

The Daily Home

PREP FOOTBALL 2016

ROSTERS

TEAM PREVIEWS

PLAYER PROFILES

SCHEDULES

**BAND &
CHEERLEADER
PHOTOS**

Alabama School for the Deaf • B.B. Comer • Childersburg

Coosa Valley Academy • Fayetteville • Lincoln • Munford • Pell City

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STAFF

Publisher - Robert Jackson

Editor - Anthony Cook

Sports Editor - Lavonte Young

Advertising Director - Pam Adamson

Distribution - Gerald Reed

Photography -

Bob Crisp, Tucker Webb & Courtesy
of Bill Miller Photographers

Art Direction - Jennifer Mashburn

Graphic Design - Fay Denton-Belcher,
Jennifer Mashburn, Geraldine Osburn

Writers - Shane Dunaway, Gary Hanner,
Lavonte Young

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6:30, Friday night.

The stands are almost full, and people are still pouring in the gate.

Another half-hour, and the place will be rocking.

There's been something in the air all day, a kind of atmosphere and excitement that exists only one day each week for only a few weeks each year.

It first erupts by mid-afternoon during the tribal rite of a pep rally. The players are in their game jerseys, the cheerleaders are dancing on the gymnasium floor and a crowd of youngsters and teenagers demonstrate their school spirit – not to mention their appreciation for a chance to get out of class – with a deafening series of shrieks and screams.

Then the countdown begins.

As kickoff nears, there's just enough time to grab a quick bite on the run, at the risk of being late for the opening festivities.

And here we are, 6:30, Friday night, sitting on the 50-yard line looking at the field, the long green carpet that's seen its share of flags and whistles, touchdowns and injuries, and celebrations and consolations. Coaches, officials, managers, trainers, statisticians and photographers are already pacing it, making their final preparations.

Finally, it's time.

Cheerleaders hoist a huge paper sign depicting their team's mascot bludgeoning, pummeling, throttling, incinerating or perpetrating other bodily harm on the opposing team's mascot. The band lays down the opening notes of the fight song, and the music slices through the spectators like a stiletto.

The fans are on their feet. The anticipation is rising. Adrenaline is pumping, and everything explodes as the home team rips through the thin paper wall and takes the field. Within five minutes, summer unofficially ends with the opening kickoff, and the stadium is witness to at least two hours of the kind of guts and glory associated only with a community football game.

High school football. You can't beat it with a stick.

On the Cover: Winterboro's Khalil Keith is a highly touted three-star prospect that is primed to have a huge senior season this fall. Keith earned second-team honors as an offensive lineman last season. The 6-foot-5, 305 pound lineman graded out at 90 percent or better in all 10 games in 2015.



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SILENT WARRIORS

NDIAA

Young Silent Warriors team focuses on building character



By SHANE DUNAWAY

With only two seniors returning in 2016, the Alabama School for the Deaf (ASD) football team has plenty of room to grow in Herminio Gonzalez's second season as head coach.

The Silent Warriors finished 3-5 last year, but Gonzalez said the youth movement has brought in players hungry for success.

"We have a very young team, but they've really impressed me this past spring," he said. "They've come to work out, and from last September all the way to the spring, they've shown a lot of motivation."

Junior quarterback Ke'Trez Holman leads ASD's shotgun double wing offense with six starters returning for the Silent Warriors, but Gonzalez said the starters the team lost -- running backs Eddie Thomas and Anthony

Scott and fullback Uriah Stallworth -- will be a challenge to replace.

"Those are very big shoes for our players to fill, but the work ethic this new team has shown is very impressive. They're very motivated, so I believe that we're going to really improve even though we're a young team. I've noticed the ability they have and the potential they've shown is amazing. They're faster this year than last year, but they're not going to be the size of an Anthony Scott. We've got a lot of freshman and sophomores. We're just going to have to build them up, and as they get older, I'm sure they'll get as big as he was in the future."

Holman also will play in ASD's 4-4 defense as part of a group returning seven starters.

"We have a very good linebacker coming back, Gabe Bridges," said Chris Moon, the team's defensive coordinator.

"He's a very good player. E.J. Wilkins, we're looking forward to having him back, and Payton Stults. They're young, but they have a wonderful future."

Gonzalez added that he is excited about one of the team's eight sophomores, Angelo Simons -- a lineman who will man the trenches on both sides of the ball.

"He's grown so much," Gonzalez said. "He was 255 pounds last year. Now, he's 299 pounds. We look forward to him being very productive on the defensive line and also at tackle. He's got great footwork."

The Silent Warriors' schedule features a mix of 11-on-11 and 8-on-8 matchups against deaf schools as well as matchups against hearing schools. Gonzalez said ASD won an 8-on-8 national championship in 2015.

"We expect it to be a tough schedule," he said. "Victory Christian is one of the

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top schools we play. We're one of the smallest teams playing football, but we do have the ability to compete with teams like that. We have four deaf schools that we play against, and that really helps our kids and keeps our kids motivated. If we didn't have those, we'd lose motivation playing against the other schools."

Gonzalez, who coached at Florida School for the Deaf prior to taking the job with ASD, said he's looking forward to Oct. 22 when the Silent Warriors play host to the Dragons.

The coach added that he's not focused so much on the expectations for the team this season as he is on building the character of his young team.

"That'll take care of the wins," Gonzalez said. "I hope we win them all, but I'm focused on the character that's on the team and the teamwork so that they become leaders. Becoming a better team is more important, but I think we'll get four or more wins."

ROSTER

No. Name

2	Miles Gonzalez	24	Corey McKinnie
3	Payton Stults	34	Jalun Worthey
4	Gabe Bridges	50	Andrew Underwood
5	Ke'Trez Holman	52	Jasper Carroson
6	Jacob Darda	54	Nicholas Moses
7	E.J. Wilkins	55	Angel Cisneros
8	Jaquan Rankins	63	Joel Farmer
9	Michael Paige	64	Matthew Gollotte
10	Alex Ledbetter	65	Quindaius Millhouse
11	Vitroni Williams	70	Matthew Garrett
18	Jacquavius McCrae	72	Zachary Beaver
20	Marc Wallace	74	Angelo Simons
22	Keith Williams	82	Noah Stanford

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Alabama School for the Deaf

HEAD COACH: Herminio Gonzalez (second year)

KEY LOSSES: Anthony Scott, Eddie Thomas, Uriah Stallworth

KEY RETURNERS: Ke'Trez Holman, Angelo Simons

BASE OFFENSE: Shotgun Double Wing

BASE DEFENSE: 4-4

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 3-5

POINTS SCORED: 192 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 255

SPOTLIGHT



KE'TREZ HOLMAN

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Cam Newton, because I look up to him. I want to play like him.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

We were playing against Louisiana School for the Deaf. I ran away from the defensive tackle and threw a long pass to Eddie Thomas for a 75-yard (touchdown). I threw about a 50- or 55-yard pass, and Eddie ran it in for the touchdown. That was my favorite moment, but in the same game on another play, I ran for about a 25- or 30-yard touchdown.

What are your post-high school plans?

I'm going to go to college at Auburn University for academics, and I hope to play basketball.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been

playing?

I was exposed (to football) at the early age of 9 or 10 by my brother and cousin. My brother played football at Bibb County High School, and he graduated in 2015.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I sit down and think about it. I listen to music with my headphones, and I get ready for the game against my rivals. While I'm listening to my music, I think about how explosive I can be and how I can move the ball forward. I also play defense, (so I think about) how to stop them and how to accomplish my personal goals.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

Basketball is my special talent. I play basketball for my hobby.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 vs. Waterloo 7 pm

Aug. 26 at Victory Christian 7 pm

Sept. 10 at Mississippi School for the Deaf 7 pm

Sept. 16 at Model School for the Deaf 7 pm

Sept. 23 vs. Jacksonville Christian 7 pm

Oct. 1 at Vina 7 pm

Oct. 15 vs. Indiana School for the Deaf 7 pm

Oct. 22 vs. Florida School for the Deaf 7 pm

Oct. 28 at Gaylesville 7 pm

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Tigers expect to do more in 2016 with smaller team



By SHANE DUNAWAY

If B.B. Comer Memorial High School's football team expects to build on its 4-6 effort in 2015 -- its first year under head coach Mike Battles -- the Tigers will do so with a very condensed roster for the 2016 season.

Battles said his team would only have 20 players heading into its Week Zero jamboree with Autaugaville.

"The pluses and the minuses of that is that everybody that comes on our field knows they're going to get to play," he said. "They're going to play, and they're going to have to play. All my guys are ironmen. They play both sides of the football.

"We don't have a second team. We have next man up. If someone goes down, you're the next man. Get on out there. That's the way we do it."

He added his team had a good summer leading into fall camp.

"We're not really into 7-on-7," Battles said. "We're more into 11-on-11. So we've been around. We've had a bunch of 11-on-11 camps. We went to a lot of places, we got in there and we got better because our practices -- with the small number we have -- we don't have much to scrimmage with. All our work has to be done individually.

"I know the number seems small, but if we had every boy in that school seventh through 12th grade at B.B. Comer, the same 20 would still be playing. That's the way it is. They're committed, and they're going to be there. We worked out, and we've worked hard this summer. I'm proud of them. They've done a good job."

When assessing his offense, Battles said his skill players have more experience than the offensive linemen.

"Last year, we only lost six seniors, but five of them were on the offensive line," Battles said. "We (also) lost Tyre

McKinney, who I think in my opinion, he might've been the best tight end in the state of Alabama. He might not have been the best at receiving, but he's probably the best blocker you're ever going to see in a high school tight end."

Quarterback Alvin Burton returns to lead the offense alongside bruising fullback Corey Strickland as well as wide receiver Houston Ford, who competed with Burton for the quarterback spot during the offseason.

"We don't want to be a throwing football team," Battles said. "We want to be a passing football team. There's a lot of difference. Just throwing the ball doesn't make you a passer. To be a passer, you have to know where you're throwing the ball.

"The more you know, the easier it is to throw the football. I think Alvin is smart enough, and he's a good enough athlete. He's done a good job getting better at that position out there,

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because we ask him to do stuff pre-snap and post-snap. He's quite capable of doing it."

On the defensive side of the ball, Battles said his defense should be improved after a rough outing in 2015.

"We're going to be better than we were last year," he said. "Last year, we gave up 300 points. It would be hard to do worse. We expect the defense to be a little bit better. We're going to dedicate ourselves to stopping the run and controlling the passing. That's what you have to do to be successful."

A season removed from narrowly missing a chance to make the Class 3A playoffs as a fourth-seed in Region 3, Battles said he realizes how tough the front end of his schedule is in 2016.

"Our biggest challenge is going to be when we have to go down to Autaugaville, I can tell you that right now," he said. "We've got to go down there, get with the program and come out of the blocks. Weaver has one of the best football teams (it has) had in a while.

"The next week, we go to Pike County, and Pike County has always been tough. After that, we've got Montevallo, and

then we've got Montgomery Academy. We could be 0-5, and we'll still have a decent football team."

He added his team can still be competitive despite its small numbers.

"Our skill level, I like it," Battles said. "What we've got to do is stay healthy. We have to, and our ninth-graders are going to have to play like seniors. That's all there is to it."

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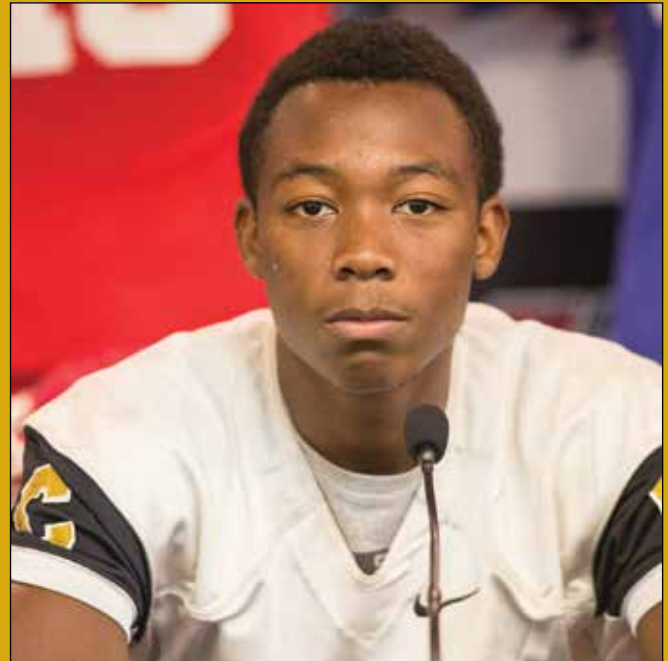
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ROSTER

No. Name

1 Houston Ford	25 Keyuntae Leonard
3 Justin Holmes	42 David Richardson
4 DeAnthony Elston	52 Jacob Dobbs
8 Alvin Burton	53 Ward Rush
9 Jason McMillian	54 Deon Gaddis
15 Julius McCain	65 Michael Cherry
17 Zack Dobbs	70 Allen Barefield
23 Lamar Johnson	73 Jacob Polk
24 Jacoby Kelley	77 Hunter Harris

SPOTLIGHT



ALVIN BURTON

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

My favorite football player is Marcus Mariota because he's that quarterback who likes to run around. Sometimes he'll be in the pocket, and sometimes he won't. But when he gets on the outside and runs, you just can't stop him.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

My greatest football moment was during the Fayetteville game (last year). I had caught an interception, and I ran it back. I could've scored, but I got tackled.

What are your post-high school plans?

I plan on going to college, you know, to get my education, because education comes first. And one day play football, professional football.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I've been playing since I was in ninth grade, and that's when I (decided) I really wanted to play the rest of my high school career.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I prepare myself by praying to God that nobody gets hurt out there on the field, and I pray to God I do what I need to do to get the job done.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

My hobbies, when I'm not doing (anything) at home, I go outside and try to get better at football, working on my footwork and my passing so I can use that on the field to get the job done.

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: B.B. Comer

HEAD COACH: Mike Battles Sr. (second year)

KEY LOSSES: Tyre McKinney, Nicholas Owings, Trevor Harris

KEY RETURNERS: Alvin Burton, Houston Ford, Corey Strickland

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple **BASE DEFENSE:** Five-man front

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 4-6 **POINTS SCORED:** 249 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 312

SCHEDULE

Aug. 26 vs. Weaver 7 pm	Sept. 30 at Southside Selma 7 pm
Sept. 2 at Pike Co. 7 pm	Oct. 7 vs. Central Coosa 7 pm
Sept. 9 vs. Montevallo 7 pm	Oct. 14 at Prattville Christian 7 pm
Sept. 16 at Montgomery Academy 7 pm	Oct. 21 vs. Beulah 7 pm
Sept. 23 vs. Talladega Co. Central 7 pm	Oct. 28 at Fayetteville 7 pm

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Childersburg TIGERS

CLASS 4A
REGION 3

Tigers to begin final season at John Cox Stadium



By LAVONTE YOUNG

Childersburg High School football team looks to put together a memorial season their last season in John Cox Stadium. Next season, the Tigers will open their new on campus stadium.

First-year head coach Jonathan Beverly is elated about the changes that are being made, and he plans to give the Childersburg community a team that they will be proud of this season.

"Everybody is excited about the new stadium," he said. "Obviously there is so much history in John Cox Stadium where we are now. We have a t-shirt with a picture of the stadium on the back saying it is our final season there. A lot of people around town are sentimental about it, but overall, people are excited about the changes that are coming. There is a lot of history that in the stadium that we are in now. The community is great, the community shows us so much support. We know that the final season there is

going to be exciting. We know the community is going to come out and support us. We have a home schedule that pretty challenging, but it also should provide some exciting atmospheres on Friday nights when we are at home."

Beverly and the Tigers enter the season with lofty goals. Last season, Childersburg went 2-8 and missed the postseason for the first time in three years. Beverly believes if his team performs up to its capability, it will have a good chance of getting back into the playoffs.

"Maximize our potential," Beverly said. "I think we have the potential to have a really competitive football team. We expect to be playing football in November. We want to be a playoff contender, and we want to be a playoff qualifier behind that. We will see what happens. There's a lot that has to happen from now until then, but I believe if we maximize our potential and do the things I think we can do, we will be playoffs the first week of November."

The Tigers are once again are in what's considered the SEC West of Class 4A. Childersburg is in a region with two-

time defending champion Leeds, Munford (who made it to the semifinals last season), Dadeville and Handley. In his few months on campus, Beverly believes his team and coaches embrace the challenges in front of them.

“From top to bottom, we have a very competitive region,” he said. “It is probably the most talented region in 4A and the best coached region in 4A. We are excited about it, our kids love to compete. Our coaches love to compete, and that is why I love getting out of the bed in the morning and coming to work. These guys are crazy competitive, and with our schedule they are going to get competition every week. There are no off weeks with our schedule, for sure.”

Junior Jalen Kidd will be under center for the Tigers. Beverly has confidence in his ability to lead the football team and make the right plays on the field.

“Jalen is a phenomenal leader,” he said. “He is a phenomenal athlete, he does a lot of things well. We are a team that’s going to look to run the football first. Everything kind of starts with him. We do have a lot of different quarterback runs for him. He makes a lot of things happen with his legs. He has progressed so much in the spring and in the summer. He can throw the football, and we’re confident that when he has to throw the football he will be able to do it. He takes command of the huddle. The other 10 guys look up to them. He looks them in the eyes and tells them where they need to be. He does a great job, and we are excited to have him under center.”

One of the positives that Kidd has going for him this season is the offensive line. Last season, the Tigers’ line struggled at times, but Beverly feels that the offensive line is going to be the strength of the team this season.

“Everybody on the team I treat like a son, but those five guys get more personal attention because I coach them each and every day,” he said. “They work hard. Cory (Dates) is one of the leaders up front for us, and he works hard each and every day. I think they are going to be a strength of our team. I think we are going to be able to get behind those five guys and really lean on them when we need to. Cory as well as Elijah Slaughter and the others are dependable, they are there every day, and they are consistent. Some of the best teams that I have ever coached, the one constant was having a good offensive line. I honestly believe that this group this year has the opportunity to be the best offensive line that I have ever coached. They have that potential.”

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SPOTLIGHT



CORY DATES

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

My favorite college player is Leonard Fournette, because of his explosiveness. My favorite NFL player is Todd Gurley. I like for the same reason, his explosiveness.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

My greatest football moment is when I first got on varsity. We had a camp, and we spent the whole night in the gym. We had summer camp for three days, and it was pretty fun.

What are your post-high school plans?

I am going to college, and I would like to work in physical training field.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I really became dedicated to football when I was in the sixth grade. With my body, I didn't have to decide, God decided for me.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I listen to music. You won't believe this, but the Sylacauga game -- which is a rivalry game -- I was listening to The Weekend. I guess it got me in my feelings, but I played really good.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I played baseball for a really long time.

ROSTER

No. Name

2 DK Mann	33 Terry Thomas
3 Syheem Young	34 Tyler Dates
4 KC Calhoun	35 Cameron Vincent
5 Jelan Kidd	36 Sean Hosey
6 Darryl Bradford	40 Dylan Hottenson
7 Daniel Morris	41 William Foy
8 Kevondre McMeans	44 Desmond Phillips
9 Noah Garrett	50 Elijah Slaughter
10 Kishawn McKinney	54 Christian Guerrero
11 Andrew Datcher	56 Raymonds Abrams
12 Austin Douglas	57 Tavian Simmons
15 Kylan Bennett	58 Courtney Gamble
16 Steven Abrams	59 Darius Borden
17 Ryan Logan	60 Keshon Reynolds
19 Keiston Twyman	61 Jimmie Garrett
20 Kiante Anderson	62 Ryan Heath
21 Marquise Duncan	64 Isaiah Stamps
22 Brady Veazey	65 Cory Dates
23 Cameron Thrash	66 Isaiah Stamps
24 J'Koby Brown	74 Yancy Turner
25 Dewayne Garrett	75 Bailey Robinson
26 Chase Cook	77 Tyler Chatman
30 Taquon Wells	78 Tray Russell
32 Keshon Wells	79 Zach Penrod

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Childersburg

HEAD COACH: Jonathan Beverly (first year)

KEY LOSSES: Tylan Coleman, Fontavious Garrett

KEY RETURNERS: Jelan Kidd, DK Mann, Cory Dates

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple **BASE DEFENSE:** Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 2-8 **POINTS SCORED:** 212 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 380

SCHEDULE

Aug. 26 vs. Pell City 7 pm

Sept. 2 at Holtville 7 pm

Sept. 9 vs. Tallassee 7 pm

Sept. 16 at Elmore Co. 7 pm

Sept. 23 vs. Sylacauga 7 pm

Sept. 30 vs. Handley 7 pm

Oct. 7 at Leeds 7 pm

Oct. 14 at Munford 7 pm

Oct. 21 vs. Dadeville 7 pm

Oct. 28 at Coosa Central 7 pm



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CVA Rebels hope to secure an early victory this season



By LAVONTE YOUNG

Steve McCord enters his second season at the helm of Coosa Valley Academy's Rebels with some optimism. Last season, the team went winless, and McCord believes it is vital for his team to end its losing streak early in the season.

"Our goal is to be a lot more competitive than we

were last year and, of course, win," McCord said. "We need to win early and build some confidence. If we do that, maybe we can build on that as the season goes on."

One of the positives that the Rebels have going for them this season is their schedule. Last season, CVA played three of the top programs in Class AAA, but McCord believes his team will be able to compete



against every team it lines up against.

“Our schedule is better because we don’t have to play Bessemer, Edgewood and Northside out of Dothan,” McCord said. “It has to be more competitive, because we weren’t competitive at all against Edgewood and Bessemer. From a competition standpoint, it should be a lot better for us.”

Staying healthy is going to be a major key for CVA, since the Rebels lack depth. McCord’s squad only has 21 players, but he said the young men work hard to improve day in and day out.

“All of our kids work really good, we don’t have any complaints with that,” McCord said. “We don’t have a lot of them. They have worked really good this summer, and they did pretty good when we went to camp. We went to a 7-on-7 camp, and they held their own. We have been pleased with them and their effort.”

One of the points of emphasis the Rebels have worked during the offseason is putting more points on the board. Last season, CVA scored a dismal 134

points in 10 games.

“We have seven starters returning on offense,” he said. “We have four offensive linemen back, a running back, two receivers back and our quarterback. If you had to pick a side of the ball as our strength, I guess it would be offense, because we didn’t do too much on defense last year. We gave up a lot of points and scored a few against some people. We have more work to do (on defense) than we do anywhere.”

Defensively, the Rebels struggled stopping teams from scoring points early and often. CVA gave up 469 points last season. McCord hopes a change at defensive coordinator and the work that his players put in the offseason will pay off.

“We have a new defensive coordinator in Coach Carter. Our guys are better because they worked in the offseason and this summer. We haven’t got a whole lot bigger, but we have put on some strength. Their attitudes have been good, and their work has been good. If we are better, it is going to be because of that not because of a specific player.”

SPOTLIGHT



JUSTIN TAYLOR

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Russell Wilson. He is short, and he beats the odds. I am short, too, so he gives you somebody to look up to. Everybody says you have to be 6'1", 6'2" or 6'3" to be a quarterback. Russell Wilson shows that you don't have to be that. You can have everything else but height to be good.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

My first start at Childersburg High School was a 40-yard pass to Tylan Coleman for a touchdown.

What are your post-high school plans?

I am just trying to get into college. I look forward to

being a nurse one day.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I just try to get everybody else to relax and get in their zone. I just sit in my locker and get mentally ready.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I find football is a hobby, it is not just something that I do. Practicing football is my hobby. I practice all the time; my brother is always helping me and taking me to the football field. We are either working on speed, agility or quickness. We are always practicing. If I am not practicing, my head is in a book.

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Coosa Valley Academy

HEAD COACH: Steve McCord (second year)

KEY LOSSES: Rance Morgan, Easton Hopkins

KEY RETURNERS: Justin Taylor, Austin Ledford, Tanner Temple

BASE OFFENSE: Spread

BASE DEFENSE: Even front

2014 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 0-10 **POINTS SCORED:** 132 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 469

SCHEDULE

Aug. 26 vs. Chamber Academy 7 pm

Sept. 2 at Lowndes Academy 7 pm

Sept. 9 vs. Macon -East Academy 7 pm

Sept. 16 vs. Lakeside 7 pm

Sept. 23 vs. Pickens Academy 7 pm

Sept. 30 at Sparta Academy 7 pm

Oct. 7 at Kingwood Christian 7 pm

Oct. 14 vs. Evangel Christian Academy 7 pm

Oct. 21 at Cornerstone Christian 7 pm

Oct. 28 at Sumter Academy 7 pm



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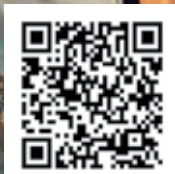
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ROSTER

No.	Name		
		21	<i>Camden Knight</i>
1	<i>Kaine Thorton</i>	32	<i>Blake Hardin</i>
2	<i>Austin Ledford</i>	50	<i>Jalyn Peters</i>
3	<i>Mason Houston</i>	52	<i>Harley Gerald</i>
5	<i>Stone Dorough</i>	56	<i>Brandon Adams</i>
7	<i>Jacob Brooke</i>	58	<i>Mac Palmour</i>
8	<i>Griffin Smith</i>	60	<i>Austin Bynum</i>
10	<i>Justin Taylor</i>	61	<i>Tanner Temple</i>
13	<i>Tripp Allen</i>	68	<i>Brody Williams</i>
15	<i>Chase Carlee</i>	72	<i>Justin Robertson</i>
18	<i>Bailey Deshazo</i>	84	<i>Christian Rose</i>



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Wolves anticipate building on a historical season



By SHANE DUNAWAY

Fayetteville High School's football team put together a historic season in 2015, winning the Class 2A Region 4 championship and winning a home playoff game – both firsts for the school – en route to a 9-3 finish.

But the Wolves lost some key pieces of their roster and must now reload and contend in Region 5.

"We've got some new guys coming in this year," said head coach John Limbaugh. "They're going to be working very hard. We've been working through the summer. They're going to be doing a lot more work. We're going to shore things up in the secondary.

"Our defense was just outstanding last year. We had a couple of shutout games, and we just played lights out

on the defensive side of the ball."

Fayetteville's top two running backs, Dustin Ingram and Darius Cook, were among the crop of seniors who've departed, but Limbaugh said he's confident in Payton McKee and Houston Goins – a pair of players coming off knee injuries who will shoulder the load for the ground game.

"Every year, you lose seniors and people will bring their hands together and talk about what we're going to do," the coach said. "We're going to be just fine. Our guys are ready, and they're looking forward to the opportunity to show what they can do.

"Both these guys are coming off some injuries, but they're healthy now and ready to go. Both of these guys are hungry, and we expect great things out of them."

One unexpected loss came prior to fall camp opening. Limbaugh said senior left tackle Luke Murphy approached him and informed him that he would not be back in 2016 so he could focus on baseball.

"He hasn't been with us for any of the summer," Limbaugh said. "I thought maybe he'd change his mind and come on back and play. Sometimes, kids make rash decisions, so I wanted to give him some more time.

"But really and truly, he's just got his heart set on playing college baseball. I'm a guy that feels like you can do both or play both. We love Luke to death. I might not agree with his decision, but I'm going to support him in his decision."

Limbaugh said he has five players competing for Murphy's spot, with

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senior Blake Morris currently pacing the pack.

The good news is fleet-footed quarterback Bailey Deloach, a senior, will be back to lead the Wolves' offense.

"I hold my breath a lot when Bailey's back there," Limbaugh said. "He's a great young player, but what I appreciate about Bailey is he's a great young man. He has fun out there on the football field. I can't wait to see what he does this year."

Deloach said he's been putting in a strong effort to improve his skills during the summer.

"I've worked on more passing and getting my accuracy (better) because my stats (as far as) completions weren't good," he said. "So I'm trying to get better (there)."

Not only have the Wolves been working hard on the field, according to Limbaugh, his team also has been participating in various community service projects.

"As a part of our approach to working our kids and getting them to be where they need to be mentally and spiritually, we believe in giving back to our community," he said. "We had our kids involved in a work program where our team did 300 hours of community service.

"That included a trip to Jimmie Hale Mission to give food to the needy and (working) at FarmLinks to help support them for all the help they give us. We cleaned up

the yards, parking lots and windows of the local businesses who support us. We just believe in giving back, and that's a part of the makeup of our players as they grow into adulthood and manhood. You don't get something for nothing, and that very jersey they wear is earned. For them to play sports is a privilege."

Fayetteville faces both Winterboro and B.B. Comer in 2016, the only two teams to defeat the Wolves in the 2015 regular season.

"I was looking at the Winterboro game, and Coach (Alan) Beckett is a fantastic individual who is doing a fantastic job," Limbaugh said. "He's got some great players, and it's unfair to them to say it was a trap game, to quote that Star Wars thing, 'It's a trap.'"

"We were looking forward to the game against Ariton and hosting our first playoff game ever. That's my fault we lost that Winterboro game. I leave that totally on my shoulders.

"The Comer game, we jumped out 14-0, but it got to a point where I looked over at my assistant coach (Mark) Reed, and I said, 'Coach, they've done all they can.' When kids go to a funeral the same day as a football game, that's a tough deal, but I think our kids grew from that experience far more than anything I could ever do as a football coach."



Despite the move to a new region in 2016, Limbaugh said he feels like his team doesn't have to prove anything because they know they belong.

"We already belong in that region," he said. "We were region champions last year and went 6-0. When you beat a Thorsby at their place in overtime and beat a Pickens

County at their place, you've shown that you deserve to be where you're at.

"I think (Region 5) is the hardest region in 2A football. That can be debated, but if you'll look at it from top to bottom, it's a very tough region. Teams are going to have to play to beat us."

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SPOTLIGHT



BAILEY DELOACH

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

I'd say Cam Newton. He has fun with what he does, and he's pretty good at what he does. He's just confident.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

(Winning a) region championship. That was a good one. It was a hard fought game (against Pickens County).

What are your post-high school plans?

I'm planning on playing college football. We'll see how that goes. JSU came to talk to me (as well as) Troy and West Alabama.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

In third grade, I played Pee Wee, and I liked it a lot. I always played running back until (junior varsity), then I moved to quarterback.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I get with my teammates, and we get pumped up, I guess.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I do anything (I can) with my friends and just have fun. I just like having fun and spending time with my family.

ROSTER

No	Name
2	Bailey DeLoach
3	Daurian Cook
4	Tristan Vincent
5	Grant White
6	Sam Manning
7	Dalton (Jon) Pate
9	Anthony Hasiten
10	Hayden Carpenter
11	Michael Moore
12	Tyler Allen
13	Blake Machen
14	Tyler Hill
15	Greg Keeton
21	Andrew Morgan
22	Houston Goins
24	Lawson Adams
25	Chance Butts
26	Skylar Blount
27	Cody Pate
33	Payton McKee
38	Joey Machen
44	Dakota Liner
50	Cameron Kelley
51	Ethan Usrey
54	Logan Blanchard
55	Blake Morris
56	Lucas Byrd
60	Conner Hendrick
61	Dylan Green
64	Jacob Kornegay
65	Rhett Haynes
76	Cole Terrell
78	Johnny Cates
83	Steven McCain
88	Zach Roberts
90	Tanner Harry

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Fayetteville

HEAD COACH: John Limbaugh (fifth year)

KEY LOSSES: Dustin Ingram, Darios Cook, Dylan Shell

KEY RETURNERS: Bailey DeLoach, Payton McKee, Houston Goins

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple **BASE DEFENSE:** Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 9-3 **POINTS SCORED:** 287 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 240

SCHEDULE

Aug. 26 at Central Coosa 7 pm
 Sept. 2 at Ranburne 7 pm
 Sept. 9 at LaFayette 7 pm
 Sept. 16 vs. Vincent 7 pm
 Sept. 23 vs. Winterboro 7 pm

Sept. 30 vs. Lanett 7 pm
 Oct. 7 at Woodland 7 pm
 Oct. 14 at Horseshoe Bend 7 pm
 Oct. 21 vs. Reeltown 7 pm
 Oct. 28 vs. B.B. Comer 7 pm

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Lincoln hopes better leadership leads to better results in 2016



By LAVONTE YOUNG

Last season, Lincoln High School's football team learned that talent alone is not enough to be successful in Class 5A.

Lack of leadership and team chemistry plagued the Golden Bears early in the season as they dropped their first five games and derailed their goals of repeating as region champions. Fourth-year head coach Brad Wallace said 2015 was wake-up call for his returning players and coaching staff.

"It was something that we learned as players and as coaches

that leadership has to be there at the beginning of the season," Wallace said. "It has to roll through practices during the hot days when things aren't going their way, and it has to go through the first part of the season, that way we can get rolling.

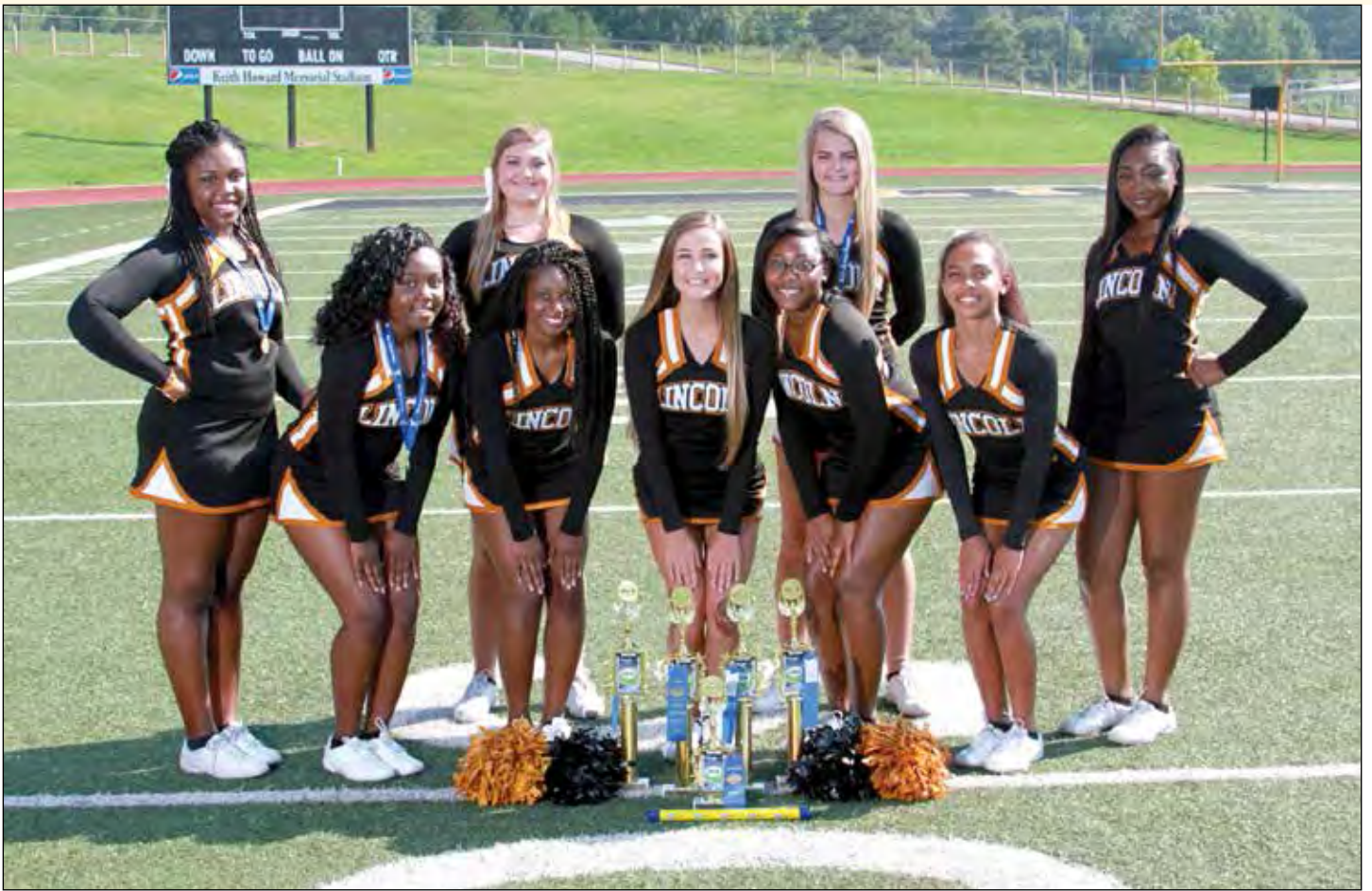
"The thing about this team that I am so proud of is when we came in (for winter workouts in) January, they all had goals and objectives of what they were going to do in the weight room. That was just the beginning.

"We went into spring practice, and I think we had the best spring practice since I have been here. We

got a lot accomplished in the spring. Coming off last year, I think our kids want to strive to be better. This was their first time not being in the playoffs in four or five years, and that kind of hit them in the heart a little bit."

Besides leadership, the other pressing topic for the Golden Bears during the offseason and entering preseason camp was who will be under center. Lincoln is looking to replace Zay Caldwell, who combined to pass and rush for over 2,000 yards of total offense last season.

There is a four-way battle for the



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quarterback position with Earl Wells, PJ Gaddis, Donta Rivers and Garrett Vick.

Wallace said he would like a clear favorite before the season opener against Leeds on Aug. 26.

“We are dwindling reps on some and some are still getting a majority,” he said. “It’s one of those things where we are trying to figure out who is going to be the game manager and not make silly mistakes that will get us in a bind, especially in the fourth quarter. That is what we are looking for in a guy, and we are looking for a guy that’s calm, cool, collective and that doesn’t let adversity affect him.

“Earl Wells has worked hard throughout the spring and the summer. He was actually in the field when I left (for Talladega County media day) throwing balls. He is a worker and he is going to work every day and try to get better.”

With the quarterback job still up for grabs, it is a safe bet the Golden Bears will lean on the running back tandem of LJ Carmichael and Montrell Johnson. The duo played a major role in the Golden Bears turning the season around in the second half last season. (Lincoln won four of its last five games.)

“I expect to lay a lot of the load on them this season,” Wallace said. “They came on at the end of the year last year, and they really got close to each other last year – began pushing each other more and more. I expect to see a lot of them, especially at the beginning of the season with our quarterback being so young.

“We are going to be going to them a lot more than we have in the past and we are going to see where we can go from there.”



What won’t be an easy task for the Golden Bears is accomplishing their goals this season. Lincoln will



compete in Region 4, which features Sylacauga, Cleburne County, Valley, Bearegard and Central Clay County. That's in addition to opening the season against two-time defending 4A champion Leeds.

"All of those games are playoff atmosphere type of games because all of those teams have been in the

playoffs over the last few years," Wallace said. "One of the big keys for us is to keep from being injured. We are playing a tough schedule, so we are going to have to learn how to practice and get the most out of it without banging on each other every day. That is going to be one of our keys this year."

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SPOTLIGHT



EDDIE LEONARD

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

I usually go for Auburn, so Cam Newton. When he came to Auburn, I really looked up to him. At my position, in college, I look up to Reuben Foster. I know he plays for Bama, but he is a really good linebacker and I like the way he plays. He plays like me, and I compare myself to him.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

It is when I'm on defense and I am just hyped. I just want get out there and get after somebody.

What are your post-high school plans?

When I get out of high school, I want to go to college and get my education.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I have been playing football since I was 4. It has been a passion for me. My daddy put me in it when I was young.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I am real quiet. I just listen to music and motivational speeches to get my mind right.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I really don't have a special talent off the field. I just like lifting weights. The faster and stronger I get makes me happy.

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Lincoln

HEAD COACH: Brad Wallace (fourth year)

KEY LOSSES: Zay Caldwell, Dee Whiteside

KEY RETURNERS: LJ Carmichael, Eddie Leonard, Montrell Johnson

BASE OFFENSE: Spread/Wing-T **Base Defense:** 4-2-5

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 4-6 **POINTS SCORED:** 256 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 278

SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 vs. Leeds, 7 pm

Aug. 26 at St. Clair Co., 7 pm

Sept. 2 at Sylacauga, 7 pm

Sept. 9 vs. Talladega, 7 pm

Sept. 16 at Valley, 7 pm

Sept. 23 vs. Munford, 7 pm

Sept. 30 vs. Central Clay Co., 7 pm

Oct. 7 at Cleburne Co., 7 pm

Oct. 14 Open

Oct. 20 vs. Beauregard, 7 pm

Oct. 27 at Hayden, 7 pm

ROSTER

No Name

1 LJ Carmichael

2 Donte' Rivers

3 Brikael Truss

4 Montrell Johnson

5 Ezlyzh Carter

6 Lytavvis Green

7 Jakalen Allen

8 Marquise Arnold

9 PJ Gaddis

10 Eddie Leonard

11 Quin Carter

12 Garrett Vick

13 Jeremy Lane

14 Earl Wells

15 Jarrod McBurnett

16 Montez Hall

17 Nick Pope

18 Steven Haynes

19 Shamar Hampton

20 Jamichael Johnson

21 Jacob Burns

22 Zeke Morgan

23 Keushawn Townsend

27 Davis Mellown

31 Zack Hudson

33 Andrew Roberts

34 Dre Dye

36 Drew Snyder

37 Andrew Newton

38 Brian Hastings

45 Weston Perry

50 Tre Howard

51 Kevon Moore

52 Rel Howard

53 Austin Johntson

54 Kenneth Fomby

55 Issac Britt

56 Javon Ward

57 Keon Wood

58 Rashard Woodgett

59 Cleon Welles

61 Taylor Hall

63 Steven White

67 Shaun Davis

68 William Jones

72 Chris Abercrombie

73 Ethan Turner

78 Deon Jackson

79 Jackson Nolen

82 Zion McClunney

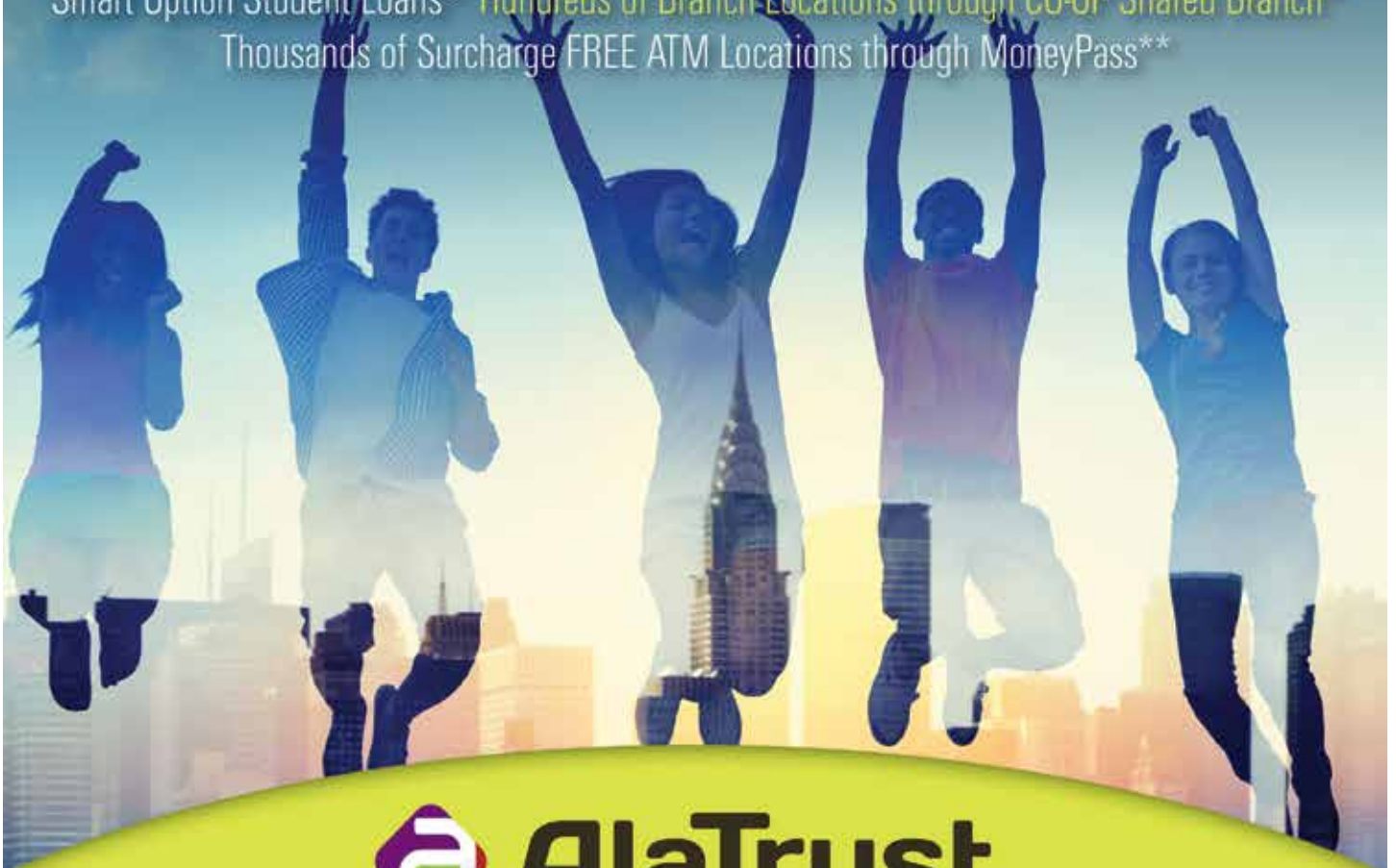
83 Da'Zhone Finley

85 Tyler Parker

90 Logan Latta

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Munford LIONS

CLASS 4A
REGION 3

Munford eyeing state title, but road to crown won't be easy



By LAVONTE YOUNG

For two of the last three seasons, the Munford High School football team has advanced to the semifinals of the AHSAA Class 4A playoffs, but the Lions have fallen short of reaching their ultimate goal of making it to the state finals.

Last season, Munford lost to the eventual state champion Leeds in a semifinal. Since the loss, the Lions' players and coaches have been working hard to get back into that position this season, but with, hopefully, a different outcome.

"Part of me wants to poor mouth and just say that we are going to win a couple of games, but our goals are to win the region and win a state championship," second-year Lions coach Bill Smith said. "That is what we have talked about and that is what our players have talked about. That is what we have worked towards.

"Everybody is 0-0 right now. Everything that these young men did last year really doesn't matter because everybody is 0-0. The season will be what these guys and their teammates make of it."

The Lions won't surprise anyone as

they are ranked fourth in the Alabama Sports Writers Association's 4A preseason poll.

"We were under the radar last year in what supposedly was going to be a rebuilding year, and these guys just stepped it up, especially from Week 5 and Week 6 on," Smith said. "We were 2-3 at the midway point last year, and we went on an eight-game winning streak.

"These young men did everything that I asked them to do. It was a great job by our assistant coaches and coordinators. It was one of the most fun years of my coaching career.

"We will have more of a target on our backs this year. It is always flattering when it is hard to find nonregion games. I think our schedule is probably the toughest 4A schedule in the state. We will have to be ready and, hopefully, we will be battle tested come playoff time."

The Lions will definitely be a seasoned group if they are able to make it back to the playoffs. Munford is still in what's considered to be the SEC West of the 4A with Leeds, Dadeville, Tallassee and Handley. In addition to those region games, the Lions will play host to Central Clay County to

open the season, and they close the campaign with a showdown against 2015 4A runner-up and third-ranked Cordova.

"I had a mutiny on my hands with my assistant coaches when I told them that we were playing Cordova in Week 10," Smith said. "That will be a huge game for us at our place.

"Our schedule ended being odd with a Week 0 game with Central Clay County. That is a heated rivalry, so I felt like I needed to keep that game. They are a very good 5A team. Our other 5A game is going to be Lincoln, and they are going to be very formidable, very athletic and very well coached, and it will be at their place. Our other nonregion game is Cordova. I think our region was the toughest in 4A and I think it will be again."

The Lions return all-state quarterback Avery Harris. In his first season as a signal caller, Harris threw for 2,998 yards and 28 touchdowns, while also rushing for 913 yards and 18 scores. He also had a receiving touchdown against Leeds in the semifinal. Smith considers Harris one of the best quarterbacks that he has ever coached.

"From the first day that I was on



campus 15 months ago, I have seen him develop physically and I have seen him develop into a leadership role,” Smith said. “It didn’t take me long when I got to Munford to realize that he was going to be special. He is one of the better quarterbacks that I have been blessed to coach.

“One of the things that sets him apart is that I can chew him out and his blood pressure stays pretty normal and calm. He is a calm and cool customer in the pocket. He is an outstanding dual threat quarterback and outstanding leader.”

This season, the Lions will have the tough task of replacing their top three receivers and a running back that rushed for 1,500 yards in 2015. Smith will depend on several young players to fill their roles.

“We are going to be youthful. I only have 14 seniors,” Smith said. “We are

going to start at least one freshman and four or five sophomores. They are going to be good. How fast they become good will depend on them and our coaching staff.”

Junior TaCorrie Russell will look to impact the game on both sides of the ball. Russell became a reliable big-play threat for the Lions last season as well as disruptive force as a defensive end. The three star prospect, according to 247sports, moved to defensive end at the midway point last season, and the Lions defense drastically changed. Munford had a three-game stretch during which it allowed 48, 43 and 50 points before changing defenses and moving Russell to end. The next seven games, the Lions held their opponents to nine points per game.

“TaCorrie is going to be a defensive player that plays offense,” Smith said. “Coach Darrell LeBeaux and I have

told him early on how good of shape he is in will determine how much offense that he gets to play this year. He is a defensive player that is going to play offense when he gets in shape. We would have played him earlier last year on defense, but it took him a few games to get in the kind of shape where he can play both ways. He is there now. “

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KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: *Munford*

HEAD COACH: *Bill Smith (second year)*

KEY LOSSES: *Austin Stephens, Charles Smith, Austin Campbell*

KEY RETURNERS: *Avery Harris, Jakari Robinson, Tacorrie Russell*

BASE OFFENSE: *Spread* **BASE DEFENSE:** *3-3*

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: *10-4* **POINTS SCORED:** *482* **POINTS ALLOWED:** *353*

SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 vs. Central Clay Co., 7 pm Sept. 30 vs. Elmore Co., 7 pm
 Aug. 26 Open Oct. 7 at Handley, 7 pm
 Sept. 2 at Dadeville, 7 pm Oct. 14 vs. Childersburg, 7 pm
 Sept. 9 vs. Holtville, 7 pm Oct. 21 vs. Leeds, 7 pm
 Sept. 16 at Tallassee, 7 pm Oct. 28 at Cordova, 7 pm
 Sept. 23 at Lincoln, 7 pm

ROSTER

No Name

1	Tacorrie Russell	38	Avontae Heard
2	Kendrick Handley-Brown	40	Cole Burgdoerfer
3	Noah Champion	42	Jimbo Stone
4	Avery Harris	44	Dre Simmons
5	Payton Jackson	45	Rodney Groce
6	Lance Ford	47	Jacoby Threatt
7	Pernell Mitchell	48	Tyrese Jemison
8	Laraie Ball	50	Ontarious Toyer
9	Marshall Clark	52	Jaylen Best
10	Tanner Reeves	53	JR Fuller
11	Chance Gaither	54	Caelon Patton
12	Ethan Swinford	55	Jeffery Threatt
13	Christian Ousley	56	Lance Smith
14	Ethan Leahey	58	Brody Bussie
14	Chase Gaither	60	Parker Molden
15	My'khal Thompson	60	Cyrus Powell
16	Landson Ashworth	61	Cameron Sargeant
17	Garon Thomas	64	Trevon McClendon
18	Elliott Carothers	65	Datavious Curry
18	Justin Sistrunk	65	Michael Armstrong
19	Zay Britt	66	Jackson Dunaway
20	Lawson Molden	69	William McGuire
21	Kyle Ross	70	Jakari Robinson
22	Darren Parker	71	Logan Turner
23	Christian Ousley-O'Neil	72	Alex Peterson
24	Greg Oden	72	Luke Gaither
27	Marshon Black	74	Payton Graben
28	Weston Taylor	75	Jacob Smith
28	LJ Flint	77	Carson McGuire
30	Treyvoun Wheststone	79	Melvon Braxton
30	Jeremiah Best	80	Nick Ball
32	Carson Smith	82	Dylan Campbell
34	Draven Campbell	85	Josh Capers
36	Tarique Johnson	86	Francisco Islas
37	Kristian Reyes	87	Andrew Williams

SPOTLIGHT



JAKARI ROBINSON

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

My favorite football player is Cam Newton. He went to Auburn and that is my favorite team. He is the best player I know and he has fun doing it. He has fun and he doesn't care what anybody has to say about him. He just has fun doing what he does.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

When we beat Leeds, that was crazy. We were going hard and we believed, but when it hit the fourth quarter, we didn't know for sure (if we could pull out the win). It was a shocker to us when we won. That game was crazy in the fourth quarter.

What are your post-high school plans?

Go to college and graduate from college, then go to the NFL. If not, get a degree and

get a job. I haven't decided what I am getting a degree in.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I wanted to play football when I was real little. I was like 3 or 4. My first year playing was in third grade and I have been playing ever since.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I just like to focus. A lot of players mess up before the game because they are trying to play around. I just put my headphones in and go into my own little world and focus on what I have to do.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I can play the guitar and the trumpet.



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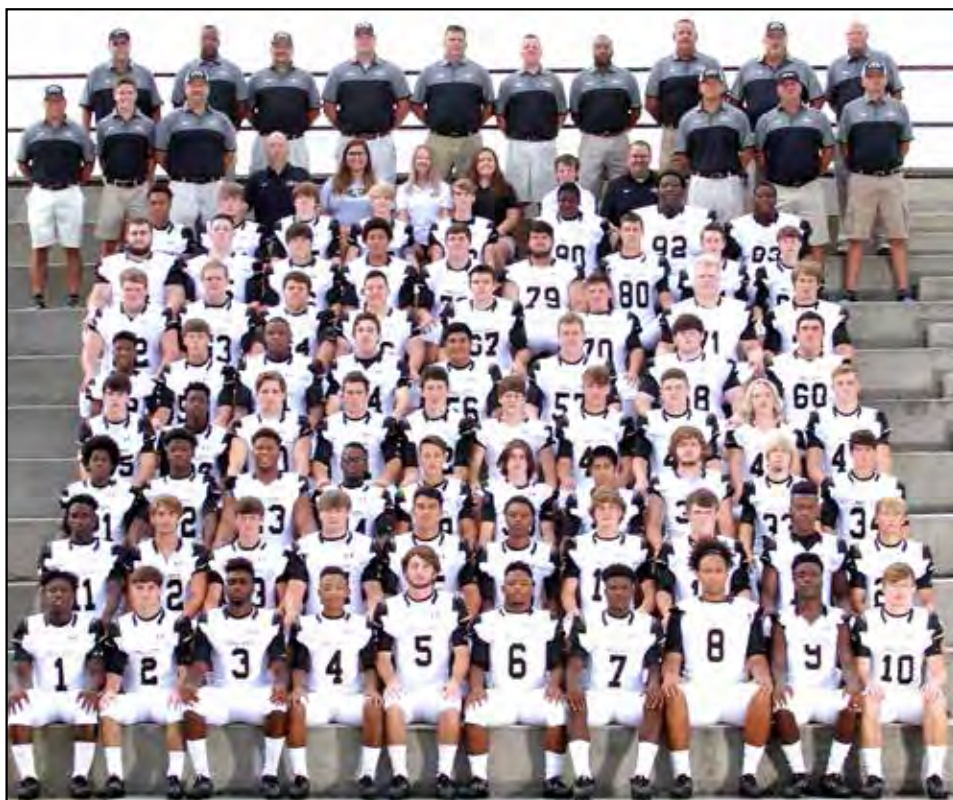
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Pell City Panthers: New coach, new mindset



By LAVONTE YOUNG

Keith Etheredge is in a new place, but his goals and expectations have stayed the same. Etheredge won four state championships during the past decade while at Leeds, and he expects to have the same level of success at Pell City.

“My goals never change. I want to go 15-0 and win the state championship,” he said. “Of course, we want to win the region, and we have some good teams in our region. We talk about being realistic and setting goals. You want to set your goals high, but if you falter and you drop a game, the goals change to going 14-1 and win a state

championship. We just have to take it a game at a time and get better every single day.”

One of the things that Etheredge had to change at Pell City is the mindset of his players. The coach believes his team is loaded with more talent than he had at Leeds when he took over in 2006.

“We are as good up front as we ever were at Leeds, and that’s pretty good,” he said. “We have some things that we need to work on, but I think most of it is confidence with the kids. At Leeds, those kids had swag, but the thing is it wasn’t like that when I got there. When I got there, they’d won seven games in three or four years. We had

to change the mentality, and I think there are more tools here than I had at Leeds.”

Last season, Etheredge led the Green Wave to a 14-1 record and the Class 4A state championship. Leeds had an explosive offense that averaged 46 points per game thanks to a dominant ground game and a stifling defense that only allowed an average of 8.5 points per game.

Etheredge is confident that he can bring the same style of play to Pell City and have success.

“It is going to be fun to see how our style works in 6A,” he said. “A lot of people say that won’t work in 6A. I keep reverting back that kids are kids. If you have players that are going to buy into your system, they can do whatever they decide to do. If I have a guy like Kent Foster, we are going to run behind him. Our offensive line should be all right, our defensive line should be real good, at linebacker we should be good. We don’t have a lot of depth there, and we have to stay healthy. Secondary-wise, we have some guys out right now. We lost an outside linebacker at the last passing camp -- he tore his ACL -- so that hurt. He was a senior, he hadn’t played in the last couple of years, but he was coming back out. He did a great job in the spring and summer.”

Going into the season, Etheredge believes the offensive line, the defensive front and the tailback positions are the

team's strengths.

The Panthers will depend on senior Chris Lynch to carry the load. Lynch had a productive junior season despite missing games. He finished the season with 800 yards. Etheredge believes that if Lynch's work ethic matches his mindset, he will be one of the best running backs in the state.

"When he steps on the field, he thinks that he is the best player out there," Etheridge said. "That's the attitude that every kid has to take. I have to get him to get where he is working every single day to be the best, because he thinks he is the best every time that he steps on the field. He is great football player. This may be a mouthful, but as far as ability he may be the best running back that I ever coached. He (Lynch) has all the tools to be the best that I ever coached. It is one thing that he's got that the other ones haven't had. Tre Nation is the total package, he rushed for over 7,500 yards and over 120 touchdowns in his career, so it is hard to compare a kid to him. They are different types of kids. Chris Lynch is more compact kid, but he is a 4.53 every time you take him out there to run the 40 (yard

dash). He could be a 4.4 if he worked on his start. He has the breakaway speed, he can catch the ball out of the backfield. Lynch has the wiggle, he has the power, he has the speed."

Etheredge believes the Panthers will be up for any challenge they face on the field once they find a leader.

This season, Pell City will compete in Region 7 with Southside-Gadsden, Brewer, Albertville and Fort Payne, and Etheridge won't be content with just making the first round of the playoffs.

"It is an exciting time to be here," he said. "You are not just going to be able to roll the ball out there and get into the playoffs. If you do that, you are just trying to get to the playoffs and get the fourth seed and have to go play Muscle Shoals at Muscle Shoals You better bust your rear end to try to get that one or two seed where you have a home playoff game and have the opportunity to make a run in the playoffs. Eventually you have to play Muscle Shoals, Clay-Chalkville or one of those dominant teams like Opelika. You want to play them in the second or third round, so it is a big game you can get your kids up for."

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ROSTER

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Chris Lynch | 48 Keshon Horton |
| 2 Logan Tucker | 50 Justin Thomas |
| 3 Saqalis Smith | 52 Gabe Beavers |
| 4 Malik Posey | 54 Tyler Locklar |
| 5 Hudson Hughes | 56 Andres Sanchez |
| 6 Marquis Posey | 58 Simon Adkins |
| 7 Branshun Forman | 59 Tyler Mixon |
| 8 Kinsman Trammell | 60 Seth Kent |
| 9 Maleek Robinson | 63 Nick Brownlee |
| 10 Cole McGee | 64 Colvin Foster |
| 11 Michael Sanders | 66 Adam Galvan |
| 13 Bryant Freeman | 67 Christian Henderson |
| 14 Hunter Craton | 71 Kent Foster |
| 15 Sergio Alvarez | 72 Daniel Crane |
| 16 Aillon Hogan | 74 Joshua Evans |
| 17 Austin Stephens | 75 Jordan Burgos |
| 18 Braden Crow | 76 Dylan Reeves |
| 19 Logan Estell | 77 Austin Smith |
| 20 Casey Smith | 78 Caleb Rich |
| 21 Darnell Carter | 79 Bret Dockery |
| 22 Darius Garrett | 80 Avery Weiss |
| 23 Kaleel Tate | 81 Andrew Crow |
| 24 Devarus Miller | 82 Aaron Crow |
| 25 Jeff Rich | 83 Cordell O'Neal |
| 28 Anthony Emerick | 84 Will Adams |
| 29 Keyton Hill | 85 Nick Butler |
| 30 Griffin Childree | 90 Jacob Fomby |
| 32 Jesse Staples | 92 Tyler Estell |
| 33 Ashton Storey | 93 Emon Roberson |
| 34 Collier Slovensky | Tyler Burns |
| 35 Callis Bullard | Dillon Callahan |
| 36 Cody Eades | Taylor Eckman |
| 38 Mai'Khi Arnold | Raine Williams |
| 39 Joey Horton | Christian Elliott |
| 40 Ty Goodwin | Will Pruitt |
| 41 Austin Carleton | Ethan Jett |
| 43 Randy Cain | Xavier Haverwas |
| 44 Austin Pike | Dalton Smith |
| 45 Owen Emerson | |

SPOTLIGHT

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Chance Warmack. I am an Alabama fan and he played at the University of Alabama. I think he is a great player and I loved seeing him go in the first round of the NFL draft. It is real special thing for me to see a guard or a center go in the first round. I really like watching him play.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

My greatest football moment was probably my 10th-grade year when we played Gadsden City and they were ranked very high in the state. They were supposed to be really good, and we upset them by two touchdowns.

What are your post-high school plans?

I want to get a business or sales and marketing degree. I hope to open up my own business one day. I love football, and as long as I can play, I will play.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I wanted to play football ever since I was a little kid. My dad played football at Alabama, so he knows the ins and outs. He tried to hold me back until I got to school ball. The first year that I played, I was 10 years old.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing



KENT FOSTER

a rival school?

I am very quiet and I stay within myself. I like to go over the plays inside my head. I make sure I know all of my assignments and the defenses that we will be seeing. I like to watch a little bit of film before playing the game even though I have been watching it all week. I also like to get ready mentally -- like how I want to dominate my opponent and be mean and physical.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I am pretty good with my hands. I like building stuff and fixing stuff. Me and my day go build shoot houses. I love hunting and I love fishing.

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Pell City

HEAD COACH: Keith Etheredge (first year)

KEY LOSSES: Elijah Shepard, Gabe McKinney, Luke Brasher

KEY RETURNERS: Chris Lynch, Hudson Hughes, Kent Foster

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple **BASE DEFENSE:** Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 4-7 **POINTS SCORED:** 213 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 231

SCHEDULE

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Aug. 26 at Childersburg, 7 pm | Sept. 30 at Cullman, 7 pm |
| Sept. 2 at Gardendale, 7 pm | Oct. 7 at Albertville, 7 pm |
| Sept. 9 vs. Southside-Gadsden, 7 pm | Oct. 14 vs. Oxford, 7 pm |
| Sept. 16 vs. Brewer, 7 pm | Oct. 21 at Fort Payne, 7 pm |
| Sept. 23 vs. Anniston, 7 pm | Oct. 28 at Helena, 7 pm |

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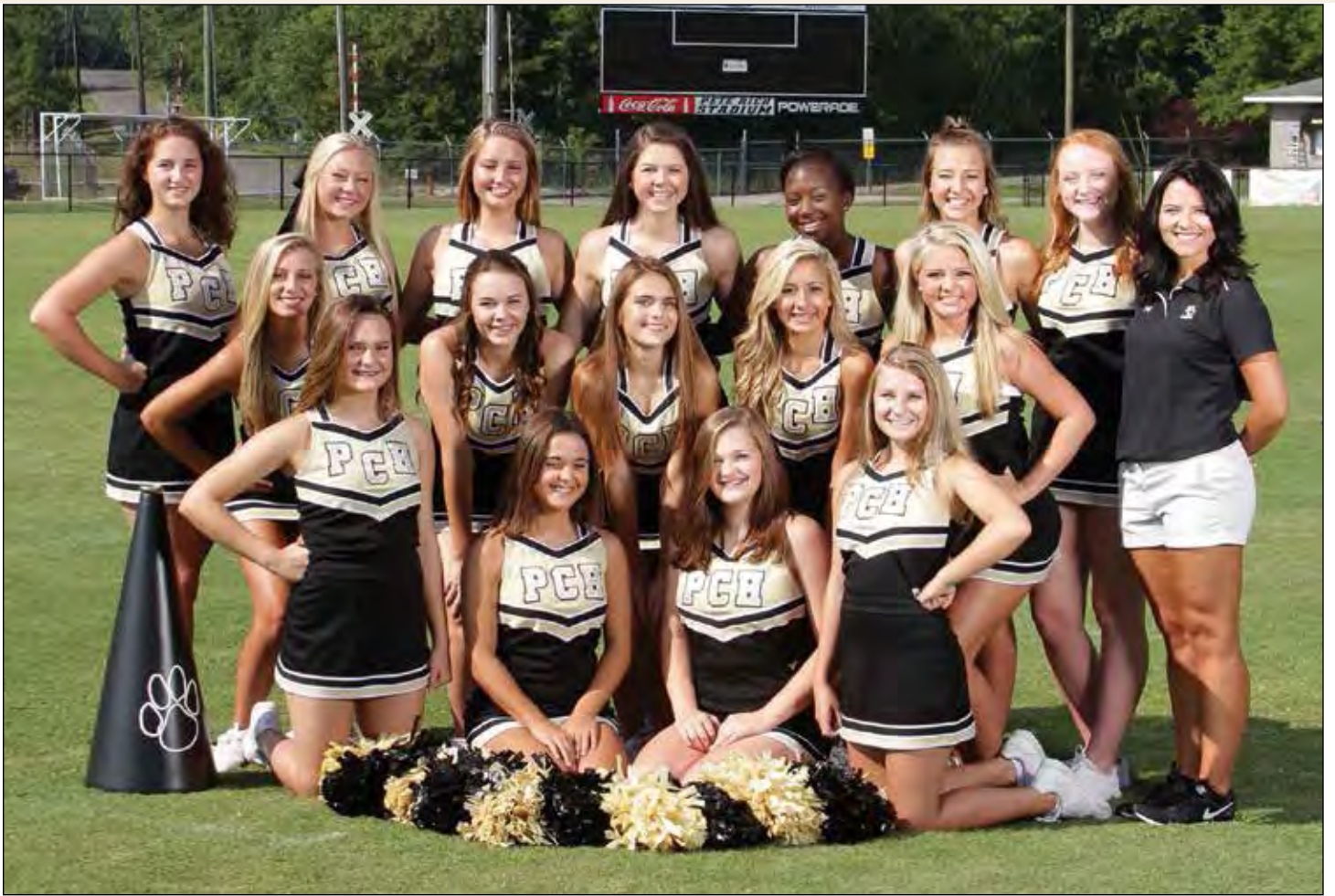
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Ragland PURPLE DEVILS

CLASS 1A
REGION 4

Brian Alred takes the helm of Ragland football program



By GARY HANNER

Ragland High School has a new head football coach going into the 2016 season, but Brian Alred is no stranger to the Purple Devil Nation.

Alred was the defensive coordinator for two years in 2013-14 when Jonathan Nix was head coach.

“This is my first head coaching job, and I am very excited about it,” he said. “I think it’s a great opportunity to be back in Ragland. I feel like I have an advantage because I know these kids and their work ethic, and they know me.”

When the news broke that Alred was the new head coach, the kids appeared to be very excited, he said.

“I had several calling me and texting me, wanting to get started with practice right then,” he said. “I’m excited, they are excited and I think the community is excited.”

Alred said it is quite an adjustment coming back as the head coach.

“I’ve had coaches tell me once you become a head coach, it is completely different,” he said. “Everybody is turning to you for answers, and I think that is the biggest adjustment for me. I was also named the athletic director, so I have other coaches coming to me looking for answers.”

Alred, 36, is a 1998 graduate of Glencoe High School, where he played football, basketball and baseball for the Yellow Jackets. He graduated from

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JSU in 2005.

He has coached at Fayetteville, Springville, St. Clair County and Ragland. He has spent eight years in the St. Clair County school system.

Alred said his No. 1 goal is to develop student-athletes and make them better young men.

“We obviously want to win ballgames, but everything has to start in the classroom,” he said. “We

want to prepare them for life, and, hopefully, along the way, we will win some football games. If we start in the classroom and make them better young men, football will take care of itself.”

Alred has some key players returning, including running back and free safety Jadon Killings.

“I expect a lot out of Jadon, and we are going to depend on him a lot from a player’s standpoint and



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from a leader standpoint,” Alred said. “Another key player would be starting quarterback Stoney Merritt. He’s a super kid and a leader offensively who can get us in the right situations to be successful on Friday nights. He stepped up and took on a leadership role this summer.”

Alred also named running back and outside

linebacker Braxton Thomas as a key player he is expecting great things from.

Alred said there are six returning starters offensively and five defensively.

“Ninety percent of our kids do play both ways,” he said. “That is why our players have to get in better shape than they are in right now. We got a late start

with me being hired late, but they have hit the ground running in the weight room. We've got to get stronger and more conditioned to be able to play both ways."

Ragland is in Class 1A, Region 4 with Appalachian, Donoho, Talladega County Central, Victory Christian, Wadley and Winterboro.

Alred said he believes there are three teams leading the pack right now: Wadley, Talladega County-Central and Victory Christian. He said that is based on their records from last year.

"Victory Christian had a great season last year, and Coach Mark Sanders is doing a great job with those kids there," Alred said. "He came in, and they have gotten better each year under him.

"It's a tough region to be in."

Alred said one advantage for his team this year is that Ragland plays six home games.

"Our first five games are at home," he said. "That

works out to our favor."

When talking about the keys to a successful season, Alred said it has to be being able to play together as a team and getting better every week.

"My emphasis is that we must get better every week," he said. "With me coming in late, we are behind already. We play a one-game season each week. We want to make the state playoffs. We have to get Ragland football back to where it used to be.

"This community and this school have a rich tradition in football. These kids understand that. I've set high expectations for our kids, and I believe they can reach those expectations. If we continue to get better each day and each week, we can achieve the goal of making the playoffs."

Ragland opens the season at home against Ohatchee on Friday, Aug. 19.



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SPOTLIGHT

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Tim Tebow, because he is a good Christian influence and he is a great leader.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

My first touchdown pass at the varsity level when I was in the eighth grade. It was a 30-yard pass to Trez Carson.

What are your post-high school plans (college, military, career, etc.)?

Not sure at this moment, but I do know I want to go to college. If I get some scholarship offers, I would like to play football at the next level.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I've been playing football since I was in the seventh grade. I did play one year of Pee Wee football. Coach Brian Mintz talked me into playing football again when I was in the seventh grade.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're



STONEY MERRITT

playing a rival school?

I go over all the plays that I know we have offensively. I try to picture us scoring on every single play. I do a lot of mental reps in my head. That's how I stay focused during the day.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I play basketball and baseball, along with football. So when I'm done with one sport, I go right into the other sport. I'm practicing one of those three sports year-round.

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Ragland

HEAD COACH: Brian Alred (first year)

KEY LOSSES: Jagger Phillips, Devion Turner, Dustin Blunt

KEY RETURNERS: Stoney Merritt, Jadon Killings, Matthew Thornburg

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple **BASE DEFENSE:** Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 3-8 **POINTS SCORED:** 211 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 326

SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 vs. Ohatchee, 7 pm

Aug. 26 vs. Ashville, 7 pm

Sept. 2 vs. TC Central, 7 pm

Sept. 9 vs. Coosa Christian, 7 pm

Sept. 16 vs. Wadley, 7 pm

Sept. 23 at Tarrant, 7 pm

Sept. 30 at Victory Christian, 7 pm

Oct. 7 at Winterboro, 7 pm

Oct. 14 vs. Donoho, 7 pm

Oct. 21 at Appalachian, 7 pm

ROSTER

No. Name

- 1 Jalen Byers
- 2 Noah Hollingsworth
- 3 Braxton Thomas
- 4 Adam Sanders Jr.
- 5 Stoney Merritt
- 8 Gad Jones
- 9 Coby Fuller
- 10 Jadon Killings
- 11 Seth Welborn
- 18 Hunter Day
- 25 John Brewer
- 33 Dylan Lively
- 50 Alex Kay
- 55 Jeremy Burnham
- 65 Jacob Philips

- 66 Chase Warren
- 68 Bryan Goodwin
- 79 Kaden Bice
- Bailey Goodwin
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Sylacauga AGGIES

CLASS 5A
REGION 4

It's an exciting time for Sylacauga's Aggies



By LAVONTE YOUNG

There is a lot of excitement in the Sylacauga community about the upcoming football season, and rightfully so. The Aggies have a talented and senior laden team that has the potential to be one of the best teams in school history. There is also excitement about the newly renovated Legion Stadium.

“To talk about the excitement, it is something that we thought that we would never see,” head coach Matt Griffith said. “We have a very historical stadium that was built in 1947 and absolutely hardly nothing has been done to it since, and it was really starting to get dangerous. We have a superintendent with a vision, and we are going to have top-notch facilities across the board. We are excited about it, and our kids are excited

about it.”

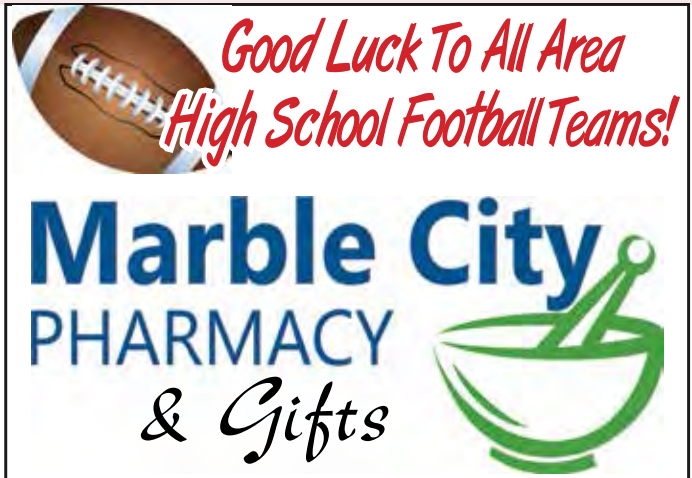
Sylacauga had a successful 2015 season as the Aggies went 7-4 before losing in the first round of the AHSAA Class 5A playoffs to eventual state champion St. Pauls.

Even though the Aggies have had success during the regular season during Griffith’s tenure, they have struggled in the postseason. Under Griffith, Sylacauga has a 1-7 playoff record. During the summer, Griffith decided to change the team’s workout. On Wednesdays, Sylacauga traveled to Blackwatch Sports Performance in Birmingham for speed and agility training. Griffith hopes the training will help his team get to the next level.

“We are hoping what we did on Wednesdays is that little edge to put us over the edge,” he said. “Instead of being a three or four seed in the region, you are a one or two in the region. You are getting a home playoff berth and you are finally playing somebody’s three or four seed and not hitting a number one (seed) out if the south like a St. Paul, Demopolis or Jackson and you can get out the first or second round.”

In order to get to the next level, the Aggies will need another huge season from Alex Thomason and Sylacauga’s high-powered offense. Last season, the Aggies averaged 34 points per game with Thomason leading the way with over 1,600 rushing yards and 22 touchdowns.

“Alex is Alex, and we love him to death,” Griffith said. “Alex is strong academically, he does everything correct. This is a kid that only wants to play football, but he thought track would help him this year, so he runs track to help him with speed. He is doing everything he needs to do to be as elite a player as he can. Our kids enjoy blocking for him. He is a kid that the more you give it to him the stronger he gets in a ballgame. I think that we have gotten



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better throwing the ball all summer; if we can take a little heat off our running game, it opens up other holes for us instead of a having a 5-, 6- or 7 -yard break you get 15-18 because the holes open up a little better.”

In order for the Aggies to accomplish their first goal, they will have to get through a tough area. The Aggies went to Class 5A, Area 4, where they will face Lincoln, Talladega, Central Clay County, Cleburne County, Beauregard and Valley. Griffith believes this is the one of the toughest regions the Aggies have been in during his 12 seasons at helm.

“We have a tough schedule, but we have one of the best football teams that we have ever had,” Griffith said. “We are very experienced,

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and we have smart players that have worked really hard. We are probably playing the toughest schedule that we have played since my first two years. You go back to 2005-2006, you are talking about a time where there were six classifications, and Homewood is in there, Ben Russell is in there and Chelsea is in there. I believe that this schedule is along those lines. It is a very tough competitive region with very good football, very well-coached and it is going to come down to can we stay healthy and who is going to make mistakes. Stay healthy is luck sometimes, making mistakes is something that you can control. We have to eliminate mistakes and stay healthy. It is anybody's ballgame."

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SPOTLIGHT

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Ray Lewis because of his work ethic and the accomplishments that he has achieved in his NFL career.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

My greatest football moment was last year in the playoffs against St. Pauls. I had a big game and I had a big hit on the sideline. That made me realize I could play with these guys on this level.

What are your post-high school plans?

I plan on going to college. When I get out, I plan on going into the construction business and get into underwater welding. I also plan on taking football to another level.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

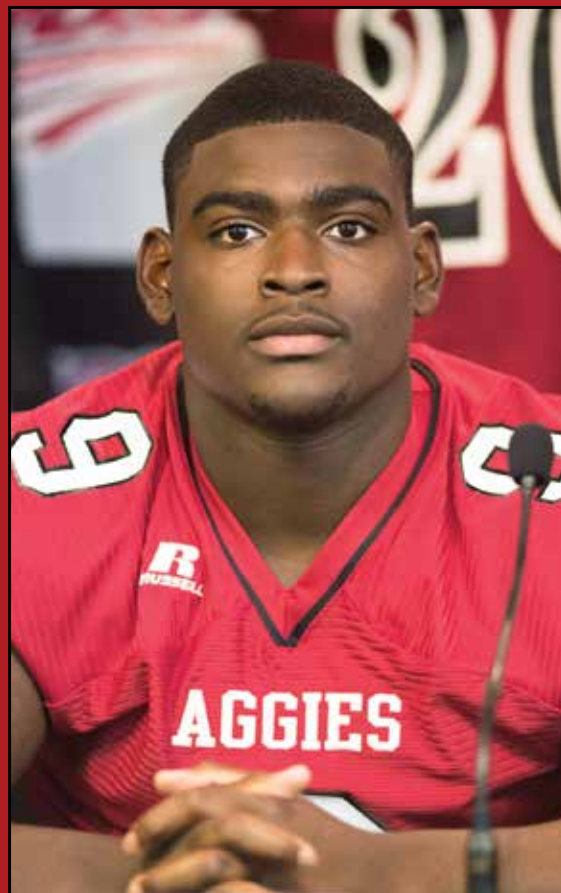
I've always wanted to play football. I have played since I was old enough to play. I have a love for the game. My brothers played and I have always wanted to follow in their footsteps. Football has always been around in

my family.
How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

Game day I am relaxed, I just listen to music in my locker. I just get my mind ready and I go over plays in my mind so I can perform my best every time I step on the field.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I think I am a good swimmer. I think that is my best talent off the field.



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KEY FACTS

TEAM: Sylacauga

HEAD COACH: Matt Griffith (12th year)

KEY LOSSES: Donterio Moon, Jordan Daniel, Jaylun Thomas

KEY RETURNERS: Alex Thomason, Derrick Carter, Jackson Walker

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple

BASE DEFENSE: Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 7-4 **POINTS SCORED:** 377

POINTS ALLOWED: 244

SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 vs. Chilton County 7 pm

Aug. 26 at Anniston 7 pm

Sept. 2 vs. Lincoln 7 pm

Sept. 9 at Beauregard 7 pm

Sept. 16 Open

Sept. 23 at Childersburg 7 pm

Sept. 30 vs. Talladega 7 pm

Oct. 7 at Valley 7 pm

Oct. 14 vs. Central Clay County 7 pm

Oct. 21 at Cleburne County 7 pm

Oct. 28 vs. Calera 7 pm

ROSTER

No. Name

2 Bailey Ward

3 Cade Bryant

4 Lew Dale

5 Alex Thomason

6 Tashun Looney

7 Kalis Pope

8 Brady Davis

9 Derrick Carter

10 Dailon Keith

11 Tyreke Watts

12 Demarcus Daniel

13 Tyler Thompson

14 Cole Grogan

15 DeMarco Campbell

16 Jackson Walker

19 Riley Keith

20 Conner Machen

22 Jacob Daniel

23 Chandler Deerman

24 Tommy Gaddis

25 Lane Strickland

28 DeShun Watson

29 Vontae Graham

30 Roderick Milliner

31 Darcarius Mickey

32 Chris Mallory

35 Joseph Johnson

39 Kam Cook

40 Jackson Conn

44 Devonta Green

50 Chase Pruitt

51 Austin Allen

54 Paul Craddock

55 Austin Decker

56 Nick Price

57 Coy Whitehead

59 Cody Hamm

60 Tyler Jacobs

62 Ryan Pugh

63 Branden Trucks

64 Dawson Green

65 Willie Ashford

66 Justyn Vincent

67 Ladarruis Cook

68 Zan Smith

70 Ben Tice

71 Blake Houston

72 Jimmy Espara

73 Grahma Hughey

75 Matt Bryan

76 Sam McGrady

78 Caleb Dates

86 Chris Jackson

89 Marquintence Taylor

90 Chase Merkel

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Talladega TIGERS

CLASS 5A
REGION 4

Despite limited numbers, Talladega takes aim at playoff spot



By SHANE DUNAWAY

Since Talladega High School's last football playoff appearance in 1995, the program has become a model for mediocrity with 164 losses in 20 seasons.

But fourth-year Tigers head coach Robert Herring gave his squad of 23

players a vote of confidence heading into the 2016 season – the team's first in Class 5A, Region 4.

"We don't try to sugarcoat stuff to these kids or lie to them," he said. "We told them we would love to be 5-5 this year and be the fourth seed in the playoffs. You've got Beauregard, who anybody will tell you hands down,

they're supposed to be our region champs without question.

"Then you've got Sylacauga and Clay Central who is next. That's your (Nos.) 1, 2 and 3, and then you've got us, Lincoln and Cleburne County. We're all fighting for that fourth spot."

Defensive line coach Carlos Battle said he also can see a difference in the

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Tigers.

“This football program and these kids will show y’all and our fans that we’ve been working,” he said. “These kids get up at 6 o’clock every morning. When other kids are asleep, they’re up working ...

“I believe in these kids. I believe we’ll have a great season this year. As a matter of fact, I believe it’ll be a history-making season. These kids will show y’all what Talladega is about.”

Herring said his players took the first step away from trending downward by performing well and winning a spring scrimmage against B.B. Comer, 16-6.

“We’ve come a long way,” he said. “That was a good scrimmage for us, and we needed to (win). We match up well against B.B. Comer. We’re a 5A

school, and we’ve got 23 kids. They’re a 3A school, and they’ve got 20 kids.”

Talladega returns five seniors, including a pair of defenders in Jamonte Twymon and Jae-lyn Russ. Herring said he has high hopes for the duo.

“Jamonte and (Jae-lyn) both have been three-year starters for us,” he said. “(Jamonte) starts on the offensive and defensive lines, and so will Jae-lyn. He’ll be a right tackle and a defensive end. Our other three seniors also (play) both ways.

“We’ve got five kids who are seniors, and all five of them (play) both ways. That makes it tough (to win games) if you’re in 5A football, but these kids have worked hard all summer since that B.B. Comer game.

“This summer, we’ve had it

consistently -- 23 players showing up for workouts. They’re 23 kids who want to be there, and 23 kids that’ll pay the price. These kids have done that, and we hope it pays off for them, not just in wins and losses, but as far as life lessons.”

Twymon, who Herring touted as one of the strongest players on the team, said he knows the Tigers must give maximum effort in order to achieve success.

“We’re going to have to go hard and compete to keep winning,” he said.

Talladega opens its season with a trip up Alabama 21 to face Oxford, a 6A team coached by Herring’s brother, fourth-year head coach Ryan Herring.

The matchup with the Yellow Jackets kicks off a grueling schedule for the Tigers, with equally tough showdowns against region foes as well as Talladega



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“We don’t have a game we look at and say, ‘Well, this is going to be a gimme for us,’” Robert Herring said.

“Our kids, most of them (play) both ways, and this year, for us to win, we’re going to have to have something go on our side, whether it’s an inside kick or trick plays.”

What the Tigers may lack in numbers, they may be able to make up for in athleticism, with several players who are multi-sport athletes, including junior quarterback Ashton Duncan.

“He had a pretty good spring for us and he’s a kid you know (plays) football, then goes to basketball and right into baseball,” Herring said. “He’s a three-star athlete and he’s a leader for us. Last year, he played like a sophomore is supposed to play. He had some turnovers (and) interceptions.

“This year, we don’t expect that from Ashton. We want Ashton to be that guy this year that teams know that if that quarterback has a good game, Talladega’s going to be hard to beat.”



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SPOTLIGHT



JAE-LYN RUSS

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

J.J. Watt because he is a beast at defensive end, and I love his work ethic.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

Probably when we have a three-and-out, and it gives our offense a chance to do something with the ball.

What are your post-high school plans?

I would like to go to college (at) probably Jacksonville State University or North Alabama.

When did you decide you wanted to play football,

and how long have you been playing?

I've been playing since Pee Wee League, and I've recently decided to take it serious when I went to camp.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I'll just be focused. I'll be quiet in every class. I'll just be thinking and doing my work, and (I'll) just picture what I'm going to do on the field.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

Not really. I go to church and stuff like that.

ROSTER

No. Name

	33	Tristan Wells	
4	Nicholas Warwick	35	Caleb Perkins
7	Jeromy Brand	36	Devilin Cameron
10	Ashton Duncan	37	Kentarious Swain
11	Fred Dickerson	42	Matteau Farmer
12	Jalen Gree	50	Nyjahl Garrett
14	Jay Patterson	51	Ron Dothard
15	Dylan Bradford	52	Jamonte Twymon
18	Ji'quavius Garrett	56	Robert Houston
20	Dennis Swain	61	Jae-Lyn Russ
21	Josh Woods	63	Thomas Wilcox
22	Jostin Shields	64	Kevin Garrett
24	Je Querius Wilson	65	Cedric White
30	Chris Curry	66	Jaymon Gaddis

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Talladega

HEAD COACH: Robert Herring Jr. (fourth year)

KEY LOSSES: Ja'Quan Scales, Bruce Garrett, Justin Twymon

KEY RETURNERS: Ashton Duncan, Jae-lyn Russ, Jamonte Twymon

BASE OFFENSE: I-formation **BASE DEFENSE:** Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 2-7 **POINTS SCORED:** 120 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 309

SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 at Oxford 7 pm

Aug. 26 at Talladega Co. Central 7 pm

Sept. 2 vs. Cleburne Co. 7 pm

Sept. 9 at Lincoln 7 pm

Sept. 16 vs. Beauregard 7 p.m

Sept. 23 at Walter Wellborn 7 pm

Sept. 30 at Sylacauga 7 pm

Oct. 14 vs. Valley 7 pm

Oct. 21 at Central Clay Co. 7 pm

Oct. 28 vs. Winterboro 7 pm



Talladega County Central FIGHTING TIGERS

CLASS 1A
REGION 4

TC Central wants more than appearance in 1st round of playoffs



By LAVONTE YOUNG

For the past three high school football seasons, the Talladega County Central Fighting Tigers have made the first round of the playoffs, but head coach Christopher Mahand is not satisfied with just making a brief appearance in the postseason.

Mahand enters his third year back (six years overall) at Howell's Cove with the expectation of the Fighting Tigers being contenders late into November.

"We want to make the playoffs and have success," Mahand said. "We want to get past the first round. The last couple of years, we have been to the first round ... and now it is time for us to move on. ...

"I think we have the opportunity to have a pretty good team if the Lord blesses us to stay healthy. The experience factor was real big last year, even though a lot of my guys were freshmen and sophomores. For them to get that experience coming into this

year is going to really be effective for us this year. We are excited about this year to see what we can get done."

TC Central will start the campaign with its toughest games of the season. The Fighting Tigers open the season against rival Talladega and then will travel to Ragland before playing host to Wadley and Victory Christian. Last season, TC Central lost to Wadley and Victory.

Mahand said his team will be prepared to take everybody's best shot this time around.

"That pretty much is going to iron out the region for us," Mahand said. "We play Winterboro later on in the year, and that is always big for the kids. To have the Big 3 early in the year is big.

"Ragland is a meat grinder for us. They were very well coached and a very good team last year. I think (new coach Brian Alred) is going to bring the energy back that Ragland had in the past. Victory shocked a lot of teams

last year, including us. I don't think we were prepared like should have been, and that is my fault as the head coach. We won't make that same mistake this year. ...

"We are going to have to play good football if we are going to have success. We are not going to be able to sneak up on anyone. Everybody expects us to be a good team, so we usually gets everybody's best game. If we are going to have the success we want to have this year, we are going to have to prepare for success."

TC Central will depend on Kylan Cross to have another big season. Last fall, Cross rushed for 1,300 yards. This summer, the junior running back impressed college scouts. Cross received his first offer from Mississippi Valley State.

"I have been real pleased with Kylan this summer," Mahand said. "I think he has taken on the role as leader. I tell the kids all the time that you have to be a senior to be a leader on the team,

and I think he has taken to that. He has been there every day this summer, riding the younger kids when it is time to work out. He is the first one to finish running and the first one to finish his sets.

“I think Kylen is finally starting to realize his potential that God blessed him with to have the opportunity to play on the next level if he continues to work hard. We are expecting a lot out of Kylen, and that’s no secret.”

The Fighting Tigers have several players returning this season that transferred or sat out due to disciplinary reasons. One of the players that Mahand is elated to have back is linebacker/running back Chris Embry.

“We had some guys for transfer and (some) disciplinary actions,” Mahand said. “Chris is one of the guys back from transferring. It is definitely a blessing to have him back. I think if I had him last year, we could’ve won a couple of those close games that



we lost. When he played for me as a freshman and a sophomore, he was an anchor of the defense at middle linebacker. He lines people up and he is a run stopper in the tackle box.

“With (Class) 1A, if you can stop the run nine out of 10 times, you are going to win the game. I am glad to have him back to anchor the middle for us.”



Shown (l-r) Ashleigh Pate, Phillip Rhea, Mathew Challenger, Shannon Williamson, Jason Bearden and Anthony Pate.



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SPOTLIGHT



KYLEN CROSS

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Derrick Henry is my role model. He is a great running back. He is great; he is a big back that can move. He is big, but he has speed on him and he is powerful.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

My greatest football moment was when I was in the eighth grade and it was my first time playing varsity. Our running back, Ramone Russell, had a concussion and I went in and had a good game. On defense, I made a major hit. That game led to me starting.

What are your post-

high school plans (college, military, career, etc.)?

Go to college and continue my football career. I would like to major in engineering.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I have been playing since I was 5.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I just close my eyes, I pray and I go to sleep. I also listen to music.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

Playing football is my hobby.

ROSTER

No. Name

1	Ricky Duncan	22	Kylen Cross
2	Darrell Maple	25	Kentavius McKenzie
3	Kentrell Duncan	30	Kris Embry
4	Jaylon Swain	50	Kadarius Shephard
5	Jaylon Dykes	51	Antwon Hawkins
8	Damion Swain	52	Mikell Armbruster
9	Jayden Jones	55	Micah Embry
10	Devin Dates	58	Devilyn Keller
12	Cameron Swain	61	Michael Harmon
14	Jafrondric Davis	63	Judson Harmon
15	Datravian Tuck	70	Syncere Brown
		71	Devin Wilson

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Talladega County Central

HEAD COACH: Chris Mahand (third year)

KEY LOSSES: Trovell Stockdale

KEY RETURNERS: Kylen Cross, Kris Embry **BASE OFFENSE:** Multiple **BASE DEFENSE:** Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 6-4 **POINTS SCORED:** 231 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 190

SCHEDULE

Aug. 26 vs. Talladega 7 pm

Sept. 2 at Ragland 7 pm

Sept. 9 vs. Wadley 7 pm

Sept. 16 vs. Victory Christian 7 pm

Sept. 23 at B.B. Comer 7 pm

Sept. 30 at Winterboro 7 pm

Oct. 7 at Donoho 7 pm

Oct. 14 vs. Appalachian 7 pm

Oct. 23 Open

Oct. 27 vs. Tarrant 7 pm

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Scrappy Lions team has sights set on another playoff berth



By SHANE DUNAWAY

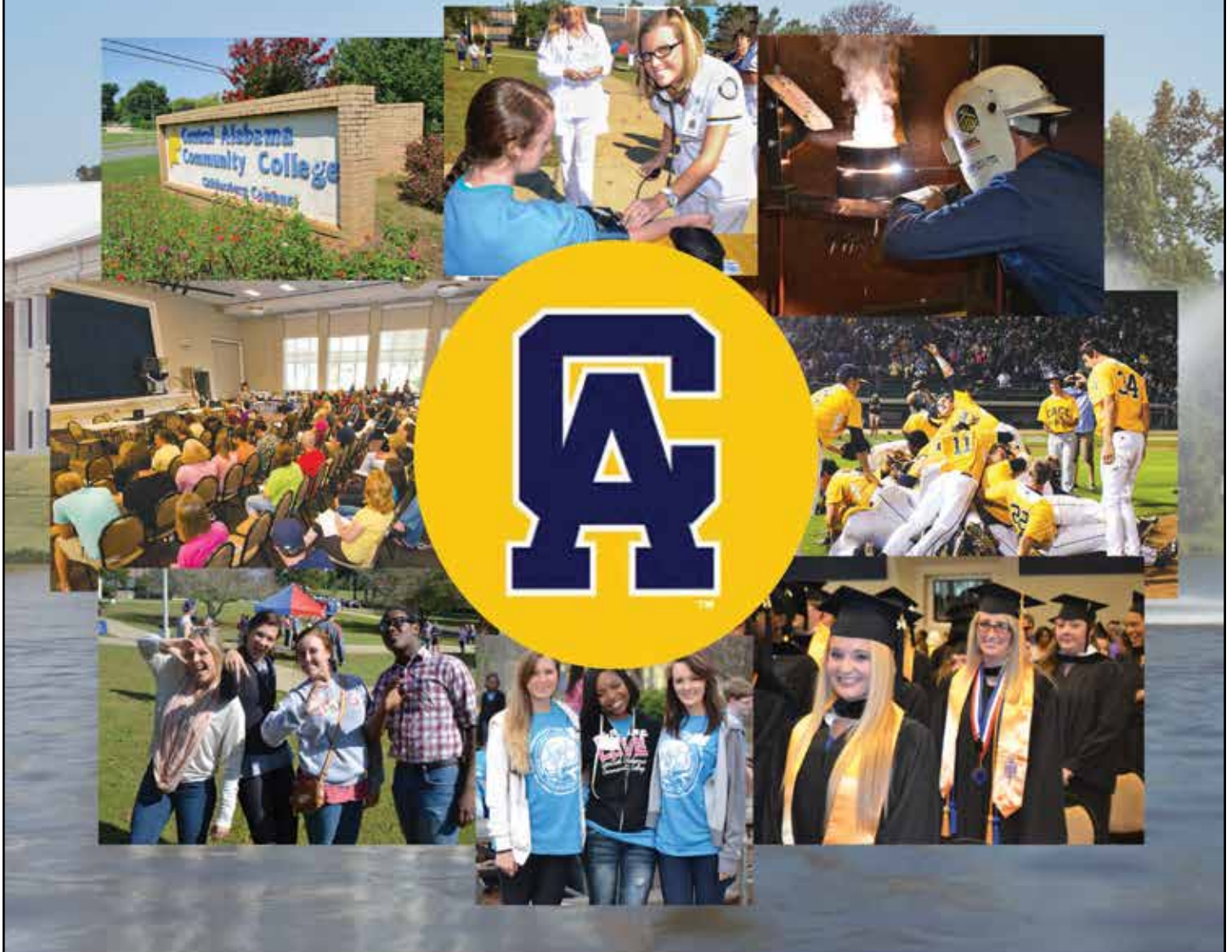
Sometimes the best things in life come unexpected.

The statement rings true for Victory Christian's football program after the Lions put together a 5-0 start that launched an impressive run to the 2015 playoffs as the runner-up in Class 1A, Region 5.

"This is the first time we've done that, so that's pretty awesome," said head coach Mark Sanders. "We're trying to keep the momentum going. It basically all boils down to just a couple things – being in the weight room, doing offseason training, doing camps, keeping the guys together as much as possible and keeping that team fellowship.

"(We have) the mentality that we can do whatever we put our minds to do. We have the capability of achieving things

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we could only dream of, but only if you put in the work, believe in yourself and bring your brothers along with you, just having that family atmosphere. I've got a good coaching staff that supports me, and I couldn't do anything without them."

Though the Lions officially moved to Region 4 during the Alabama High School Athletic Association's offseason reclassification, their region opponents and their mission remain the same.

"We're happy to be in the region we are," Sanders said. "We understand it's one of the toughest regions in 1A football. There are a lot of tough programs in our region, and they pose a challenge every week. But that's something we'll never back down from because the kind of mentality I want my team to have is just a scrappy, 'we'll face anybody, anywhere' mentality.

"We've developed a good friendship

with a lot of the coaches in our region, and I'm pleased we're still in the same region. We're definitely looking forward to playing all those guys again this season."

One of the biggest wins of 2015 came against Ragland on the Purple Devils' home field. The Lions fell behind 20-8 in the second quarter before scoring 28 unanswered points for a 36-20 victory that clinched the team's first playoff berth in school history.

"Games like that just show you how competitive our region is," Sanders said. "That game against Ragland is one that I'll never forget because I love to see the character of a team evolve during a game. That's one of the greatest things, and one of the greatest gifts a coach can receive is for them to be down and find a way to climb back and to claim victory.

"Just how they did it and how we

pulled it off as a squad, it meant the world to me, my coaching staff, the whole school and the community. We've been searching for a win against Ragland for years, and we finally pulled it out and did it in a great way. I'm thinking about all the things that went on in that game, and it was just awesome. It was just a great comeback and a great night."

Sanders said his team graduated 12 seniors, including key leaders Shawn Traywick and Kyle Roberson, but the team should be able to sustain the success with a solid core of junior and senior players.

"I can't wait to see what this season holds for our team," he said. "We have a lot of potential, but we also have a lot of work to do. Every year, you have to keep rebuilding and filling in holes that you lose. But I think we're going to be OK. I really do.

"I could start talking about Harrison Cheatwood, (and how) he's definitely created a buzz for himself as far as being athletic and a multi-sport athlete. His ability to be athletic on the field really stems down to his level of competition. I mean, he hates to lose. That drives him to be as great as he can be.

"Other guys like Garret Dorroh, he's definitely been a key player for us on defense the last couple years, but we're transitioning him more into an offensive role at wideout. He'll be a big help for us on both sides of the ball."

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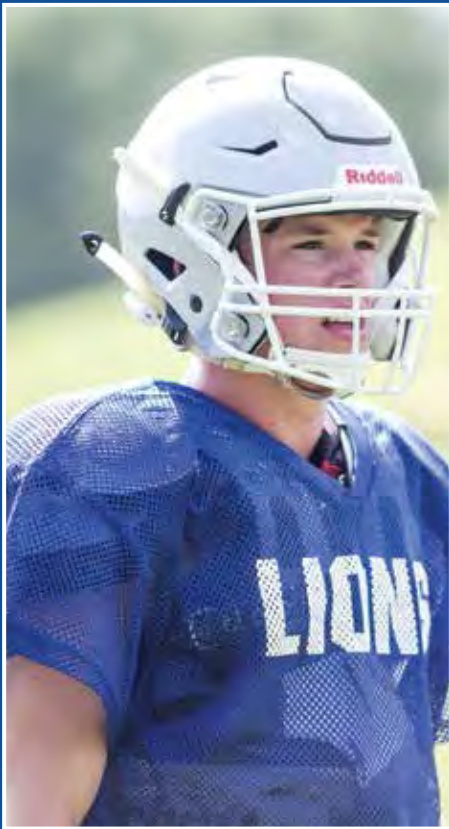
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SPOTLIGHT



HARRISON CHEATWOOD

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Tom Brady because he's a winner, and he's a competitor. He's always coming back in the fourth quarter and staying composed. He's good. A lot of people don't like him, but I like him.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

Probably that first playoff win (last season), because no one has ever won a (football) playoff game here at Victory before. It was big for our school and big for all us guys who have been putting in the hard work to get there. But we definitely want to go further, and we're going to.

What are your post-high school plans?

I want to play college football somewhere. I don't know where yet, though. That's the plan.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?

I wanted to play ever since I was in elementary school. I wanted to play Pee Wee, but my parents wouldn't let me until seventh grade. That's when I started, and I've been with it ever since. It's been the (most fun) thing I've done.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I usually go eat the pre-game meal. I usually find a place to go take a nap and watch film after I wake up and get myself going. I watch a lot of film, but that's about it.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I help my dad put swimming pools in all summer. That's pretty much it, really.

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ROSTER

No.	Name
1	Ethan Johnson
2	Harrison Cheatwood
3	David Smith
5	Michael Venkler
7	Abraham Sargent
8	Ethan Carlisle
10	Chase Shirley
11	Tanner Aldridge
12	Daniel Barber
14	Aaron Jernigan
15	Brantley Bonner
21	Matt Frey
22	Garret Dorroh
23	Pate Cheatwood
24	Ladarius Fitts
33	Blake Bowie
35	Ashton Love
41	Juan Talley
48	Isaac Warren
50	Jack Andrews
52	Creed Cline
54	PJ Holman
55	Wyatt Coss
56	Dawson Smith
57	Addison Lett
60	Sam Mrachkovskiy
62	Brodie Holliday
73	Cage Jackson
77	Griffin Staples
79	Payne Golden
87	Ben Weir

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Victory Christian

HEAD COACH: Mark Sanders (third year)

KEY LOSSES: Kyle Roberson, Shawn Traywick, Tanner Love

KEY RETURNERS: Harrison Cheatwood, David Smith, Ethan Carlisle

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple BASE DEFENSE: Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 8-3 POINTS SCORED: 352 POINTS ALLOWED: 275

SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 vs. Sumiton Christian 7 pm	Sept. 23 at Coosa Christian 7 pm
Aug. 26 vs. Alabama School for the Deaf 7 pm	Sept. 30 vs. Ragland 7 pm
Sept. 2 vs. Donoho 7 pm	Oct. 7 at Wadley 7 pm
Sept. 9 vs. Appalachian 7 pm	Oct. 21 at Winterboro 7 pm
Sept 16 at Talladega Co. Central 7 pm	Oct. 28 at Vincent 7 pm

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Winterboro BULLDOGS

CLASS 1A
REGION 4

Winterboro feels optimistic about season



By SHANE DUNAWAY

After putting together his first winning season at Winterboro High School in 2015, head football coach Alan Beckett should be optimistic heading into his fourth year at helm.

But his Bulldogs will face a tough road in 2016 with all four Class 1A, Region 5 playoff teams from a year ago – Talladega County Central, Ragland, Wadley and Victory Christian -- scheduled consecutively. Beckett's Bulldogs will battle those four squads, now in Region 4, for playoff spots again.

"Wadley's strong," Beckett said. "They return a lot, and they were in the quarterfinals. They were probably an injury away from playing in the state championship.

"TC (Central) is always really good, and Coach (Chris) Mahand's really running a group through that's really strong ..."

"Victory Christian, they were second in our region, won a playoff game and had a historic year for them. Coach (Mark) Sanders is doing a great job there. It is a good region."

Beckett's teams each season have steadily improved in total points per game on offense, total points allowed on defense and overall win total.

"We're a time-of-possession team," he said. "We're a field position team. So all those statistics matter – where the ball is and how many first downs you get. The numbers are going to matter for one thing.

"We've just got to continue to find ways to win the games within the games, and win some of those close ones. ... We may not be in the driver's seat, but we're in the car. We want to continue to work our way toward being the driver."

Beckett hopes the hard work his team put in during the spring and summer months will go a long way toward Winterboro taking the wheel in Region 4.

"We've had a big summer," Beckett said. "We've had a lot of guys go to camp. Clay (Twymon) has just gotten back from Florida State ... Khalil Keith is getting a lot of attention from colleges, so he's been to several as well ... We've been really busy in the weight room."

Beckett added his team has been active with volunteering, taking some time during the summer to assist at a soup kitchen in Anniston.

"We were really proud of that just (for them) getting out and doing good deeds," he said.

Offensive weapons Marquel Bryant and Marquez Bryant were among the key departures for the Bulldogs, but Twymon continues to grow into a leadership role as he

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enters his fourth year as the Bulldogs' starting quarterback.

"He was an all-region quarterback last year, and we went through the tough years, the freshman years," Beckett said. "He's gotten better as the years have gone on. He really had a solid year last year, and he's one of our team leaders."

Twymon said he learned plenty from his early struggles

"I feel like I was 120 pounds soaking wet starting off in ninth grade," he said. "I'm not much bigger now, but I wasn't physically mature enough to, like, really take the hits. It really made me a stronger person having to battle through adversity and stuff like that.

"I feel like my teammates were young, too. There were four of us in the ninth grade that started the whole year. I feel like we just grew together, and I think this year, if we just take care of our responsibilities, we'll do what we need to do to win."

R.J. Burns will move to left tackle to fill a void created during Winterboro's spring game against Linden. Beckett said starting left tackle Jason Geise suffered a neck injury during the game that could be season-ending, so the injury forced a re-shuffling on the line.

"(R.J. is) getting bigger and improving," Beckett said.

"He had a really good year last year and he's going to play more defensively as well. He loves the sport and he's a really good student as well."

Burns said he's looking forward to logging starts at left tackle.

"I feel like it was a good transition for me because I feel like I can protect my quarterback coming from the blind side and not have to work very hard to get my (footwork) right," he said. "We have a couple plays where we pull a lot, and I feel like I work pretty hard."

Beckett said his team has come a long way in terms of attitude, morale and doing the right things on and off the field, but more improvements need to be made.

"I think we're really close," he said. "We've got a couple guys who are just trying to get there on a daily basis and try to understand the importance (of it), which carries on into life that you've got to be there ...

"It's smaller problems to be honest. It doesn't mean I still sleep a full night this time of year, but it's smaller problems, motivational ... I've got a big concern going in of who's that leader going to be when we hit adversity."

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ROSTER

No.	Name
1	Cam Borden
2	David Cook
4	Isaiah Scott
6	Luke Wheeler
7	Omar Dobbins
9	Nyjavion Brown
10	Shaun Vincent
11	Jake Travis
14	Clay Twymon
15	Centorre Smoot
20	Jadion Swain
21	Cordarius Swain
22	Anthony Curry
23	Isaiah McKenzie
24	Kaleb Hale
25	Zay Bunt
30	Dawson Mosley
33	Desmond Battle
51	Justus Garrett
54	Desmick Walker
55	John Costner
57	Brody Hamm
58	Chase Rhoddam
61	Myles Machen
64	Khalil Keith
68	Tim Johnson
73	RJ Burns
77	Ty Swain
75	Jason Geise
88	David Cook

KEY FACTS

OVERVIEW

TEAM: Winterboro

HEAD COACH: Alan Beckett (fourth year)

KEY LOSSES: Marquez Bryant, Marquel Bryant

KEY RETURNERS: Clay Twymon, Khalil Keith

BASE OFFENSE: Multiple

BASE DEFENSE: 3-4/Multiple

2015 IN REVIEW

RECORD: 6-4 **POINTS SCORED:** 213 **POINTS ALLOWED:** 183

SCHEDULE

- Aug. 19 at Keith 7 pm
- Sept. 2 vs. Isabella 7 pm
- Sept. 9 at Donoho 7 pm
- Sept. 16 at Appalachian 7 pm
- Sept. 23 at Fayetteville 7 pm
- Sept. 30 vs. Talladega County Central 7 pm
- Oct. 7 vs. Ragland 7 pm
- Oct. 14 at Wadley 7 pm
- Oct. 21 vs. Victory Christian 7 pm
- Oct. 28 at Talladega 7 pm

SPOTLIGHT

Who's your favorite football player (college or professional), and why?

Russell Wilson, because I'm a small quarterback, and he's a small quarterback by NFL standards. And he's just elusive. I like the way he models his game. He's not overly cocky or (overconfident). I mean, he's confident in his game, but he's not just to the point where you can't really stand to watch the guy because he's celebrating all the time and stuff like that.

What is your greatest football moment, at any level?

Probably being an all-region quarterback last year. And having a chance to experience camps and stuff like that. Playing with Khalil (Keith) and my offensive line. We've got our whole offensive line coming back, so it's going to be an experienced group this year.

What are your post-high school plans?

I want to play college ball somewhere. I'm not saying SEC schools, but a smaller school. I'd like to play college ball as a defensive back for someone.

When did you decide you wanted to play football, and how long have you been playing?



CLAY TWYMON

I started when I was 6 years old, and I've been playing ever since. I always played quarterback coming up, and I always played in the defensive backfield. I've played both ways.

How do you prepare yourself mentally for game day, especially when you're playing a rival school?

I watch a bunch of film, and I just make sure I don't try to overcompensate or overdo it. Basically, I just try to relax my mind, listen to music and stuff like that.

Do you have a special talent off the field or a unique hobby?

I guess you could say leadership because I'm heavily involved in school activities and stuff like that. I'm in Senior Beta Club and in student leadership.



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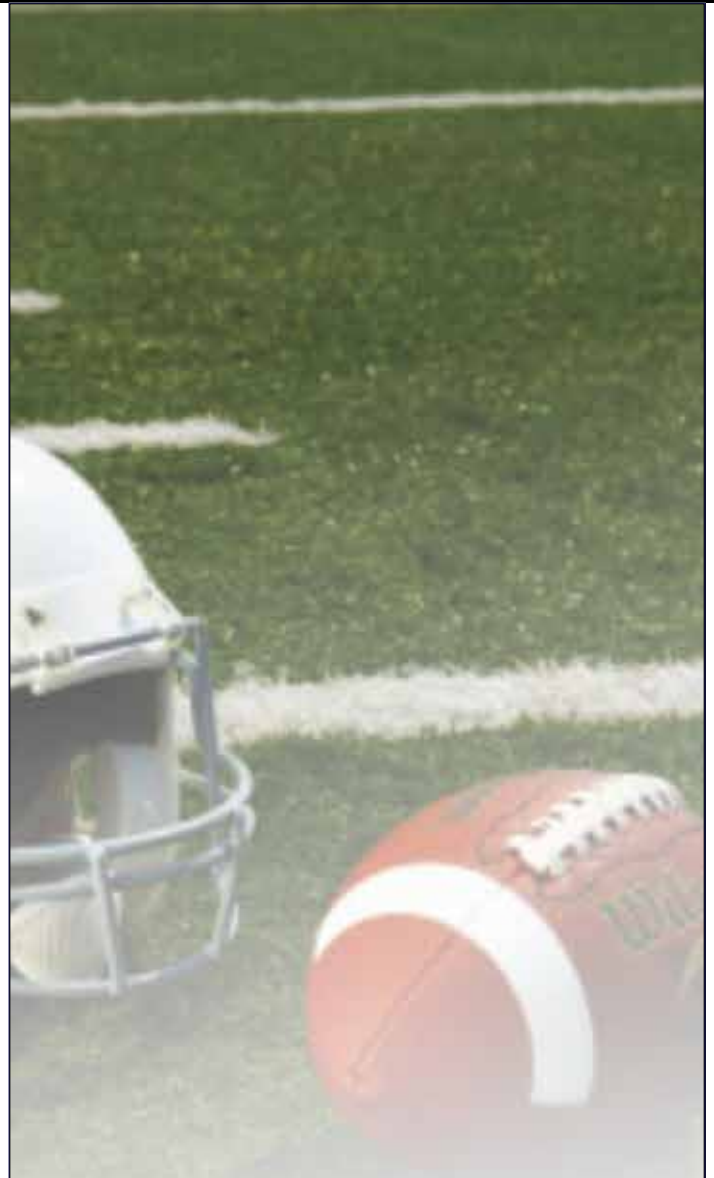
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