

# Sports



East High School senior Bryson Torres (left) and the Eagle Empire students face off with South senior Hunter Kovac (top right) and the Colt Nation supporters.

PREP FOOTBALL

## Gunning for the BOOM

East, South clash for 58th time in storied rivalry

BY NICK JURNAY  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

This is the big one. At 7 tonight, East and South high schools face off for the 58th time in the annual Cannon Game. Both teams enter with 3-1 records, and win No. 4 would carry a lot more boom than the prior three. At stake is the "big gun" — a real, working Civil War-era cannon that was donated to the rivalry in 1976 by the Steel City Kiwanis, along with the Key Club from both schools. Currently, the cannon booms gold — East won the meeting 54-21 last year. South leads the overall series 39-17 with one tie, and the cannon series 29-11. But the last four meetings have been evenly split, and these are two immensely different teams with intensely high goals for this year. "I think the kids are excited, and I'm excited that they're excited," South coach Ryan Goddard said. "When you have a game like this, an intra-city rivalry,

CANNON GAME AT A GLANCE
<b>Who:</b> East (3-1) vs. South (3-1)
<b>What:</b> The Cannon Game
<b>When:</b> 7 tonight
<b>Where:</b> Dutch Clark Stadium
<b>Series:</b> South leads 39-17-1 (29-11 in Cannon series)
<b>Last year:</b> East 54, South 21
<b>Accepted passes:</b> CHSAA, CHSCA, S-CL, corporate partner, scoreboard sponsor, PCS/D60 pass.

all that stuff, the big gun. ... Things can get spicy." The Colts enter as the incumbent challengers with hopes of covering the cannon with a coat of black for the 18th time in 20 years. South is led by the junior running back tandem of Steven Brock and Reese Bravo, who have helped the Colts to over 1,200 yards rushing in the first four games. Brock leads the way with 64 carries for 622 yards and eight touchdowns, while Bravo has 377 yards on 59 carries with five scores. "I think our running game starts with our offensive line, first and foremost," Goddard said. "And (Brock and Bravo) are two pretty talented kids who have done a great job of prepar-

ing week in, week out. And when they get the ball, they do their thing. "We have a nice little rotation, and they've stayed fresh which has helped, too." East, meanwhile, aims to keep the cannon covered in gold. The Eagles boast a potent rushing attack of their own, led by reliable senior Bryson Torres (400 carries, 461 yards, seven touchdowns). But the Eagles and first-year head coach Andy Watts have prided themselves on defense, which has forced eight turnovers (three interceptions, five fumbles) on the year. "It's going to be exciting," Watts said. "We have to prepare like it's any other

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week, even though it is a big game and a heated rivalry. It's going to be two talented teams out there on Friday night, and I think we match up well and it will come down to whoever makes the fewest mistakes." Where the two teams are similar is at quarterback, where two first-year starters will make their Cannon Game starting debuts. South junior Zach Cozzolino (25-53, 485 yards, five touchdowns) and East sophomore Luc Andrada (43-73, 658 yards, five touchdowns) step into the spotlight in front of 15,000 manic fans for the first time. "It's going to be a large crowd, the biggest they've ever played in front of," Watts said. "These young guys have been waiting their whole lives to go do

it, and I expect them to do well. Now it's just their turn." **Keys to the cannon** **South:** The Colts will have to neutralize East's big playmakers, including Andrada, Torres and senior receiver Luke Padula (15 receptions, 226 yards). "They don't get the success they've had without having some good players," Goddard said. "We have our hands full, and it's going to come down to fundamentals." **East:** The Eagles also have a tall task in trying to stop the South stars, including Brock and Bravo as well as junior receiver Marcel Barbee (14 receptions, 298 yards, four touchdowns). As for East's offense, Watts doesn't expect to change the formula. "We're going to do what we do and take what the defense gives us," Watts said. "I wouldn't say it makes or breaks your year, but it definitely helps when you win it." njurnay@chieftain.com