

Sweetwater Coach Ben McGehee – A Man of Courage and Foresight

247sports.com/high-school/texas/Article/Sweetwater-Coach-Ben-McGehee-A-Man-of-Courage-and-Foresight-120941558/

By Lew Patton Aug 22, 2018



(Photo: Big Country Preps, 247Sports)

Sweetwater's Coach Ben McGehee begins his second season as the Head Coach and Athletic Director at Sweetwater High School coming from Temple High School. As is many times the case in high school football, a team will usually have an up and down kind of season based on how many seniors graduate and then the next year, training freshman and sophomores to take up the slack. Back in 2016, both Sweetwater and Temple were coming of state championship games and both teams were defeated in the state finals.

McGhee was fresh off a state title appearance with Temple, where the Wildcats made a great run through a gauntlet no one expected them to make it out of. That run included what many believe is the upset of the year when they took down undefeated and odds on title favorite Manvel. Temple's appearance at the title games was preceded by Shane Mobley's Sweetwater, who also fell in the finals by a score of 24-6 to a juggernaut team from West Orange-Stark. Mobley left Sweetwater for Sealy in January of 2017.

The 2017 Mustang team still had many pieces of that 2016 finals team. Sweetwater's outgoing group featured a trio of program-changing talents in quarterback Chris

Thompson (8,404 yards, 97 TDs passing; 2,506 yards, 47 TDs rushing), linebacker Kiante McCoy (380 career tackles) and receiver/cornerback Kobe Clark (3,135 yards, 68 TDs receiving; 149 tackles, 9 interceptions). That is a lot of talent to lose to graduation.

So where does the courage and foresight come in? If you are a high school coach, you have to know and believe that there will be some slim times talent wise, but that will grow in to good times given patience and coaching. The same should be said about fans. Just believe in your coach, and one day, he will have a great team in the district. Coach McGehee has the confidence and foresight to know times may be challenging this year, but he took on the job with the confidence that there would be times like these.

"Anytime you lose a big group like that, you know you're going to take a little bit of a step backwards," McGehee said. "We're just trying to figure out how do we take those steps back forward and try to find the strengths our young guys have and try to play to those strengths. Our mentality is we're just going to try what we can be successful at and try to get really good at that. We may not be as diverse as we were last year. We may be a little bit more of a tougher defense and a run-first type, clock-management team, whereas last year we ran a really, really fast tempo and pace. So we may change the identity of our team a little bit, but we'll just try to play to our young guys' strengths." (Youngblood 2018)

Dave Campbell's Texas Football has Sweetwater picked to come in 2nd in 2018 in District 1-4A DII behind Midland Greenwood. Abilene Wyle has moved up in to Class 5 A but arch rival Snyder is back in the district again with a lot of talent. Coach McGehee has confidence in his players and can see improvement in some leaders already. Maybe Sweetwater is in a rebuilding year, just don't tell Coach McGehee or his players that.

Reference:

Daniel Youngblood, *Reload or Rebuild? Sweetwater Faces Question in 2018*, Big Country Preps <https://bigcountrypreps.com/2018/08/17/sweetwater-feature/>

">247Sports