

2026 Gilmer Buckeyes Football • Game Information & Notes

Gilmer Buckeyes (5-2) at Center Roughriders (0-7)

Friday, Oct. 23, 2026 • Roughrider Stadium • Center, Texas • 7:00 p.m.

Team Information

GILMER BUCKEYES	CENTER ROUGHRIDERS
Class 4A Division II • District 8-4A DII	Class 4A Division II • District 8-4A DII
Enrollment: 879	Enrollment: 681
2026: Season Record 5-2 • District 1-1	2026: Season Record 0-7 • District 0-2
2025: 4-7 overall • Lost in Bi-District	2025: 5-6 overall • Lost in Bi-District
Head Coach: Alan Metzel • 7th season	Head Coach: Jack Alvarez • 1st season
At School & Career: 69-21	At Center: 0-7 • Career: 205-111
Offensive Formation: Spread	Offensive Formation: Multiple
Defensive Formation: 3-4	Defensive Formation: 3-4

Game Site — Roughrider Stadium

- Roughrider Stadium, 658 Roughrider Drive in Center, is owned by Center ISD. The stadium was originally built in the late 1940s, and newspaper accounts refer to it by name as early as 1956.
- The stadium seats 3,988 and has an artificial playing surface and a running track. A 2011 renovation added a new field, a new track, new visitors' bleachers and additional home-side seating.
- Gilmer is 2-0 at Roughrider Stadium: 63-6 on Sept. 28, 2007, and 56-17 on Sept. 8, 2017.
- Gilmer is 3-1 all-time in games played at Center. Center's lone series victory, 27-13 on Oct. 24, 1952, came at home; Gilmer won 27-0 at Center on Oct. 22, 1954.
- Friday is Gilmer's first trip to Center since 2017 and its first district game ever against the Roughriders.

2026 Results to Date

Gilmer: 5-2 (1-1) (* District 8-4A Division II game)

Date	Opponent	Result
Aug. 27	at Longview Pine Tree	L, 40-52
Sept. 4	at Tyler Chapel Hill	W, 54-31
Sept. 11	Kilgore	W, 64-50
Sept. 18	at Sulphur Springs	W, 48-38
Sept. 25	Sunnyvale	W, 49-28
Oct. 9	Pleasant Grove*	W, 33-27
Oct. 16	Pittsburg*	L, 56-58

Center: 0-7 (0-2)

Date	Opponent	Result
Aug. 28	Van	L, 19-46
Sept. 4	San Antonio Cornerstone	L, 14-51
Sept. 11	at Nacogdoches	L, 14-19
Sept. 18	at Malakoff	L, 3-54
Sept. 25	at Jasper	L, 16-21
Oct. 9	Longview Spring Hill*	L, 21-28
Oct. 16	at Texarkana Pleasant Grove*	L, 7-42

Main Storylines

- Gilmer (5-2, 1-1) looks to rebound from a 58-56 loss to Pittsburg that ended its five-game winning streak. The Buckeyes took a 56-55 lead with 1:15 remaining before Pittsburg drove 37 yards for a field goal with no time remaining. Center (0-7, 0-2) is seeking its first victory under first-year head coach Jack Alvarez.
- The District 8-4A Division II playoff race is tightly bunched. Carthage leads at 2-0; Gilmer, Pleasant Grove, Pittsburg and Longview Spring Hill are 1-1; Center is 0-2. Gilmer closes the regular season against Carthage at home and at Spring Hill.
- Gilmer is No. 4 in the MaxPreps.com Division 4A-II rankings updated Oct. 18, behind No. 1 Carthage; Pittsburg is No. 16 and Pleasant Grove No. 14. PigskinPrep.com rates Gilmer No. 12 and Center No. 58 and projects Gilmer to win by 32 points. District 8 has two teams in this week's

Dave Campbell's Texas Football Class 4A Division II Top 10: No. 1 Carthage and No. 9 Pleasant Grove.

- Friday is the first district meeting between the schools. Gilmer leads the all-time series 12-1, has won 11 consecutive meetings and is 5-0 against Center in the playoffs, including bi-district wins in 2023 and 2024.
- Gilmer's Tayveon Horne (926 rushing yards) and Zade Taylor (920) are each closing in on 1,000 rushing yards. Horne needs 74 yards and Taylor needs 80.
- Alvarez, who coached Ennis to the 2014 Class 5A Division II state championship, brings 205 career victories to Center. PigskinPrep.com rates Center's schedule the toughest in the state; its seven opponents are a combined 44-27.

Center Players to Watch

- **#8 Joseph Mitchell** — Jr., QB/DB, 6-2, 170. Center's starting quarterback. Through seven games: 19-of-47 passing for 225 yards, two TD and two INT; 35 rushes for 151 yards and two TD; five receptions for 82 yards and a TD. Team-high four interceptions on defense.
- **#7 JK Barnes** — WR/OLB, 6-3, 186, Class of 2027. Center's leading rusher at 49.8 yards per game. Listed by Center as its top 2027 college prospect, with a reported 4.67 40-yard dash.
- **#1 Zy'Kevius Villegas** — Sr., S, 6-0, 170. 44.8 rushing yards per game and two rushing TD, plus an interception. Had 53 tackles in 2025.
- **#0 Christyce Barnes** — Jr., WR/CB, 5-9, 160. Center's leading receiver at 31.8 yards per game, with a TD catch; also averages 5.8 tackles per game.
- **#23 Anthony Torres** — Jr., TE/MLB. Leads Center at 8.4 tackles per game; 1.5 sacks and a forced fumble.
- **#54 Jace Radney** — Sr., DE, 6-0, 215. Team-high three sacks and nine quarterback hurries, plus a fumble recovery.

Gilmer Players to Watch

- **#2 Zade Taylor** — Sr., QB, 5-6, 170. Through seven games: 54-of-86 passing for 759 yards, seven TD and seven INT; 88 rushes for 920 yards (10.5 per carry) and 13 TD. Has 1,679 yards of total offense and accounted for 20 TD. Recruiting: holds five scholarship offers from smaller programs.
- **#6 Tayveon Horne** — Jr., RB/OLB, 6-0, 185. Through seven games: team-high 139 carries for 926 yards (6.7 per carry) and 15 rushing TD; seven catches for 52 yards; six kickoff returns for 165 yards and a TD. Leads Gilmer with 1,143 all-purpose yards and 16 total TD. Recruiting: offers from Texas Tech, Houston, UTEP and UTSA, plus others.
- **#5 Kipton Neighbors** — Jr., WR/S, 6-2, 195. Through seven games: 19 receptions for 311 yards and two TD; 35 rushes for 303 yards (8.7 per carry) and five TD; six punts for a 32.8-yard average. Ran 13 times for 113 yards and three TD against Pittsburg. Recruiting: offers from Baylor, Kentucky, Kansas State, Oklahoma State and SMU, plus others.

- **#10 Kaden Canady** — Fr., WR/S, 5-7, 150. Team-high 21 receptions for 325 yards (15.5 per catch) and five TD. Returned a kickoff 81 yards and a punt 74 yards for TDs against Pittsburg. Has 721 all-purpose yards and seven TD scored three different ways. Recruiting: already holds an offer from UTSA.
- **#1 Ismael Camara** — Sr., FB/DL, 6-7, about 343. A five-star offensive line prospect committed to Texas; chose the Longhorns over Oregon, LSU and SMU, plus others. Gilmer uses him at fullback and on the defensive line: two rushing TD, an 18-yard reception, six tackles and four QB hurries.
- **#9 Austin Blakeley** — Jr., FB/ILB, 5-10, 180. Leads Gilmer with 57 combined tackles (40 solo, 17 assists), plus three tackles for loss and a 62-yard interception-return TD.
- **#80 Aaden Borelly-Brown** — Jr., FB/DL, 6-2, 290. 33 combined tackles, team-high six tackles for loss, a nine-yard sack, three QB hurries and a forced fumble.
- **#44 Davion King** — Sr., FB/DL, 6-2, 325. 26 combined tackles and six QB hurries. Recruiting: offers from Air Force, Houston, North Texas, Stephen F. Austin, Texas State, UTEP and UTSA, plus others.
- **#54 Rashaad Buchanan** — Jr., OL/DL, 6-0, 230. A two-way lineman with 23 combined tackles, a sack and a team-high eight QB hurries. Recruiting: five scholarship offers, including Texas College and Howard Payne.
- **#34 Ryan Blume** — Jr., FB/DL, 6-0, 225. 29 combined tackles, five tackles for loss and four QB hurries.
- **#13 Keithan Johnson** — Jr., WR/CB, 6-2, 195. 18 combined tackles and a team-high seven pass breakups. Recruiting: offer from North Texas, plus others.
- **#17 Jerzyri Johnson** — Jr., WR/CB, 5-11, 160. Six kickoff returns for 296 yards (49.3 per return), including TD returns of 97 yards at Pine Tree and 95 yards against Kilgore; 21 tackles and five pass breakups.

Center Season Notes

- Center has scored 94 points (13.4 per game) and allowed 261 (37.3 per game) through seven games.
- Three of Center's losses were by seven points or fewer: 19-14 to Nacogdoches, 21-16 to Jasper and 28-21 to Longview Spring Hill.
- Center has played two teams ranked No. 1 in their classifications by PigskinPrep.com: Malakoff (8-0) in Class 3A and San Antonio Cornerstone Christian (6-2) among 11-man independent schools.
- No Center player has more than three touchdowns. Mitchell has thrown two TD passes.
- Alvarez is Center's third head coach in three years. Center returned 16 lettermen and lost 25; preseason reports listed the Roughriders as athletic at the skill positions but thin along both lines.
- Common opponent: Gilmer defeated Pleasant Grove 33-27 on Oct. 9; Center lost at Pleasant Grove 42-7 on Oct. 16.

Gilmer Season Notes

- Through seven games, Gilmer has scored 344 points (49.1 per game) and allowed 284 (40.6 per game). The Buckeyes have scored at least 33 points in every game and at least 40 in six of seven.
- Gilmer has gained 3,109 total yards (444.1 per game), including 2,350 rushing (335.7 per game, 7.65 per carry). The Buckeyes have gained at least 400 total yards in every game; their 446 rushing yards against Pittsburg were a season high. The 335.7 rushing yards per game are on pace for the second-highest season average in school history, behind the 1985 team's 348 per game. That 1985 team rushed for 4,524 yards in 13 games, the school single-season record until the 2023 state championship team ran for 4,768 yards in 16 games.
- Taylor has more rushing yards (920) than passing yards (759). He and Horne have combined for 1,846 rushing yards and 28 of Gilmer's 36 rushing TD.
- Against Pittsburg, Horne (189), Taylor (141) and Neighbors (113) each ran for more than 100 yards, the second time this season Gilmer has had three 100-yard rushers in a game.
- Gilmer has punted only six times in seven games, did not punt against Sulphur Springs or Pittsburg, and has not attempted a field goal all season. The Buckeyes are 41-of-60 on third down (68.3%) and 7-of-11 on fourth down.
- Gilmer has scored on 28 of 30 red-zone trips (93.3%) and 17 of 18 goal-to-go situations (94.4%). It has 84 explosive plays, an average of 12 per game (runs of 10+ yards or completions of 20+ yards).
- Gilmer has scored 50 touchdowns: 36 rushing, seven passing and seven on returns. The seven return TD came from five different players; opponents have one return TD.
- Gilmer has 814 yards and four touchdowns on 29 kickoff returns (28.1 per return), while its opponents have 449 yards and no touchdowns on 29 kickoff returns (15.5 per return).
- Turnovers have decided Gilmer's season. The Buckeyes committed eight turnovers and forced one in their two losses, but committed four and forced seven in their five wins. Six of Taylor's seven interceptions came in the two losses; in the five wins he is 41-of-58 (70.7%) for 622 yards with one interception.
- Gilmer's offense averages 49.6 points in its wins and 48.0 in its losses. The difference is on defense: 34.8 points allowed per win and 55.0 per loss.
- Gilmer has held four of seven opponents under 200 passing yards, and opponents are completing 51.0 percent of their passes. Sunnyvale managed 50 rushing yards on 24 carries.
- Six of Pittsburg's eight touchdowns came on drives that started in Gilmer territory.
- Gilmer has outscored opponents in the first quarter (91-69), second (104-91) and fourth (94-65) and trails only in the third (55-59).

Previous Meeting / Series History / All-Time Scores

- Gilmer leads the all-time series 12-1 and has outscored Center 500-166. Friday will be the 14th meeting and the first in district play.

- Last meeting: Gilmer 20, Center 14 in the 2024 Class 4A Division II bi-district playoffs at Tatum's Eagle Stadium.
- Gilmer has won 11 consecutive meetings since Center's 27-13 victory in 1952.
- The teams have met five times in the playoffs: 1926, 1928, 2015, 2023 and 2024. Gilmer has won all five.
- Since 2006, Gilmer has scored at least 56 points in five of seven meetings.

All 13 previous meetings

Year	Result	Game	Site
1926	Gilmer 26-6	Bi-District	Gilmer (Dec. 9)
1928	Gilmer 32-6	Bi-District	Gilmer (Dec. 7)
1952	Center 27-13	Non-district	Center (Oct. 24)
1953	Gilmer 6-0	Non-district	Gilmer – Buckeye Stadium (Oct. 23)
1954	Gilmer 27-0	Non-district	Center (Oct. 22)
1955	Gilmer 18-0	Non-district	Gilmer – Buckeye Stadium (Oct. 21)
2006	Gilmer 64-6	Non-district	Gilmer – Buckeye Stadium (Sept. 29)
2007	Gilmer 63-6	Non-district	Center – Roughrider Stadium (Sept. 28)
2015	Gilmer 36-21	Regional	Tyler – Rose Stadium (Nov. 27)
2016	Gilmer 70-21	Non-district	Gilmer – Jeff Traylor Stadium (Sept. 2)
2017	Gilmer 56-17	Non-district	Center – Roughrider Stadium (Sept. 8)
2023	Gilmer 69-42	Bi-District	Hallsville – Bobcat Stadium (Nov. 10)
2024	Gilmer 20-14	Bi-District	Tatum – Eagle Stadium (Nov. 15)

Center Historical Notes

- Center entered 2026 with a 458-567-30 all-time record and 38 playoff appearances. The Roughriders have not played in a state championship game.
- Center went 5-6 in 2025, finishing third in District 8-4A Division II at 3-2. The Roughriders lost a 50-48 bi-district game to Van on Nov. 14, 2025, at Jacksonville's Tomato Bowl.
- Alvarez's coaching career includes West Sabine (1998-99), Kirbyville (2000-10), Ennis (2011-17), Copperas Cove, Cuero and Marshall (2022-23). He took Kirbyville to the 2008 Class 2A state final, won the 2014 Class 5A Division II state championship at Ennis and reached the state semifinals with Ennis in 2013 and Cuero in 2021.
- Alvarez retired after the 2023 season at Marshall and was hired as Center's athletic director and head coach on Jan. 8, 2026.

Gilmer Historical Notes

- Gilmer began playing football in 1914 and has never had a winless season.
- Gilmer is 765-411-39 all-time entering the Center game.
- The Center game will be the 1,216th game in Gilmer football history.
- Gilmer's 765 all-time victories rank 12th in Texas high school football history.
- Gilmer's 39 district championships are tied for the 10th most in Texas high school football history, according to PigskinPrep.com.
- Gilmer's 28 seasons with 10 or more wins are tied for the 11th most in Texas high school football history, according to PigskinPrep.com.
- Gilmer has recorded 15 undefeated regular seasons, tied for the seventh most in Texas high school football history, according to PigskinPrep.com.
- The Buckeyes have won four state championships — 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2023 — and have appeared in nine state championship games.
- Gilmer's nine state championship-game appearances are the second most in Class 4A and tied for the 17th most among all classifications in Texas high school football history, according to the UIL.
- From 2003 through 2023, Gilmer either won the state championship or lost in the playoffs to the eventual state champion 14 times.
- Gilmer has reached the playoffs in 25 consecutive seasons entering 2026.
- Since 2000, Gilmer is 297-64 overall and 223-43 in regular-season games.
- Since 2000, Gilmer is 254-17 when scoring at least 30 points.
- Gilmer has lost only 20 games since 1980 when scoring at least 30 points, with the 58-56 Pittsburg game becoming the latest.

Game Notes

- PigskinPrep.com projects Gilmer to win by 32 points.
- Friday will be Gilmer's first game against a team coached by Jack Alvarez. Gilmer's 42-36 state semifinal win over Cuero in 2009 came before Alvarez coached there.
- Junior Joseph Mitchell is Center's starting quarterback.
- Center's 50-48 playoff loss to Van in 2025 came against the same Van team that beat Gilmer 48-38 in 2025.
- Gilmer's 2023 bi-district win over Center (69-42) opened its run to the 2023 Class 4A Division II state championship.

Current Streaks

- Gilmer has scored in 109 consecutive games.

- Gilmer has won 11 consecutive games against Center.
- Gilmer has rushed for at least 256 yards and gained at least 400 total yards in all seven games, and it has scored at least 33 points in every game.
- Taylor and Horne have each rushed for at least 100 yards in all seven games.
- Center has lost eight consecutive games, dating to its 2025 bi-district loss to Van.

Did You Know?

- Gilmer's first playoff victory came against Center: 26-6 in the 1926 bi-district round, played in Gilmer on Dec. 9, 1926. Gilmer beat Center again in the 1928 bi-district round.
- The highest-scoring game in the series was Gilmer's 69-42 bi-district win in 2023 (111 points). Center's 42 points that night are its most against Gilmer, and Gilmer's 510 rushing yards in that game are the second most in a game in school history.
- Gilmer's 70-21 win in 2016 is its highest score in the series.
- Gilmer's 2015 regional win over Center (36-21 at Tyler's Rose Stadium) came during a 14-1 season.
- The 114 combined points in last week's 58-56 Pittsburg game tied the Kilgore game (64-50) for the most in a Gilmer game this season and set a record for the 83-game Gilmer-Pittsburg series. The previous series high was 86 points in 2016, and Pittsburg's 58 points were its most ever against Gilmer.
- Gilmer's 56 points against Pittsburg are the second most it has scored in a loss. The most came in a 61-58 Class 3A Division II area-round loss to Canton on Nov. 18, 2005.
- The 58-56 Pittsburg game and the 64-50 Kilgore game are tied for the eighth-highest-scoring games in Gilmer history at 114 combined points. The record is 144, in Gilmer's 82-62 win over Prosper Walnut Grove in 2023.
- Jerzyri Johnson has two kickoff-return touchdowns on only six returns, and six of Gilmer's 11 longest plays this season are returns.
- Center has two brothers on its roster: senior #11 Easton Wulf, a backup quarterback and linebacker, and sophomore #10 Westin Wulf, a starting linebacker.

Next Game

- Gilmer — vs. Carthage, Friday, Oct. 30 at Jeff Traylor Stadium in District 8-4A Division II play.
- Center — vs. Pittsburg, Friday, Oct. 30 at Roughrider Stadium in District 8-4A Division II play.