



Kevin Tosi

(806) 548-0551

insurance claims welcome, references provided



The team raised about \$5,000 with 104.9 The Beat and ClearTalk for a diabetes fund raiser.

They are also trying to get a program started with Lubbock Independent School District called "Tiny Tornados," where players can meet with kindergarten through fifth graders and do things such as tell stories and attend PE classes.

The Boys and Girls Club is another organization dear to their hearts. Williams said they have decided to allow all kids from the club attend the games for free.

The Tornados are also working with LISD to use a facility to play a game in December called "Stuff the Stadium" where people can bring toys for kids who may not have them.

"This team is all about giving back," Williams said.

The Team

As dedicated as Williams and the team are to doing their part in the community, it is just as so when it comes to producing a great football team.

"It wasn't one of those things where you come out here and make this team. No, we had tryouts," Williams said.

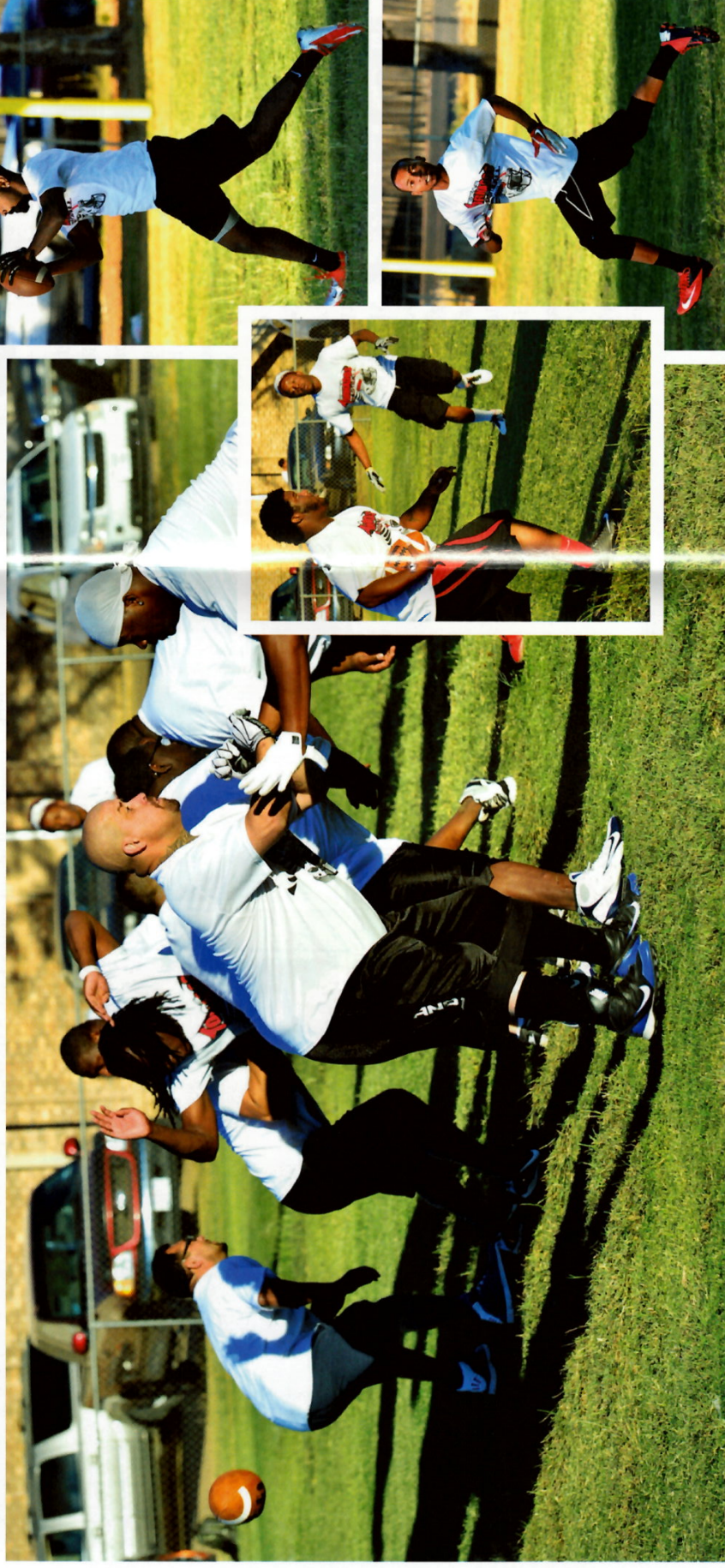
When looking for players to be a part of the team, Williams sought out guys who had a high school diploma, at least one year of high school varsity, college, or NFL experience. He said players had to be willing to help out wherever they are needed and work with youth around the city.

Williams also turned to local area high school coaches to help point him in the direction of qualified players. He wanted this to be another way for these guys to showcase their skills.

These dedicated players are looking for their second chance, Williams said. They don't get paid and are risking themselves for the love of the game and to get themselves somewhere.

“I just want Lubbock to understand that these guys are going to give them the best, best games possible.”

-Texas Tornados CEO
& GM Durand Williams



“I just want Lubbock to understand that these guys are going to give them the best, best games possible, you know everyone is screaming year-round football and our season starts the first week of February until June,” Williams said.

While putting in time and effort for themselves, they also do it for the kids, Williams said.

Receiver and running back, Rodney Moore described the team as a brotherhood and said it is something good for the kids to come out and watch, as well as something for guys to do and stay out of trouble.

Head Coach Rodney Sims said the team looks for good character guys who are trying to do the right thing, therefore leaving no room for error.

“Our biggest support staff, I think start with those kids so it almost puts that pressure on the players to do right,” Sims said.

Sims’ faith in the team is exhibited through his goals of accomplishment. He said he does not want this year to be a one-hit type thing. He wants to set a new platform for what semi-pro football should be.



“We want to be affiliated with every kid, every household, hopefully. A local brand where people will want to go out and buy jerseys and just be associated with the team.”

-Texas Tornados Head Coach
Rodney Sims

“We’re gonna try to change that with hospitality and community service,” Rodriguez said.

Assistant Coach Roy Rodriguez said the team is going to do Lubbock right. He also wants guys to be able to play the game if the athletic ability is still there.

“It’s a passion that stays with you forever,” Rodriguez said. ■

Dalila Kettrey is a contributing writer for Sports Lubbock Monthly. She may be reached at admin@sportslubbock.com.

“We want to be affiliated with every kid, every household, hopefully. A local brand where people will want to go out and buy jerseys and just be associated with the team,” Sims said.

While the team is trying to make a name for itself, they are still experiencing some challenges.

Coach Rodriguez expressed his agitation about not being able to find a field to use in the city but understands that some semi pro teams from the past have done some questionable things, so people have their guard up.

HI PLAINS Building Division

Commercial Steel Building Design, Build, Sales



- Agricultural
- Auto & Truck
- Clear Span
- Cold Storage
- Community
- Concrete
- Correctional / Jail
- Educational
- Schools
- Bus Garages
- Gymsnasiums
- Energy / Fuel Related
- Fire Stations
- Funeral Home Services
- Gas / Convenience
- Hangars
- Hardwall Masonry
- Logistic/Transportation
- Long Span Steel Bldg's
- Equipment Facilities
- Maintenance



Quick Kits
30x40x12
40x60x12
30x50x12
60x80x14
Many Sizes Available!

(806) 763-9915

Contractor Discounts Available Turn Key Quotes Available



- Manufacturing Facilities
- Medical Related
- Office Space
- Recreational
- Activity Centers
- Aquatic
- ATV/Motorcycles/Utility
- Equestrian/Riding Arena
- Golf Courses
- Large Sports
- Marine / Boat / Yacht
- Motor Homes / RVs
- Recycling Facilities
- Religious / Churches
- Restaurant / Catering
- Single Slope
- Specialty Retail
- Storage
- Strip Malls
- Veterinary / Animal Care
- Warehouse / Distribution



ST. CLAIR & MASSEY ORTHODONTICS

— *your smile is our signature* —

5203 79th Street, Suite H | Lubbock, TX | 79424 | 806.799.6780

www.smilesbystclair.com