

The Original Dale's Seafood salutes the Columbus County Head Football Coaches



Luke Barker East Columbus

Education

High School: Southern Guilford College: Greensboro College Degree: B.S. Physical Education

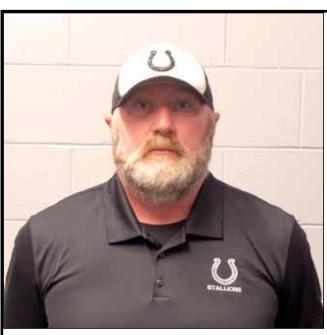
Football Coaching Experience

Thomasville assistant: 2008-2011 Eastern Randolph Head JV Coach: 2012-2014 Mattamuskeet Head Varsity Coach: 2015 Allen Jay Prep Academy Head Coach 2016-2021

Favorite football related movie or book "Remember the Titans" movie and "Friday Night Lights" TV show.

Coach was asked to complete the following sentence. If I wasn't a teacher/coach I would be "working as a transmission specialist in my dad's shop with no air conditioning or heat!"





Russell Dove South Columbus

Education

High School: Bladenboro College: UNC Pembroke Degree(s): B. A. Physical Education M. A. Physical Education

Football Coaching Experience

West Columbus assistant: 2003–2008 West Bladen assistant: 2009–2012 West Bladen Head Coach: 2013–2015 South Columbus Head Coach: 2016– present

Favorite football related movie or book

"Remember the Titans" movie and "Uncommon Life" book by Tony Dungy

Coach was asked to complete the following sentence. If I wasn't a teacher/coach I would be "a chiropractor or physical therapist."





La Monte Williamson West Columbus

Education

High School: West Columbus College: Winston-Salem State University Degree: B. A. Physical Education

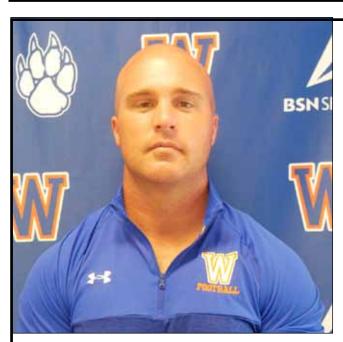
Football Coaching Experience

West Columbus assistant: 2016–2018 West Columbus Head Coach: 2019– present

<u>Favorite football related movie or book</u> "Remember the Titans" movie directed by Boaz Yakin.

Coach was asked to complete the following sentence. If I wasn't a teacher/coach I would be "an owner of a sports bar or some type of restaurant."





Jarrett "JP" Price Whiteville

Education

High School: South Columbus College: UNC Pembroke Degree: B.A. Secondary Social Studies

Football Coaching Experience

South Columbus assistant: 2007–2008 Wallace-Rose Hill assistant: 2009–2016 St. James, SC assistant: 2017 Whiteville Head Coach: 2018–present:

<u>Favorite football related movie or book</u> "Friday Night Lights" movie directed by Peter Berg.

Coach was asked to complete the following sentence. If I wasn't a teacher/coach I would be "a professional golfer on the PGA tour."



Good luck to all of our Columbus County teams in 2022!



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2022 Waccamaw Conference high school football schedules

EAST COLUMBUS

AUG. 19 WILSON PREP^

AUG. 26 OPEN

SEPT. 2 at **HOBBTON**

SEPT. 9 at WEST BLADEN

SEPT. 16 LEJUENE

SEPT. 23 JONES SR.

SEPT. 30 WHITEVILLE*

OCT. 7 TRASK*

OCT. 14 at PENDER*

OCT. 21 at SOUTH COLUMBUS*

OCT. 28 WEST COLUMBUS*

SOUTH COLUMBUS

AUG. 19 at WEST BLADEN

AUG. 26 EAST BLADEN

SEPT. 2 LORIS, SC

SEPT. 9 at **NORTH BRUNSWICK**

SEPT. 16 OPEN

SEPT. 23 JAMES KENAN

SEPT. 30 at PENDER*

OCT. 7 at WEST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 14 TRASK*

OCT. 21 EAST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 28 at WHITEVILLE*

WEST COLUMBUS

AUG. 19 at UNION

AUG. 26 WEST BLADEN

SEPT. 2 SANDHILLS

SEPT. 9 at **NORTH MOORE**

SEPT. 16 at LAKEWOOD

SEPT. 23 OPEN

SEPT. 30 at TRASK*

OCT. 7 SOUTH COLUMBUS*

OCT. 14 at WHITEVILLE*

OCT. 21 PENDER*

OCT. 28 at EAST COLUMBUS*

WHITEVILLE

AUG. 19 NORTH BRUNSWICK

AUG. 26 WEST BRUNSWICK

SEPT. 2 at EAST BLADEN

SEPT. 9 ROSEWOOD

SEPT. 16 at GOLDSBORO

SEPT. 23 OPEN

SEPT. 30 at EAST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 7 PENDER*

OCT. 14 WEST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 21 at TRASK*

OCT. 28 SOUTH COLUMBUS*

HEIDE TRASK

AUG. 19 TOPSAIL

AUG. 26 at HOBBTON

SEPT. 2 UNION

SEPT. 9 DIXON

SEPT. 16 WHITE OAK

SEPT. 23 OPEN

SEPT. 30 WEST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 7 at EAST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 14 at SOUTH COLUMBUS*

OCT. 21 WHITEVILLE*

OCT. 28 at PENDER*

*Waccamaw Conference contests

PENDER

AUG. 19 at LEJEUNE

AUG. 26 UNION

SEPT. 2 OPEN

SEPT. 9 at WALLACE ROSE HILL

SEPT. 16 at DIXON

SEPT. 23 LAKEWOOD

SEPT. 30 SOUTH COLUMBUS*

OCT. 7 at WHITEVILLE*

OCT. 14 EAST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 21 at WEST COLUMBUS*

OCT. 28 TRASK*

*Waccamaw Conference contests





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[^] Replacement for Rocky Mount Prep on the original schdule.

^{*}Waccamaw Conference contests

^{*}Waccamaw Conference contests

^{*}Waccamaw Conference contests

^{*}Waccamaw Conference contests



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presents the

2022 MIDDLE SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULES

September 7

Columbus County Middle School Football Jamboree at West Columbus

September 9

Bladen County Middle School Football Jamboree at Clarkton

September 14

Couth Columbus at Bladenboro West Columbus at Clarkton East Columbus at Elizabethtown Tar Heel at Central

September 21

South Columbus at East Columbus West Columbus at Central Clarkton at Elizabethtown Tar Heel at Bladenboro

September 28

Bladenboro at West Columbus Clarkton at East Columbus Central at Elizabethtown South Columbus at Tar Heel

October 5

Bladenboro at East Columbus Central at Clarkton Elizabethtown at South Columbus West Columbus at Tar Heel

October 12

Bladenboro at Central Clarkton at South Columbus Elizabethtown at West Columbus East Columbus at Tar Heel

October 19

West Columbus at South Columbus Central at East Columbus Bladenboro at Clarkton Tar Heel at Elizabethtown

October 26

Central at South Columbus East Columbus at West Columbus Clarkton at Tar Heel Elizabethtown at Bladenboro

Games are scheduled to begin at 6 p.m.

Columbus County middle school head football coaches



Brad Smith East Columbus Hawks



Roosevelt Colson III Central Hornets



Kaylib Holley West Columbus Warriors South Columbus Stallions South Columbus Stallions



Jake Fonvielle*



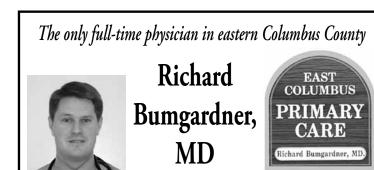
Clint Watts*

27443

*Co-head coaches



Middle school action from last season's South Columbus at East Columbus contest.



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Wishing all the players and coaches a successful **2022 season!**

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Local coaches weigh in on current football issues

By Franklin Davis franklindavis@nrcolumbus.com

The four local high school football head coaches were asked to respond to three questions about high school football in general. Here are the responses from ECHS's Luke Barker, SCHS's Russell Dove, WCHS's LaMonte Williamson and WHS's J.P. Price.

What do you see as the biggest benefit athletes receive from playing football?

Coach Barker: "Football teaches our youth how to work as a team. Not everyone can be great, but as a team we can all do our small part in a great way to make the team great."

Coach Dove: "They learn to develop a work ethic that leads to them being physically and mentally strong. Our players also keep their bodies in great physical shape, which keeps them healthy mentally, emotionally, and socially. They also learn commitment and respect by sharing the camaraderie of football with their coaches and teammates. Playing football helps build confidence in other areas of their lives such as in the classroom or their own home. Sometimes our program is the only place where our players will ever be loved or hear a prayer!"

Coach Williamson: "Football teaches life skills that they can take into the real world like self discipline, time management, team building and the accountability of adulthood"

Coach Price: "Developing mental and physical toughness is a benefit of playing football. It's a grind to go through practice in a helmet and shoulder pads when it's 95 degrees out, sweating and getting dirty. You get knocked down in football and have to get right back up and keep moving forward, just like in life. Lots of our former players come back and relate how the lessons they learned from football apply to everyday situations

they face as adults. Players who participate in multiple sports will tell you how much football prepares them to grind through practice and tough game situations in other sports. Football inspires a camaraderie among teammates that lasts a lifetime."

What are the biggest challenges high school football is facing today?

Coach Barker: "Concussions and the funding to make sure everyone has the proper equipment to avoid or limit the severity of an injury are major concerns. This is especially true at the smaller schools who have less funding than the rest."

Coach Dove: "The allure of electronics and our digital society are a big challenge. We allow our kids to be on phones, computers and video games way too much. Also specialization is ruining not only football, but also all high school sports. Just follow the money. Our kids are not college or pro athletes, and neither are their bodies. Let them play and enjoy other sports. Our schools should be community-oriented, and local programs should come first before any outside organization."

Coach Williamson: "The biggest challenge is getting the kids involved. There are a number of "activities" that aren't as positive as involvement in football that get the attention of our youth. Video games, social media and just sitting at home are some of those."

Coach Price: "The national media's focus on reporting anything it believes is negative about football is a challenge. Football is the greatest game on earth; let it be. There are always reports about concussions and all that information should be taken very seriously, but not enough talk about the relationships that are built, the bonds that are formed and the life lessons learned. Also, we need coaches on all levels to teach the game and not

discourage youngsters by putting their personal agendas ahead of player development and work ethic. Don't live vicariously through your children. As a parent, let your children talk to the coach if a problem arises, stay in your own lane. Participating in high school football or any other sport is not about getting scholarships for college. It's an opportunity for a youngster to move towards adulthood."

What, if any, changes you would like to see made in North Carolina high school football?

Coach Barker: "Bring back the subdivisions in each classification. I loved the eight state champions format. It really helped the smaller schools in each classification to be more competitive."

Coach Dove: "I would love to see the football season start a week later. Our state is supposedly all about player safety, but then we only have eight days to get ready for live contact. I would also like to see our playoffs shortened from the current six rounds. That's way too much and involves too many teams. Playoffs need to reward teams for a successful season once again."

Coach Price: "In North Carolina we need six classifications. We have more schools than Georgia or South Carolina; however, Georgia has seven classes and South Carolina five divisions. We only have four, which is absurd. Realignment needs to take place every two to three years, not four, for equitable playing fields across all sports. School enrollment needs to be the sole number used to divide the schools, not this algebraic formula the NCHSAA utilizes. We now have six rounds of playoffs in football. That should be reduced to five. But sometimes revenue from the additional playoff gate receipts gets in the way of the player safety that is always talked about."

My top 10, plus 1, Columbus County high school football games on the 2022 schedule

By Thomas Sherrill tsherrill@nrcolumbus.com

After exactly one season of covering Columbus County football, I consider myself a wee bit more knowledgeable than I did last year. I have now seen how some teams and sets of fans react in the presence of others and, in certain situations, that passion at times boiling over.

Before anyone accuses me of being a homer for one county team over another, let me just say as someone who moved here two years ago: I don't care who wins in games between county teams. I'll root for county teams against non-county teams (with one exception, but no one here is playing my alma mater, Wilmington Ashley, in a game this fall, even though all four Columbus County teams would likely win), but when it comes to in-county matchups, I'm as neutral as Switzerland.

Now that everyone reading this probably dislikes me equally, here are my picks for the top games of 2022 involving a Columbus County team.

Wilson Prep at East Columbus, Aug. 19

A very late schedule change gives the Gators a home opener three weeks earlier than anticipated. Not much is known about the first year school from Wilson, but the same can be said for new East head coach Luke Barker's squad. The Wilson Prep roster features six seniors, 12 freshmen and a nine players weighing in at 240 or more pounds

North Brunswick at Whiteville, Aug. 19

The 2022 season opener at Legion will see the 3A Scorpions aim for payback after a 54–13 home opener defeat last year to Whiteville. The 2021 game was close before a thunderstorm delayed the game to Saturday, when the Wolfpack dominated. North rallied for a winning record in 2021 while Whiteville went 10–0 in the regular season, but fans will be keen to see how the Pack look after losing such a successful senior class.

East Bladen at South Columbus, Aug. 26

This is the home opener for South Columbus after a truncated 3–5 record in 2021 and comes against a usually strong Eagles team. For the Stallions, this could be the benchmark to find out what they could be in 2022.

West Brunswick at Whiteville, Aug. 26

The Battle of Highway 130 returns after a three-year layoff due to COVID-19. The Trojans stumbled to a 3–7 record in 2021, but pitched a 21–0 shutout in Whiteville in the last matchup in 2019.

West Columbus at North Moore, Sept. 9

The Mustangs held on for a 22–18 win in Cerro Gordo last fall en route to a 10–2 record. The return game is a big road test for the Vikings late in the non-conference slate.

Jones Senior at East Columbus, Sept. 23

Jones won by the slimmest of margins, 14–13, in 2021 in Trenton. This is the second in a four-game homestand for the Gators, who need to build up momentum in non-conference play before hosting rival Whiteville the following week.

Pender at Whiteville, Oct. 7

Whiteville ran away with this game in the second half in 2021, winning 65–12, but after the Patriots' run to the 1A East Finals in 2021, this could be an early conference championship decider.

South Columbus at West Columbus, Oct. 7

The Columbus County game of the year in 2021 was when South saved its now 29-year win streak over the Vikings with a 32-yard "Hail Mary" touchdown pass with no time left. The Vikings, who have been on an upward trajectory in the last couple of years, will have this one circled.

Pender at West Columbus, Oct. 21

The Patriots beat the Vikings twice in 2021, once in the regular season and once in the second round of the 1A state playoffs by a combined score of 108–19. Both games were in Burgaw. This year, Pender comes to Cerro Gordo, where West was 4–2 last

South Columbus at Whiteville, Oct. 28

With Trask seemingly a distant third out of the three 2A teams in the Waccamaw Conference, this traditional regular season-ender could determine who gets the auto-bid for the state playoffs and guarantees themselves a home game. The Whiteville blowout win last fall was marred by a brawl early in the third quarter, so extra attention will be paid to this. Additionally, Whiteville has never won four in a row over the Stallions, but has the chance to accomplish that feat this year.

West Columbus vs East Columbus, Oct. 28

Pender will be the favorite for the 1A autobid from the Waccamaw Conference, but this game could serve as a 1A playoff home game decider. Will East be in a position to challenge West after the Vikings won 32–16 last year in Cerro Gordo? The Gators' last win in the series was in 2018.

Noteworthy: The Wolfpack haven't lost to a Columbus County team since South Columbus in 2018, with the streak now standing at nine games (five of those were shutouts and in three others Whiteville allowed seven or fewer points). Whiteville's winning streak against West Columbus goes back to 2003; its streak against East Columbus to 2012.





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Ty Moss **East Carolina**



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DaNorie Mack Methodist



Shaheem Shipman UNC Pembroke



Donnell Wilson Coastal Carolina



Antonio Odom Methodist



Levi Herring **Barton**



Nick Horne Averette

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Fair Bluff

presents the 2022 ACC **Football** Schedule

2022 ACC FOOTBALL COMPOSITE SCHEDULE



WEEK 0

Saturday, Aug. 27 Duquesne at Florida State... .5 p.m., ACCN Florida A&M at North Carolina.....8:15 p.m., ACCN

WEEK 1

Thursday, Sept. 1 West Virginia at Pitt. 7 p.m., ESPN VMI at Wake Forest7:30 p.m., ACCN

Virginia Tech at Old Dominion7 p.m., ESPNU Temple at Duke......7:30 p.m., ACCN

Saturday, Sept. 3

Rutgers at Boston College Noon, ACCN North Carolina at Appalachian State Noon, ESPNU NC State at East CarolinaNoon, ESPN Richmond at Virginia 12:30 p.m., RSN Bethune-Cookman at Miami3:30 p.m., ACCN Louisville at Syracuse......8 p.m., ACCN

Sunday, Sept. 4

Allstate Louisiana Kickoff

Florida State at LSU (New Orleans, La.) Caesars Superdome......7:30 p.m., ABC

Monday, Sept. 5 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game

Clemson at Georgia Tech (Atlanta, Ga.)..... Mercedes-Benz Stadium...... 8 p.m., ESPN

WEEK 2

Friday, Sept. 9 Louisville at UCF 7:30 p.m., ESPN2

Open: Florida State

Duke at Northwestern Noon, FS1 Southern Miss at Miami Noon, ACCN North Carolina at Georgia State Noon, ESPNU Wake Forest at VanderbiltNoon, SECN Charleston Southern at NC State...... 12:30 p.m., RSN Furman at Clemson3:30 p.m., ACCN Tennessee at Pitt 3:30 p.m., ABC Virginia at Illinois4 p.m., ESPNU Western Carolina at Georgia Tech7 p.m., ACCNX Syracuse at UConn...... 7 p.m., CBSSN Boston College at Virginia Tech8 p.m., ACCN

WEEK 3

Friday, Sept. 16 Florida State at Louisville...... 7 p.m., ESPN Wofford at Virginia Tech11 a.m., ACCN Purdue at Syracuse......Noon, ESPN2 Old Dominion at Virginia2 p.m., ACCN Ole Miss at Georgia Tech 3:30 p.m., ABC Liberty at Wake Forest......5 p.m., ACCN North Carolina A&T at Duke6 p.m., ACCNX Texas Tech at NC State 7 p.m., ESPN2 Pitt at Western Michigan......7:30 p.m., ESPNU Maine at Boston College 7:30 p.m., RSN Louisiana Tech at Clemson8 p.m., ACCN Miami at Texas A&M 9 p.m., ESPN Open: North Carolina

WEEK 4

Thursday, Sept. 22 West Virginia at Virginia Tech............................... 7:30 p.m., ESPN

Friday, Sept. 23

Virginia at Syracuse 7:30 p.m., ESPN

Saturday, Sept. 24

Boston College at Florida State

Notre Dame at North Carolina Rhode Island at Pitt

Saturday, Oct. 1

Virginia Tech at North Carolina

Saturday, Oct. 8

Clemson at Boston College

WEEK 7

Saturday, Oct. 15

NC State at Syracuse

Wake Forest

Thursday, Oct. 20

Saturday, Oct. 22

Boston College at Wake Forest Syracuse at Clemson

Duke at Miami Pitt at Louisville

Open: Florida State, North Carolina, NC State, Virginia Tech

WEEK 9

Thursday, Oct. 27

Saturday, Oct. 29

Georgia Tech at Florida State Wake Forest at Louisville

Clemson at Wake Forest Duke at Kansas Georgia Tech at UCF South Florida at Louisville

Middle Tennessee at Miami UConn at NC State

WEEK 5

Louisville at Boston College NC State at Clemson Virginia at Duke Wake Forest at Florida State Georgia Tech at Pitt

WEEK 6

Wagner at Syracuse

Open: Miami

Duke at Georgia Tech Florida State at NC State Louisville at Virginia North Carolina at Miami Virginia Tech at Pitt Army at Wake Forest Open: Syracuse

Clemson at Florida State North Carolina at Duke Miami at Virginia Tech

Open: Boston College, Georgia Tech, Louisville, Pitt, Virginia,

WEEK 8

Virginia at Georgia Tech...... 7:30 p.m., ESPN

Virginia Tech at NC State 7:30 p.m., ESPN

Boston College at UConn

Miami at Virginia Pitt at North Carolina Notre Dame at Syracuse

Open: Clemson, Duke

WEEK 10

Friday, Nov. 4 Duke at Boston College...... 7 p.m., ESPN2

Saturday, Nov. 5

Clemson at Notre Dame Florida State at Miami Georgia Tech at Virginia Tech James Madison at Louisville North Carolina at Virginia Wake Forest at NC State Syracuse at Pitt

WEEK 11

Saturday, Nov. 12

Boston College at NC State Louisville at Clemson Virginia Tech at Duke Florida State at Syracuse Miami at Georgia Tech North Carolina at Wake Forest Pitt at Virginia

WEEK 12

Saturday, Nov. 19

Boston College at Notre Dame Miami at Clemson Duke at Pitt Louisiana at Florida State Georgia Tech at North Carolina NC State at Louisville Syracuse at Wake Forest Coastal Carolina at Virginia Virginia Tech at Liberty

WEEK 13

Friday, Nov. 25

NC State at North Carolina Noon or 1 p.m. or 3:30 p.m., ABC or ESPN Florida at Florida State 7:30 p.m., ABC

Saturday, Nov. 26 Syracuse at Boston College

South Carolina at Clemson Wake Forest at Duke Georgia Tech at Georgia Louisville at Kentucky

Pitt at Miami Virginia at Virginia Tech

SUBWAY ACC FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Saturday, Dec. 3

Charlotte, N.C.

TBD, ABC

Atlantic Division Champion vs. Coastal Division Champion

Bank of America Stadium



Everyone starts the season undefeated with cautious hopes for football success

By Franklin Davis

Coaches, especially football coaches, are a pessimistic group by nature. It could be called the "Bobby Bowden" syndrome. The late Florida State football coaching legend often lamented each year that his team would be fortunate to win "a dadgum game."

Then you have Alabama's Nick Saban complaining about the "rat poison" spread by the media. Saban always thinks sports writers build up his teams beyond any reasonable expectations and the players eat it up and become complacent. Actually Mack Brown's 2021 UNC team may have ingested a dose of that "rat poison" prior to the 2021 season.

We spoke with the head coaches from the four schools after each had one or more scrimmages to evaluate this year's crop of talent. Along with some of my own opinions, the coaches revealed (as much as they were going to) how they felt about the upcoming season..

EAST COLUMBUS

East Columbus introduced Luke Barker as its 11th head coach since the school opened in the fall of 1992. Barker is well aware of the Gators' lack of a consistently competitive program, but feels the pieces are present to change the football culture at "The Swamp."

One thing working in Barker's favor is some team building that now takes place prior to students entering the ninth grade at East Columbus. Hallsboro and Acme-Delco area middle school students now play as one team, the East Columbus Hawks. While the overall number of students playing middle school football in the eastern end of Columbus County may be down slightly, the chances of the Hawks continuing to play football at the high school level should increase.

Barker praised his team's effort, attitude and how it handled some adverse situations in a scrimmage at Southwest Randolph. "Our defense is learning a new scheme and injuries forced us to play some people out of their regular positions on offense, but overall I was pleased," said Barker. "We still need to improve our depth on the line and reduce the number of players going both ways." Barker is excited about the potential of some of the Gators freshman, but hopes to field a JV team and not have to throw them directly into varsity

Nothing breeds success like success. The Gators nonconference schedule offers several opportunities to get the Barker coaching era off on the right foot.

SOUTH COLUMBUS

Stallions football has been built on a foundation of taking a group of incoming players and developing the football skills and physicality a lineman needs. Add to that, running backs who are elusive and fleet of foot and you have a recipe for winning football.

However, since winning 36 and losing just 6 games from 2016-2018, South Columbus is just 10-14 over the last three seasons.

South's success has been due in part to having hard working athletes and also the ability to maintain the continuity of the program's basic value of a physical brand of football. The two years of COVID-interrupted football and school attendance have disrupted that



Produced by students from Columbus Career and College Academy.

Commentary provided by Kevin Toman and Brett Burroughs.

August 26th	West Bladen at West Columbus
September 2nd	Loris at South Columbus
September 16th	Lejeune at East Columbus
September 23rd	James Kenan at South Columbus
September 30th	Whiteville at East Columbus
October 7th	South Columbus at West Columbus
October 14th	Trask at South Columbus
October 21st	East Columbus at South Columbus
October 28th	East Columbus at West Columbus

All games will be viewable on the CCS and school Facebook pages, CCS Youtube, CCS Twitter, CCS Roku App, CCSTV Fire TV App, The CCS Mobile App, Channel 1304 Spectrum and Channel 98 ATMC. Audio available on 89.9FM.

continuity. Every school has faced difficulties, but the Stallions have seemed to be affected the most.

Coach Russell Dove saw improvement from his first to his second scrimmage. "We were better Friday than we were Wednesday and that must continue," said Dove. "I am seeing some good things offensively. On offense we do what we do. We are still settling on a defensive scheme that fits our available personnel. Our younger players must quickly get acclimated to the speed at which varsity games are played." Dove is upbeat saying, "The more we play the better we are going to get."

Improvement is expected with a nucleus of young players whose workout regiment has been interrupted. South's roster lists only six seniors.

WEST COLUMBUS

West Columbus looks to build on the success experienced in the 2021 spring and fall seasons. The fruits of the effort invested in the middle school football program should continue to be evident on the varsity level.

Rival coaches point out that the Vikings can suit up as many athletes as any team in the conference. But football to some extent is a numbers game and the difference in a winning or losing season could be the appearance or absence of 2-3 players.

With Coach LaMonte Williamson still at the helm of the Vikings football ship, continuity is a plus. Williamson is aware of his players strengths and the players are aware of the coach's expectations.

Williamson was pleased with his team's efforts during its scrimmage with Ashley. "We did some good things. Of course there are things to work on, but I feel confident we will make the necessary corrections," said Williamson. "Despite losing some quality skill position players, I'm confident we have another good group of players at those positions."

The Vikings have had 36-40 players show up for practice and are looking for more young players in order to field a JV team. Early practices indicate enthusiasm is in and accepting mediocrity is out. Winning the early winnable games is a must for morale on the field and in the stands.

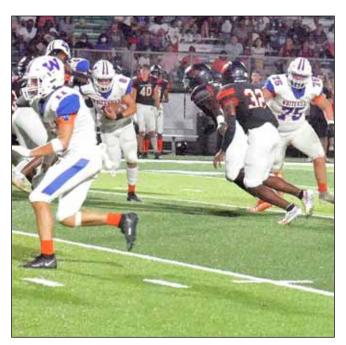
WHITEVILLE

The 2021 Wolfpack ran roughshod over its opponents until St. Pauls derailed the Whiteville championship hopes in the third round of the playoffs. Fans' expectations for Whiteville football are at a high level every season. Unlike last season when a plethora of players who had already earned all-conference recognition returned, the 2022 team will have a number of new faces and some old faces in new places.

The recipe for success is in place. The question is can the players stepping into the roles of the departed chefs continue to "cook" a delicious meal?

"We purposely took on strong opponents in our scrimmages to see how our younger players would respond," said Coach J.P. Price. "Our offensive line has great potential but we are replacing three positions that the same player started in years. A positive is the defensive line has three starters back." He added. "We still need to develop more depth to reduce the number of players that we are currently counting on to go both ways."

Initial practices have been conducted at a high pace with lots of intensity. Expect to see the same pace and intensity when the Friday night lights are burning.



Whiteville's J.T. Todd looks for running room with help from Bryce Freedman (No. 75) and Ashton Hammonds (No. 11).



Vikings' quarterback James Craven Axelberg prepares to launch a pass downfield.



The Stallions' defense surounds the South Brunswick quarterback.

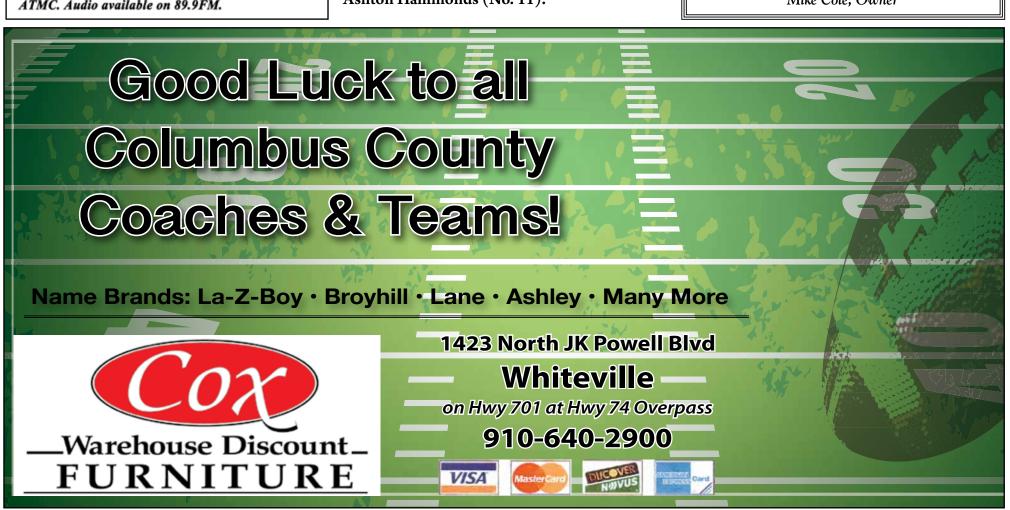


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R.J. Hester



Justin Castro



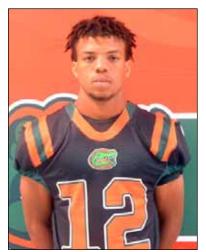
Justin Chavis



Jaquise Smith



Jonah Webb



Alex Melvin



Aaron Mitchell



Tyrese Simpson



Korey Beaty



C.J. Waddell



J.J. Jacobs



Shareed Phillips



Matthew George



Levi Zickafoose



Jeffery Robbins



Jordan Burney



Zay Hines



Anthony Robinson



Devon Jenrette



Bryson Mintz



Kaden Best



Josh G. Jacobs



Brooks McLean



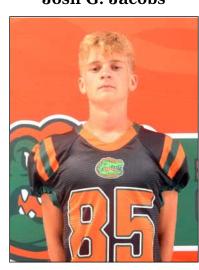
Bernard Jackson III



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Bobby Barsh



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2022 East Columbus Gators Cheerleaders



From left to right: Sara Akins, Ryleigh Baldwin, Morgan Hudson, Hayven Jacobs, Shalonda Stanley, Jayonna Shaw, Callie Jacobs, Ashajanae LeSane Powell, Alexandria Benton, Rachel Mckoy, Kyleigh Patrick, Karleigh Jones, Jade **Bright & Tamira Brown**

Coach: Mrs. Sloan Deans



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East Columbus Gators Assistant Football Coaches

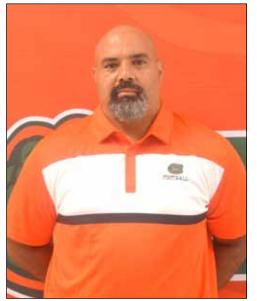








Larry Godwin



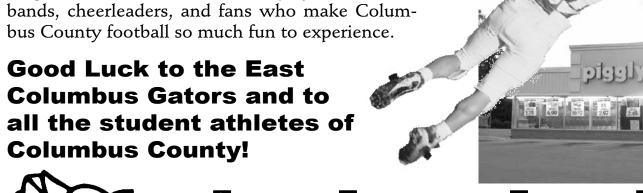
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Pablo Castrejon



Rush Blackwell



Logan Gore



Ryan Chambers



Daniel Ray



Chase Clewis



Devonta Hickman



Cayleb Long



Cameron Long



Mason Parker



Jared Caines



Justin Bianchini



Bo Kinlaw



Jake Cribb



D. J. Farmer



Mason Worley



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Ashton Grainger



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Colton Hammond



South Columbus versus South Brunswick scrimmage action.

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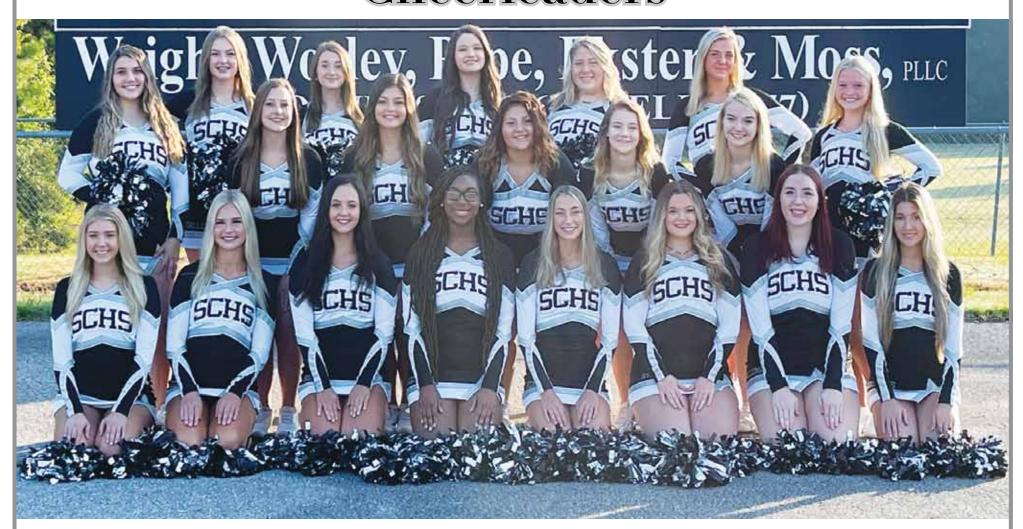
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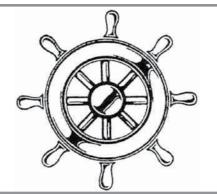
2022 South Columbus Stallions Cheerleaders



Bottom Row: Emma Worley, Lillian Ezzell, Brennan Stewart, Anderiah Long, Rachel Duncan, Skye Barnes, Peyton Mincey, Monica Hall

Middle Row: Hannah Nobles, Kaylee Waggle, Madelyn Benton, Chloe Cribb, Kyndall Buffkin, Ryleigh Hayes, Lilly Duncan

Top Row: Emerson Tompkins, Hayden Hardee, Kayla Stanley, Ella Fowler, Emma Parker Head Coach: Mary Gore



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South Columbus Stallions Assistant Football Coaches



Scott Johnson



Justin Hughes



Collin Ransom



Robbie Lee

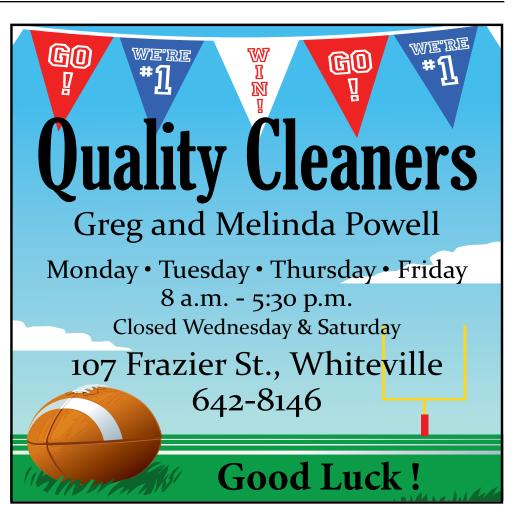


Ira Warwick



Justin White

Not pictured: Jake Fonvielle





Football teams from 20, 30, 40 and 50 years ago

1972 Whiteville WOLFPACK

Head Coach Jerry Cartrette



Left to right, bottom row: Ralph Jordan, Randy Taylor, Kelly Lord, Terry "Bub" Hammnds, Mitchell Williamson, Yogi Hickman. Second row: Joe Hooks, Rodney Bass, Tommy Duncan, Jack Davis, Timmy Watts, Bunky Williams, Alex Maultsby. Third row: William Hickman, Buddy Hooks, Avery Harris, Jerry Ezzell, Graham Smith, Eugene Bell, Bobby Edwards, Al Inman, Fourth row: Mitchell Strickland, Biff Johnson, Tommy Anderson, Larry Suggs, Billy Maultsby, Edward Hooks, Rusty Cartrette, Davey Williamson, Anthony Edwards. Not pictured: Clio Hunter, Sammy Carter, Dean Ward, Carl Chamberlin.



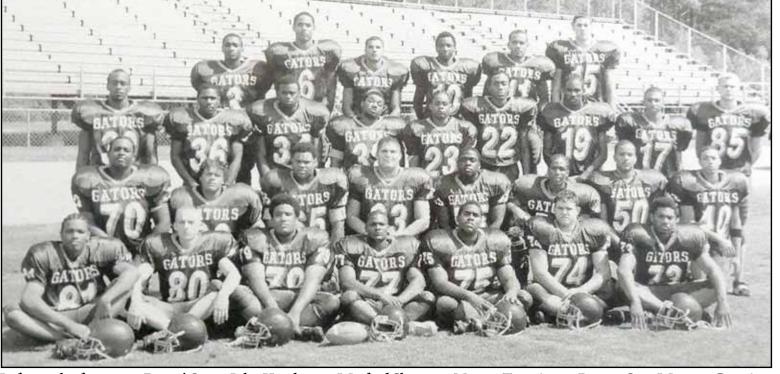
1982 West Columbus Vikings, Head Coach David Pless

First row, left to right: Chris Stanley, David Martin, Chris Strickland, Ricky Hemingway, John Meares, Walter Lennon, Michael Lennon, Jimmy Williams, Andy Noble, Brian McCleney (trainer). Second row: Chris Lee (volunteer coach), Linwood Chestnutt, Ronnie Walker, Greg Nobles, Mark Barnhill, Slade Meares, Brian Soles, Dwight Gore, Ames Floyd, Bobby Braddy. Third row: Assistant coach Kirk Denning, assistant coach Franklin Davis, , Wendell Stephens, Henry Frink, Lorenza Lennon, Alfred Bullock, Reggie Thompson, Kenneth Stephens, Petey Gerald, Gerald Williams, assistant coach Arnold Harwood, assistant coach Michael Powell, head coach David Pless. Not pictured: Gary Keel and Brian Gore.



1992 South Columbus Stallions, Head Coach Frank Ciamillo

Left to right, front row: Marcus Bellamy, Donald Jeter, Bruce Alderman, Jason Ward, Sandy Peritte, Chuck Browder, Gentry Millican, Lamont Soles, Cornelius Tisdale, Antonio Scott, Mike Soles. Second row: Assistant coach Ken Boyd, Harold Baker, Jamie Todd, Chris Brooks, Randy Perritte, Mark Gore, Bill Walker, William Gore, Edward Livingston, Scott Blackmon, Whitney Hughes, Neal Phipps, assistant coach Frank Jernigan. Third row: Assistant coach Tony Larrimore, Corizen Johnson, Adrian Jones, Michael Wright, William Elleby, Roderick Clarida, Robert Johnson, Mac Long, Byron Butler, Sammy Gore, Mark Fowler, Adam Wright.



2002 **ECHS GATORS Head Coach Mark Bridgers**

Photo courtesy of East Columbus High School

Left to right, front row: Donte' Oates, John Henderson, Winfred Shipman, Marcus Troy, Angus Brown, Sean Watson, Greg Antione. Second row: Charles Antone II, Shelton Lennon, Jamar Wright, Michael Gore, Alex White, Clawin Baldwin, J.R. Freeman, Cameron Freeman. Third row: Jonathan Pittman, T'Shombe Bacon, Taurean Gause, Terrell Brown, Dante Porter, Korey Summers, Tyron Powell, William Bryant, Bradley Nance. Fourth row: Clifton Beatty, Barry Porter Jr., Michael Spaulding, Brandon Spears, Christopher Baker, Jamie West.



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2021 All-Waccamaw Conference **East Columbus**

J.J. Faulkner* **Junior Stewart**

South Columbus

Jeremiah Dixon* Domnick Johnson Landon Worley* D.J. Godwin*

West Columbus

Jaylen Bellamy Xander Axelberg

Whiteville

Zion Wilson* Levi Herring* Shaheem Shipman* Daejuan Thompson* Brandon Tyson*

Honorable Mention

East Columbus

Logan Crosby* Ayden Graham **Dureon Sutton**

South Columbus

Rush Blackwell Austin Faulk* Demonta Gore Dalton Thompson* Logan Lovitt*

West Columbus

Dwayne Bryant Cameron Eady DaNorie Mack*

Whiteville

Zayvion Brady* Cee Jai Batten Jamal Faulk Nick Horne* Tyler Hammond* E.J. McLeod*

*Graduated

Returning Players



WEST COLUMNIS

Xander Axelberg

Jaylen Bellamy





Domnick Johnson

Junior Stewart









Demonta Gore

Jamal Faulk

Dwayne Bryant



Rush Blackwell



Cameron Eady



Ayden Graham



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Will Stephens found a way to go from Coach Pless to Coach K

By Franklin Davis franklindavis@nrcolumbus.com

William Wendell Stephens may very well have the most successful career in college athletics of any Columbus County high school graduate ever! If you have never heard of him, don't fret; Stephens is fine with his anonymity.

Stephens is a key member of the Duke University basketball staff. The route to that post was not a direct one. He overcame numerous obstacles on his way to his current position as executive director of sports performance/head sports performance coach (men's basketball).

Stephens oversees player development in Duke's weight room and practice courts. During his time with the Blue Devils' basketball programs, he has coached 46 NBA players, 21 WNBA players, 33 NBA first-round draft picks (including 23 lottery picks) and 11 WNBA first-round draft picks.

Thanks in part to Stephens emphasis on the physical development of his athletes, former Blue Devils have posted 41 top-10 finishes in the six NBA Draft Combine athletic tests since 2000. He has been a part of 17 ACC regular-season championships, 20 ACC tournament titles, nine Final Fours, and three NCAA Basketball National Championships.

"Undoubtedly, Will Stephens is an integral part of the success of Duke Basketball. Aside from being among the very best strength and conditioning coaches in the country, he is an amazing role model and mentor to the young men who choose to play at Duke. Because he is so unassuming, he would never say this but as a father, husband and professional, there's no one better than Will. We are absolutely blessed to have Will in our program. We all learn so much from the standards he consistently exhibits personally and professionally. Will is an absolute treasure." – Mike Krzyzewski, former Duke University Head Men's Basketball Coach

Why is Stephens' journey documented in the Pigskin Preview? He gives a great amount of credit for the success he has enjoyed as an adult to the lessons learned while competing in high school football.

Stephens graduated from West Columbus High School in the spring of 1983. Other players may have been more skilled, but he never let anyone outwork him. That attribute made Stephens a key member of the West Columbus football squad. I know because I was a coach for the Vikings during his time at WCHS. We can be seen standing side by side in the photo of the 1982 West Columbus team. Stephens was a member of the All Three Rivers Conference team his senior season.

"Wendell was not blessed with natural athletic ability but he had the heart and work ethic of a champion. He worked extremely hard in the weight room for four years and earned the respect of his coaches and teammates," said former WCHS head football coach David Pless. "He was a fine young man and a pleasure to coach. I can understand why Duke University would want to have a man like Wendell working with their players." - David Pless, former WCHS head football coach.

Stephens was hesitant to agree to do a story on his life journey. The deciding factor was when I pointed out how his story could serve as an inspiration to any number of youngsters who aspired to reach a goal and found the going difficult.

Current Duke Men's Basketball Associate Head Coach Chris Carrawell also played a major role in persuading Stephens to share his story. Carrawell was entering his senior season at Duke in the fall of 1999, Stephens first year as head strength and conditioning coach for the Duke men's and women's basketball progrms.

Carrawell was effusive in his praise of Stephens. "Will Stephens changed my life," he said. "I reached a level of fitness that I never had acheived previously. I went on to win the 2000 ACC Men's Basketball Player of the Year and make First Team All-American.

"He pushes our athletes in training, but is also a shoulder to lean on," said Carrawell. "He is a great mentor. Will knows what to say to lift a player's spirits up and knows how to keep a player from becoming satisfied with the status quo. He is the first person in the building and the last to leave."

Carrawell concluded by saying that, "Will Stephens is an incredible human being. He is the best strength and conditioning coach ever and an even bettter person. Since 1999 the two constants in Duke basketball have been Coack K and Will Stephens."

I make no claims to have played a part in Stephens' success. However, I am proud to know that he gives some credit for his adult accomplishments to the lessons learned on the high school football field. I planned to write a story about him, but after



Photo courtesy of Will Stephens

Will Stephens competes in a powerlifting event in the early 1990's.



Photo courtesy of Duke Athletics

William Stephens (center) is surrounded by Duke University basketball players at a training session.

receiving his responses to a number of questions, I decided his story would be more meaningful coming straight from him.

Stephens' powerlifting accomplishments are fact and should not be seen as boastful in any way since I requested the information. The following is his account of the past 43 years since he began high school and the outlook he still strives to to pass along to young people today.

Stephens' story

I grew up in the Mt. Olive/Cedar Grove area of Columbus County. My family was not well off financially. I didn't have the means to play football my freshman year of high school. I did participate in track during the spring of my ninth-grade year. It was during this period when I decided I was going to do whatever it took to play football. I also set going to college as a goal.

There were times when I would have to walk part of the way from practice before catching a ride home. Some days it was a struggle to go from working in the tobacco fields to football practice. But my coaches instilled in me how hard work and consistent effort would lead to success. And maybe more importantly, how when things got tough and obstacles to your goals arose you still had to find a way to make it through. I was determined to play. Those lessons helped me persevere and helped shape the adult I would become.

My brother Chris Lee and cousin Reggie Single-

"High school football taught me dedication, to endure and push through to the end even if you spent the day cropping tobacco."

Duke University's William Stephens

tary were great football players and were my role models. They showed me that toughness was what you endured and what you did, not what you said. As a 150-pound freshman I struggled to lift 100 pounds. Chris was benching over 400 pounds. Reggie was very strong. Rickie Hilburn (WC grad who played at ECU) also was extremely strong. I saw what they were doing and that is what I aspired to become. By my senior year, I was 170 pounds and benching 350 pounds.

The late coach Jack Gaster had initiated a weight-training program that led to much success for the Vikings in the late 1970s before he left for Smithfield-Selma in the fall of 1980. His players would participate in powerlifting competitions all over the area. My first exposure to powerlifting was at a meet I attended at Westover High School in Fayetteville. I was a freshman and went to watch some West Columbus athletes (including Chris Lee) compete.

I was intrigued by what I witnessed at that meet and what the human body could be trained to do. It took a while but eventually I got involved in the sport. After graduating from North Carolina Central University in 1987 with a degree in criminal justice, I was scheduled to attend Basic Law Enforcement School in Sanford. I had continued to lift weights during college and found a gym in Sanford to workout in during my 16 weeks in BLE School.

It was my good fortune that the gym owner, Frank Westfall, was a powerlifter. After we talked, he agreed to train me to compete in a powerlifting event. For 16 weeks we trained at night after my day at BLE School finished. My high school lessons of being tough, working hard and enduring pain served me well.

In my first powerlifting competition, I finished fourth in the 242-pound weight class at the NC Drug Free State Championships. I would continue to compete for the next eight years. Westfall got me started in powerlifting, but Tom Booth (multiple

state champion power lifter and retired Navy) taught me how to train at a high level and the mental process needed to win.

I won three consecutive (1991-1993) N.C. Drug-Free Powerlifting Championships in the 242-pound weight class and set the state record in that division in the deadlift with a lift of 661 pounds. In 1994, I won the gold medal in the Law Enforcement Powerlifting World Championships. I was ranked in the top 100 for 242-pound weight class from 1993-95 by the "Powerlifting USA" magazine. At 237 pounds, my personal best lifts were 685 pounds in the squat, 435 pounds in the bench press and 670 pounds in the dead lift.

After graduating from NCCU, I began working as a campus police officer at Duke University in 1987. In 1994, I met Sonny Falcone who was the head strength coach at Duke at that time. As I was still trying to improve my powerlifting efforts, Falcone and I spent a lot of time conversing about lifting techniques. Eventually he "recruited" me to be a volunteer strength coach working with the Duke athletes.

An Assistant Strength Coach position at Duke opened in 1998 and was offered to me and I accepted. One year later, Duke men's basketball associate head coach Johnny Dawkins asked for me to work solely with the men's and women's basketball programs. Ilearned a lot from Dawkins about what a training regimen for a basketball player should be. Over the years, with assistance from Jose Fonseca, team athletic trainer, and Nick Potter, team physical therapist and director of sports science, we developed a basketball training system that has enhanced our players' development at a continuously high level.

I believe a lot of my success came from meeting the right people in the right situation. It's amazing how God works that way. However, none of it would have been possible without the intangibles fostered in me at West Columbus that helped develop the desire to better myself physically and attend college to develop my mind for success.

High school football taught me dedication, to endure and to push through to the end even if you had spent the day working in the tobacco field. Those lessons helped open the door for college. College opened the door for powerlifting and powerlifting opened doors at Duke University.

I ask you to respect time. By that, I mean to be patient. Achieving success usually takes time and more than one attempt. Be consistent in your effort, be passionate, and stay focused. You may have to take some side roads to get to the destination you are seeking. You never know what doors will open, but you have to put yourself in position to walk through them when they do open.



Photo courtesy of Will Stephens

Stephens works with former Duke player Vernon Carey Jr. during the 2019-2020 season.

2022 football scrimmage action



Levi Zickafoose (No. 34) carries for East Columbus against Southwest Randolph.



Staff photo by Franklin Davis

The Stallions' Daquan Cox outruns a South Brunswick defender in Friday's scrimmage.



Staff photo by Franklin Davis

Whiteville's Montrez Holland (No. 10) and Dante Faulk (No. 58) pressure the New Hanover quarterback.



Photo courtesy of Justin Williamson

The Vikings' Cameron Eady(No. 24) eyes an approaching Ashley Screaming Eagles defender.

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Cameron Eady



Nashawn Corbett



Jabari Dorsey



Ryan Strickland



Travis Williams



Kenny Barfield



Kinston Green



Noah Godwin



Ryder Haynes



Alex Barnes



Joseph Specht





Ziron Hemingway Elijah Williamson



Dwayne Bryant



Wyatt Powell



Luke Hardin



Frank DeLeon



Hervon Rouse



Gavin Williamson



Not Pictured

21 Xavier Tart 22 Shawn Murchison 34 Brennen Little 60 Joseph Graham 63 Zymere McLeod 81 Jaylen Evans



Photo courtesy of Justin Williamson West Columbus at Ashley scrimmage action.

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2022 West Columbus Vikings Cheerleaders



Bottom (from left to right) Taylor Lancaster, Tykia Mason, Gabby Harrison, Azala Dawson, Alice-Christian Spivey Middle (left to right) Lyla Bullard, Grayce Blackwell, Morgan Nix, Bella-Grace Carlyle Top (from left to right) Chloe Gordon, Aubree Strickland, Jordan Newkirk, Victoria Burge Not pictured-Chayle Jarvis Coach - Tasha Bass Dyson



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Connor Grainger



Brandon Smith



Kaylib Holley

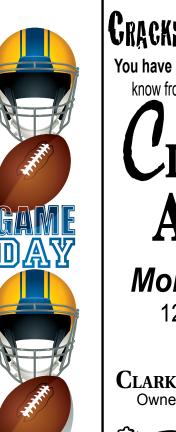


Doug Strickland



Gage Hammonds

Not pictured: Corbett Booth



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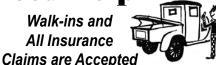
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Jayden Gore



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Wolfpack vs. Wildcats scrimmage action.



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2022 Whiteville Wolfpack Cheerleaders





Bottom L-R Tarasia Jones,
Emma Gray Wheatley,
Jasiyah Brown, Lauryn
Singletary, Grace Wilkins
Second row- Addie Bailey,
Sarah Lily Friese, Tayashia McKenzie
Third Row- Brenna McPherson,
Autumn Bullard, Mary
Gregg Williamson, Michael
Peyton-Mascot, Ella Inman,
Kayla Lee, Carly Sanderson
Top- Jenna Arrington,
Daijah Davis, Laney Bullard
Not Pictured: Bella Sellers
Head Coach: Tracy Cartrette



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Curtis Moss



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