

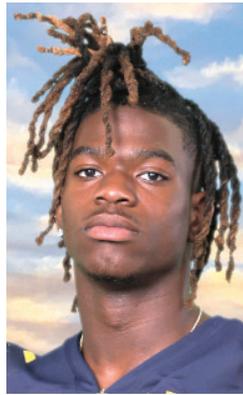
McKinney LIONS

Chalk up 2022 as a turning point for the Lions in their ascent under head coach Marcus Shavers, as the program advanced to the regional semifinal round of the playoffs for the first time since 1993.

The Lions were hardly bystanders upon reaching the third round, taking perennial powerhouse Southlake Carroll to the wire before falling 42-35. Shavers said that postseason run showed the program's growth and gave his players the confidence that they belonged among the state's elite.

Entering this fall ranked No. 22 in Class 6A, McKinney isn't alone in that sentiment.

The Lions have high hopes for this season, and a big



PLAYER to watch

XAVIER FILSAIME DEFENSIVE BACK

Filsaime began his high school as one of the Lions' top receivers before transitioning to safety for his junior season. The defensive back caught the eye of a who's who of college football powerhouses with more than 25 scholarship offers and he backed up that attention by amassing 92 tackles with three pass break-ups, three forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries during the 2022 season. Filsaime has since verbally committed to Florida.

reason why centers around the contributions of a senior class chalked in players who have been thriving for McKinney since they were freshmen—program cornerstones like senior running back Bryan Jackson (USC), senior linebacker

Makhi Frazier (Oregon State) and senior safety Xavier Filsaime (Florida).

Shavers will look to those veterans to lead and set the tone for the program, overseeing a group that stacks up among the most talented teams in the Metroplex.

That's apparent all throughout a defense that expects to pride itself on the sound, fundamental play befitting of an experienced unit, be it senior Ashton McShane (Boston College) and junior Zay Gentry (three-star prospect) in the secondary alongside Filsaime, or senior Jonathan Agumadu (Oklahoma State) and junior Riley Pettijohn (four-star prospect) spearheading the linebacker corps with Frazier.

Agumadu and Frazier will help apply the pressure behind a defensive line led by senior Jordan Covington and juniors



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Trevor Iwerebor and Koby Rosborough.

Jackson is entrenched as a bell-cow of the run game after compiling 1,647 yards and 24 touchdowns as a junior, while Frazier is expected to see more snaps out of the backfield on offense. Senior Jatavious Greer is another option in the run game.

McKinney will have a new face behind center after graduating Keldric Luster. Sophomore Jeremiah Daoud is expected to start at quarterback, but Shavers anticipates a large dose of senior Godspower Nwawuihe,

a North Garland transfer, at the position as well.

They've got a pair of veteran pass-catchers out wide with seniors Khali Best and Sincere Blakely back in the fold, while McKinney is optimistic about what's in store for juniors Jacoby Propes and Khristian Mackintrush.

One area to monitor will be up front, where the Lions graduated four starters from their offensive line. Seniors Courtney Eberhart and Jace Bryson, as well as juniors Jericho Stewart and Traymar Thomas, will look to pick up the slack within that unit.

Varsity SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Longview	McKinney ISD Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 1	Richardson Berkner	Wildcat-Ram Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 8	Flower Mound	McKinney ISD Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 15	Little Elm	Lobo Athletic Complex	7 p.m.
*Sept. 22	McKinney Boyd	McKinney ISD Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 29	Denton Braswell	Carrico Athletic Complex	7 p.m.
Oct. 6	BYE		
Oct. 13	Allen	McKinney ISD Stadium	7 p.m.
Oct. 20	Prosper Rock Hill	Children's Health Stadium	7 p.m.
Oct. 27	Denton Guyer	C.H. Collins Athletic Complex	7 p.m.
Nov. 2	Prosper	McKinney ISD Stadium	7 p.m.

*Homecoming

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