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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **MESA HIGH FOOTBALL TEAM LEARNS TO SURVIVE IN TOUGH REGION**

PHOENIX, AZ (Oct. 13, 2009) – From the moment that Mesa High football players do their traditional Polynesian chant and dance before games to the final seconds ticking off the clock, it is all about togetherness.

That is what coach Kelley Moore is instilling in his team as it fights its way through what might be the toughest football conference in the state, the Class 5A Fiesta.

When asked about the Jackrabbits' secret for success, Moore's answer was simple.

"We just play team ball," he said.

This is Moore's third year after taking over from departed former coach Dennis Parker, and Moore said, "this is my group now and they're getting a good idea about what we want from them and they are making that commitment."

After seven weeks of the regular season, Mesa had a 5-2 overall record and was 1-2 in region play. In those two losses, the Jackrabbits played region rivals Chandler and Mesa Red Mountain tough before falling by a touchdown.

Mesa rebounded with a 19-0 region win over Phoenix Desert Vista on Oct. 9, highlighted by what Moore called his best defensive effort of the season.

"Our co-coordinators (defense), Kenny Wantland and John Shea, have done a great job," Moore said.

The team's goal is to be one of the top eight teams in terms of power points that are used to seed teams for the playoffs, and that would mean at least one home game.

After seven weeks, Mesa was tied with another surprising team, Phoenix Mountain Pointe, for second in power points behind defending state champion and region rival Chandler Hamilton.

"We're just trying to get in," Moore said.

His players' togetherness surfaces in practice and film study, and their closeness off the field.

They are well aware of the school's football tradition, which has helped produce numerous state champions, including the most recent in 1992 and 1990.

It is about dedication, even to the point of playing through the pain nagging injuries such as the one that senior running back Ely Lozano has on his left foot.

He had a pair of interceptions and several key runs in the win over Desert Vista.

Of his interceptions, he said, "I called them (plays) out. We knew what they were going to do. If you study (video) like you're supposed to, it can help make a difference."

Lozano enjoys playing both offense and defense.

“It doesn’t matter, just so long as I can help the team,” he said. “That’s what everyone on this team does. They’re willing to help each other out.”

The schedule doesn’t get any easier in the final three weeks of the regular season.

Mesa plays region games against the two teams in last year’s 5A championship game, Phoenix Brophy Prep (Oct. 16 on the road) and Hamilton (Nov. 6 at home), sandwiched around a non-region road game on Oct. 23 against a vastly improved Phoenix Maryvale team.

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