

2025

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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FEATURING



The Mount Airy News

THE TRIBUNE

THE Stokes News

The Wadkin Ripple

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The Mount Airy News

THE Stokes News

THE TRIBUNE

The Hadkin Ripple



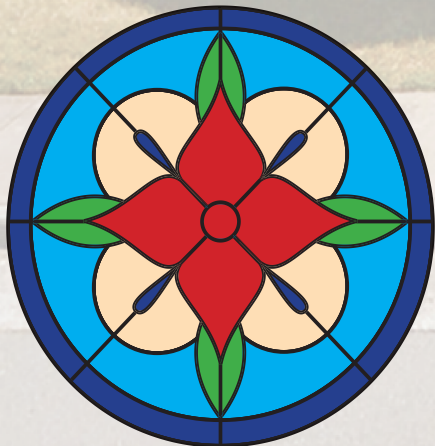
CHARLES LEFTWICH | SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Mount Airy's Taeshon Martin (4) brushes off a Starmount defender.

Have a Great Season!



East Surry Cardinals
North Stokes Vikings
South Stokes Sauras
West Stokes Wildcats

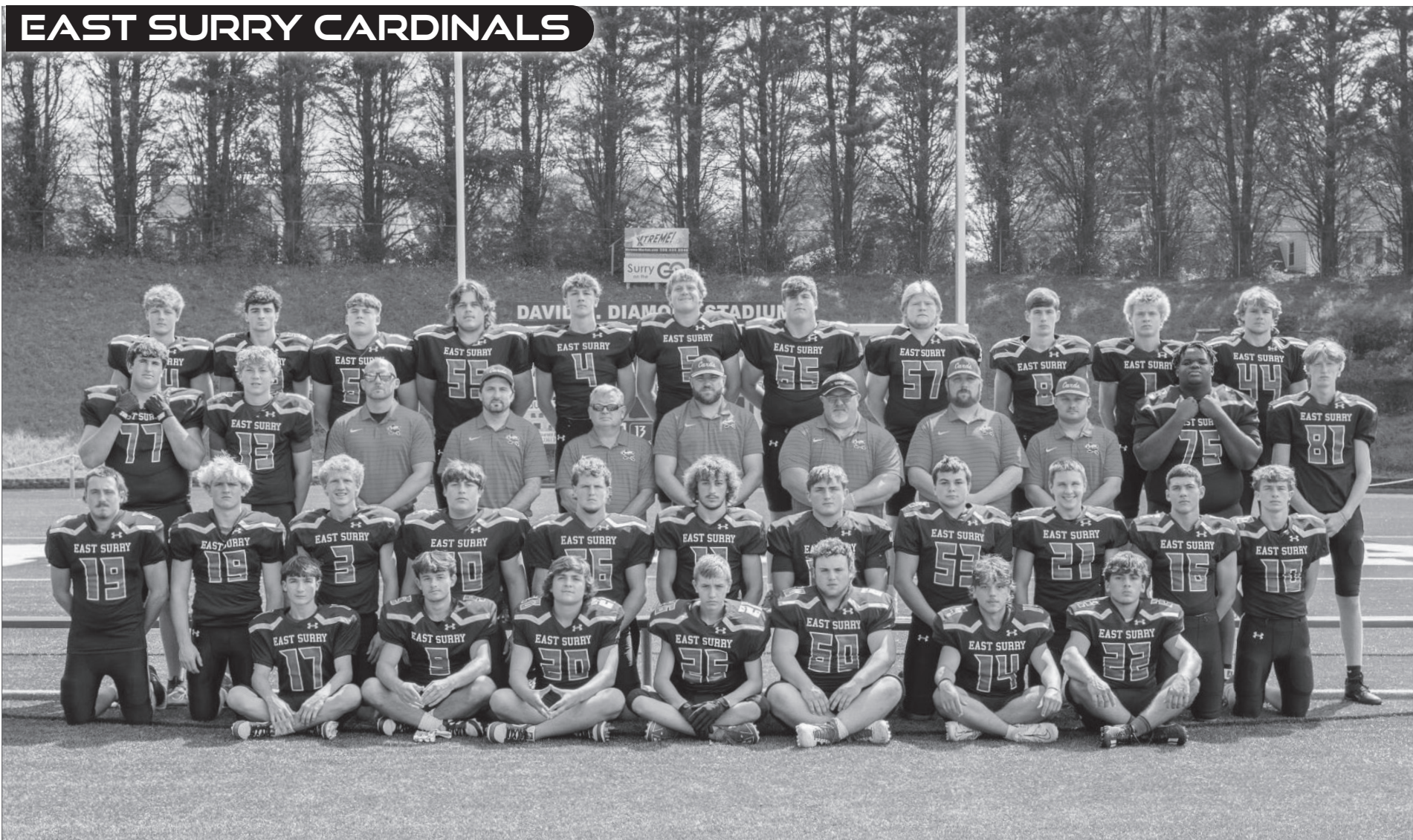


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EAST SURRY CARDINALS



JR WILLOUGHBY PHOTOGRAPHY

CARDINALS ready for ASCENT into 3A DIVISION

By CORY SMITH
csmith@mtairynews.com

HEAD COACH

Caleb Pardue

ASSISTANT COACHES

Rusty Slate (Associate Head Coach, Defensive Line); Andy Jessup (Defensive Coordinator); Eli Williams (Linebackers, Special Teams Coordinator); Joe Denny (Defensive Backs); Garrett Chamberlain (Running Backs, JV Head Coach); Travis Lowery

(Offensive Line); Jarrod Wilhite (Wide Receivers)

LAST SEASON

9-3 overall, 6-0 conference, Foothills 2A Conference Champion, 2A State Playoffs Second Round

KEY LOSSES

East Surry graduated 14 seniors as part of the Class of 2025: Braden Snow, Jonathan Parker, Noah Felts, Hatcher Hamm, Trey Grubbs, Luke

SEE CARDINALS ON PAGE 6

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Bruner, Stevie Keener, Troy Watson, Landon Galyean, Jackson Key, Bryce Lancaster, Tommy Ledesma, Kendrick Oliver and Lucas Chappell.

Four Cardinals elected to continue their football careers following high school: Felts, Keener, Galyean and Chappell.

Ledesma, Galyean and Grubbs were all-conference offensive linemen that led the way for the Cards' efficient offense. Felts, Watson and Bruner combined for nearly 2,000 rushing yards and 27 rushing touchdowns. Keener was fifth on East Surry's career receiving yards list with nearly 1,900 yards and was second all-time in receiving touchdowns with 23.

Snow, Hamm and Chappell were named to the all-conference squad on defense and finished first, third and fifth on the team in total tackles a season ago. Keener and Felts, who combined for seven of East's 12 interceptions, received all-conference honors in the defensive backfield.

SEASON OUTLOOK

East Surry enters the 2025 season

CARDINALS ROSTER

1 Logan Moore	22 Zach Rodriguez
3 Carter Motsinger	24 Porter Gibson
4 Caleb Bowman	26 Emerson Johnson
5 Braxton Davis	29 Dakota Buntin
8 Nolyn Myers	44 Josh Key
9 Liam Johnson	45 Peyton Senter
10 Aidan Harpe	51 Ian Ledesma
11 Samuel Freeman	54 TJ Samples
13 JB Davis	55 Knox Galyean
14 Noah Locklear	56 Ethan Grimes
15 Ryan Metz	57 Luke Raye
16 Nathan Diamont	60 Andrew Boles
17 Tyler Queen	65 Cameron Allred
18 Nate Kiger	66 Brett Moser
20 Ethan Wilson	77 Aaden Wright
21 Jon Hutchens	

Grade, Position, Height and Weight not available at the time of publication

fresh off a nine-win campaign and its fifth conference title in six years.

New challenges await the Cardinals in the 3A division, but coach Caleb Pardue said his team has put in the work needed to capitalize on these new opportunities.

"Our guys did a really good job in the offseason," said Pardue, who was the 2024 Foothills 2A Conference Coach of the Year. "We're making really great

CARDINALS SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
 FRIDAY, 8/22 VS. STATESVILLE
 FRIDAY, 8/29 @ STARMOUNT**
 FRIDAY, 9/5 @ MURPHY**
 FRIDAY, 9/12 @ WALKERTOWN
 FRIDAY, 9/19 VS. NORTH FORSYTH
 FRIDAY, 9/26 OPEN
 FRIDAY, 10/3 VS. SURRY CENTRAL*

FRIDAY, 10/10 @ NORTH SURRY*
 FRIDAY, 10/17 @ WEST STOKES*
 FRIDAY, 10/24 VS. FORBUSH*
 FRIDAY, 10/31 @ MOUNT AIRY*
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 **7:30 P.M. START

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strides in the weight room. We're trying to go beyond just getting faster and stronger and instead hone in on what we need to do in order to succeed at certain positions. That's helped us set certain targets to strive for and now we're seeing the positive results of that because of their hard work."

East Surry will have a mix of new and returning players who will take the field in Week One.

The Cardinals graduated three all-conference offensive linemen from this past year's team. The one returning lineman that received all-conference honors was left tackle Cameron Allred.

"They don't build them any better than him," Pardue said. "He does everything the right way and does anything you ask him to."

Knox Galyean returns as the Cardinals' center. He and Allred will be joined on the line by Andrew Boles, Brett Moser and Ian Ledesma. The trio of juniors were impact players on JV in 2024 that Pardue said will help carry over the Cards' success in the trenches at the varsity level.

"We don't expect any drop-off there and are excited to show what those guys can do," he said.

A strong offensive line is crucial to the physical offense East utilized a

year ago. The Cards ran for more than 2,600 yards while throwing for nearly 1,500.

Pardue wants this year's team to be versatile as well, whether the offense they run is option based or play action based. He hopes to spread the ball around both on the ground and in the air.

Junior JB Davis is expected to take over at quarterback for the Cardinals after serving as JV quarterback a year ago. Carter Motsinger, who passed for 994 yards and 10 touchdowns as a junior, will be the Cards' Swiss Army Knife that can play running back, wide receiver or even QB when needed.

"He can do a lot of special things with the ball in his hands," Pardue said.

Sophomores Nathan Kiger and Jon Hutchens will take over as the primary running backs. Each scored a varsity touchdown in 2024 but combined for just 11 carries. The Cardinals lost their four leading rushers from a year ago.

Logan Moore and Aidan Harpe will operate as wideouts, and Braxton Davis returns as East's tight end. Braxton's 15 receptions for 266 yards and three touchdowns ranked second on the team a year ago.

Caleb Bowman will also play tight end and some outside linebacker.

Ryan Metz returns as a defensive lineman for the Cardinals. Pardue said TJ Samples will make the jump to the varsity DL following an impressive JV campaign last year, and he will be joined by Aaden Wright.

"Aaden Wright has done an incredible job this offseason getting his body into shape to be an every down player," Pardue said of the 6-foot-5 360-pound lineman. "When he turns it on, he's terrifying. He's gonna have a huge year."

Josh Key, who was an all-conference hybrid defender in 2024, will shift to linebacker and play inside with another all-conference player, Porter Gibson. The pair combined for 155 total tackles as juniors.

Motsinger will act as one of East's leaders in the defensive backfield. He didn't play defense most of the 2024 season since he played quarterback, but he played significant minutes at DB as a sophomore in 2023.

Harpe, Logan Moore and Sam Freeman will join Motsinger in the backfield.

BIG GAMES

East Surry's nonconference opponents – only one of which is a fellow 3A team – had a combined record of 45-17 in 2024.

Starmount and Murphy each won multiple playoff games and at least 11 wins, while Walkertown and Statesville each won a playoff game and had at least eight wins.

North Forsyth now competes in the 5A division, and Statesville is part of the 6A division.

"We'll definitely be battle tested," Pardue said.

East Surry has won conference titles in five of the past six seasons, during which time the Cards are 33-1 against conference opponents. East defeated Forbush, North Surry and Surry Central in 2024 – with North being the only member of the former conference to score within 28 points of East – but came up short against both Mount Airy and West Stokes.

Mount Airy topped East Surry 28-7, and West Stokes defeated East 26-23 during the regular season and 35-21 in the state playoffs.



JR WILLOUGHBY PHOTOGRAPHY

East Surry's Braxton Davis (5) makes a touchdown reception over the outstretched hand of Mount Airy's Bryson Taylor (15).

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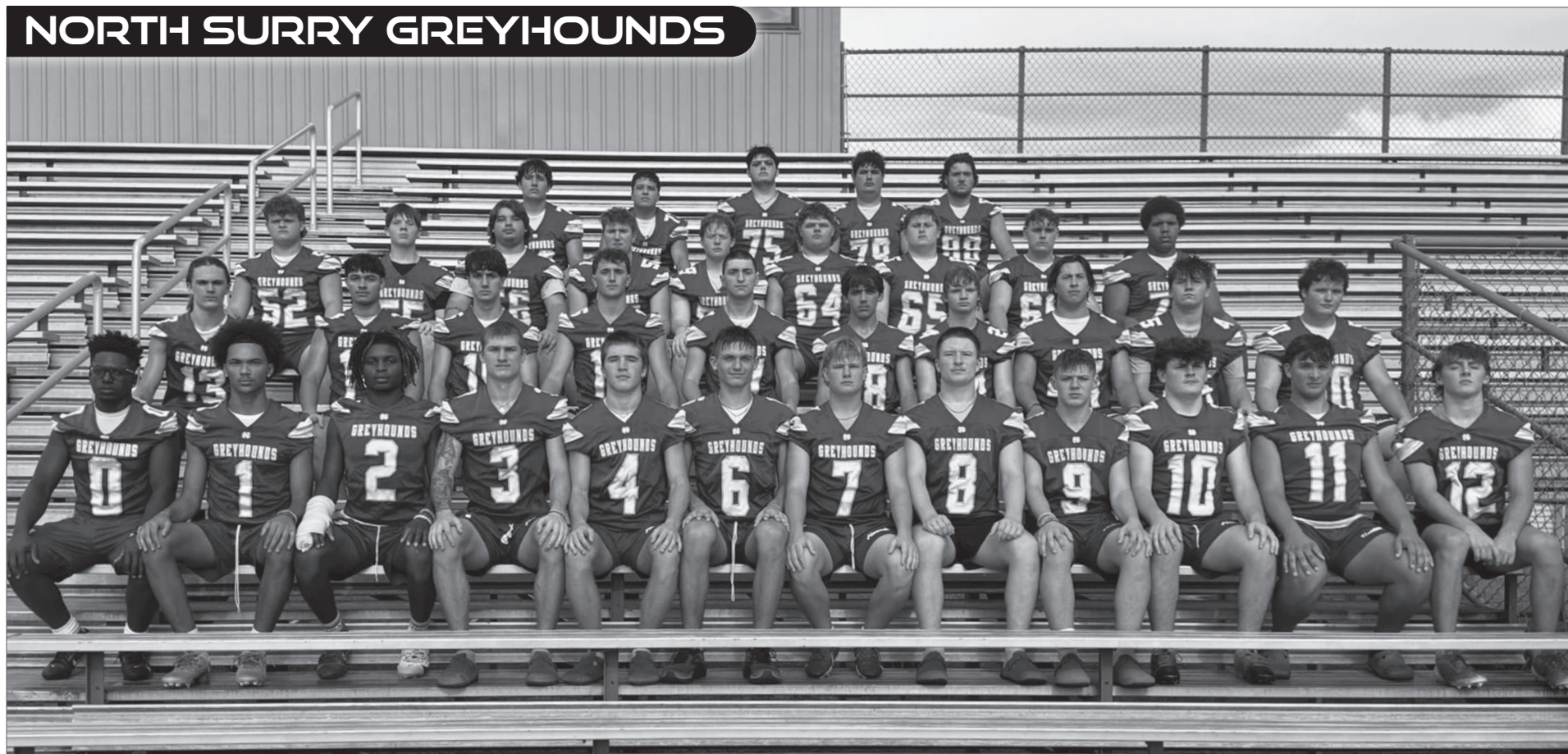
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NORTH SURRY GREYHOUNDS



GREYHOUND ATHLETICS

GREYHOUNDS aim to HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

By CORY SMITH

csmith@mtairynews.com

HEAD COACH

Jackson Smith

ASSISTANT COACHES

Danny Lyons (Assistant Head Coach, Offensive Line); Daniel Draughn (Defensive Coordinator, Strength and Conditioning Coordinator, Defensive Line); Will Hodges (Offensive

Coordinator, Quarterbacks); Jahreece Lynch (Running Backs); Carter Phillips (Tight Ends/Halfbacks); Chris Johnson (Linebackers/Special Teams Coordinator); Austin Swartz (Defensive

Backs); Tyler Beamer (Statistician/Historian)

LAST SEASON

7-4 overall, 5-1 conference, Foothills 2A Conference Runner-up, 2A State

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Playoffs first round, Points for: 36.0,
Points against: 21.1

KEY LOSSES

The Greyhounds graduated 13 seniors in the Class of 2025: Derrick Simmons, Dayvion Duncan, Isaac Webb, Kam McKnight, Owen McMillian, Najm Hines, Payten Sechrist, Alex Cazares, Braxton Montgomery, Anthony Williams, Juan Rico, Eli Ramey and Uriah Kearse.

Kearse, Webb, McKnight and Williams will all continue their football careers in college.

The Greyhounds lost a significant portion of their offense including their entire offensive line, quarterback and four of the five leading receivers. McKnight operated as QB behind a veteran offensive line for two years. As a senior, McKnight threw for more than 2,500 yards and 26 touchdowns. McMillian and Webb were both all-conference receivers, while Ramey, Williams and Montgomery were all-conference linemen.

Kearse and Williams were each all-conference selections on the

defensive line, while Sechrist earned the honor as a defensive back. Kearse, Williams, Sechrist, Cazares and Simmons finished second through sixth on the team in total tackles and combined for 16 of the team's 26 sacks.

SEASON OUTLOOK

A mix of youth and experience has North Surry coach Jackson Smith excited about the 2025 season.

"We returned some studs but definitely had a lot of holes to fill," Smith said. "These guys bought in to the process. We have a bit of a smaller freshman class, but even with the overall roster size down a little our summer attendance was up. That's a credit to this senior class and their desire to keep building our program."

"It's been really cool to see this senior class take over and receive the torch from last year's seniors."

Even with all their losses on offense, the Greyhounds return a pair of explosive all-conference athletes to lead the unit: Fisher Leftwich and Zamarri Sweatman.

Leftwich was the 2024 Foothills 2A Conference Offensive Player of the Year as a combination wide receiver and running back. He racked up more than 1,000 receiving yards and 13 receiving touchdowns, then added 339 yards and 12 touchdowns on the ground. He scored at least one touchdown in all 11 games and scored multiple touchdowns in nine games.

"Fisher does whatever we need him to do and does it extremely well," Smith said. "Having someone that's a Swiss Army Knife like that opens up so

many possibilities."

Leftwich moved into the role of starting running back after Sweatman suffered a season-ending knee injury. Sweatman averaged 105.7 rushing yards per game before his injury, which included an all-star performance of 327 rushing yards and four touchdowns against Wilkes Central.

Smith said Sweatman is on track to suit up for his senior season.

"Coach Daniel Draughn modified his training around his knee rehab and Zamarri never stopped training," Smith said. "He got cleared over the summer and we've been easing him back into it. We know what Zamarri can do. He's starting to look like himself again."

Kyler Cain will also get reps at running back as he returns from a knee injury as well.

Leftwich was able to move to running back in 2024 as North had a loaded, senior-heavy group of wide receivers as well as a veteran quarterback. Leftwich returns as the leading receiver, but only one other returning player had more than 100

receiving yards a season ago. The Greyhounds will also be led by a new quarterback – Cade Atkins.

Atkins played JV as a sophomore but missed his junior season with an injury.

"Cade has every physical tool needed to succeed at that position," Smith said. "He's 6-foot-2, about 190 pounds and is a really talented athlete; we want to use his athleticism to our advantage. Naturally he'll have to overcome the learning curve on some things having missed a season, but as coaches it's our job to put him in a position to be successful."

In addition to Leftwich, Smith highlighted Beau Carson, David Schuyler, Jace Euart and Douglas Sykes as some of the team's wideouts. The coach also plans to use multiple tight ends at times, with those including Jaxton Turney, Parker Dunbar and Erik Cabrera.

The Greyhounds' offensive line situation is still an open competition.

SEE GREYHOUNDS ON PAGE 10

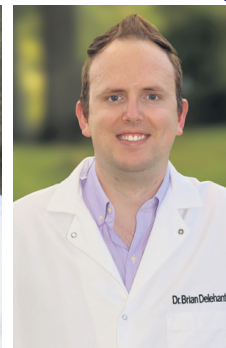


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Smith mentioned numerous players that could help fill those spots, such as: Wyatt Hooker, Dillon Shore, Ben Lakey, Dodger Hodges, Brody Anderson, Hayden Mosley and Gabe Chamberlain.

Austin Ravit is North’s only returning starter on the defensive line.

“He’s going to have to step up and fill that role Uriah had last season,” Smith said. “He’s got great hands, great hips and great bend for a guy over 300 pounds. He’s had a great offseason and been part of that senior group of leaders.”

Hooker, Shore and Turney will also make waves on the defensive line, though Turney may be used at linebacker at times.

Cabrera returns as North’s leading tackler from a season ago. He also led the Hounds in tackles as a sophomore before suffering an injury.

Cabrera and Gage Combs will start at linebacker.

“Those guys are very familiar with what we run and have a lot of experience,” Smith said. “They’ve

GREYHOUNDS

SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FRIDAY, 8/22 VS. ALLEGHANY**

FRIDAY, 8/29 @ WEST WILKES**

FRIDAY, 9/5 @ PATRICK COUNTY

FRIDAY, 9/12 VS. NORTH WILKES**

FRIDAY, 9/19 VS. NORTHWOOD**

FRIDAY, 9/26 OPEN

FRIDAY, 10/3 @ MOUNT AIRY*

FRIDAY, 10/10 VS. EAST SURRY*

FRIDAY, 10/17 @ SURRY CENTRAL*

FRIDAY, 10/24 VS. WEST STOKES*

FRIDAY, 10/31 @ FORBUSH*

*CONFERENCE

**7:30 P.M. START

helped us install a lot more than we had at this time last year.”

Leftwich was an all-conference defensive back as a junior but will be used as both a linebacker and cornerback, depending on the situation, to make an impact in more areas on defense.

North returns both safeties in Schuyler and Cain. Schuyler is a multi-time all-conference selection on defense and is one of the senior

leaders on the varsity squad.

Damarcus McClure is expected to make an impact at cornerback, as will Carson and Elijah Jenkins. Smith said the new core of defensive backs will open things up to bring Leftwich into the box.

BIG GAMES

North Surry, which now competes in the 4A Division, looks to qualify for state playoffs for the third-straight season.

“We’re proud of the kids for the work they’ve done, and we’re really excited to get going,” Smith said.

North Surry will face former Foothills 2A Conference opponents West Wilkes and North Wilkes as part of a five-game nonconference slate. The Hounds have won their past two meetings with each of those Wilkes squads, including a 34-28 overtime win over West Wilkes this past October. North will also take on Alleghany for the first time since 2019.

The Greyhounds will take a detour to Virginia to take on Patrick County, then will wrap up nonconference play against Northwood.

“We just want to control the controllables,” Smith said when asked about what he’s looking for in the first few weeks of the season. “That’s what we preach to the kids every day. It doesn’t matter how tall you are, big you are, if you’ve started however many years, whatever. We can control our attitude and toughness, and once we establish that we can see where we are.”

GREYHOUNDS
ROSTER

#	Name	Pos.	Grade	Height	Weight
0	Zamarri Sweatman	RB, LB	Sr.	5'8"	190
1	Jace Euart	WR, LB	Jr.	6'1"	175
2	Damarcus McClure	RB, DB	So.	5'10"	165
3	Fisher Leftwich	ATH, DB	Sr.	6'2"	185
4	Kyler Cain	RB, DB	Sr.	5'7"	150
6	Beau Carson	WR, DB	Jr.	6'2"	175
7	Gage Combs	RB, LB	Sr.	5'7"	175
8	David Schuyler	TE, LB, K	Sr.	5'10"	190
9	Elijah Jenkins	WR, DB	Sr.	5'7"	150
10	Kendall Ring	TE, LB	Jr.	5'9"	195
11	Jaxton Turney	WR, DB	Sr.	5'10"	205
12	Nate Stanley	RB, DB	So.	5'10"	170
13	Douglas Sykes	WR, DB	Jr.	6'1"	165
14	Reily Cazares	WR, LB	Jr.	5'9"	190
15	Mathew Rogers	WR, DB	Sr.	5'8"	170
16	Cade Atkins	QB	Sr.	6'2"	185
17	Boone Aparicio	TE, LB	Jr.	5'11"	180
24	Shane Easter	RB, DB	So	5'7"	175
44	Erik Cabrera	TE, LB, K	Sr.	6'0"	220
45	Mason Cornett	TE, LB	So.	5'11"	210
50	Lane Ramey	OL, DL	So.	5'9"	250
52	Logan Craft	OL, DL	Jr.	5'8"	250
55	Cam Jackson	OL, DL	So.	5'10"	205
56	Kinley Stanley	OL, DL	Jr.	5'10"	265
57	Ben Lakey	OL, DL	Sr.	5'10"	250
59	Gabe Chamberlain	OL, LB	Sr.	5'9"	215
64	Hayden Mosley	OL, DL	Sr.	5'10"	270
65	Dillon Shore	OL, DL	Sr.	5'10"	270
69	Dodger Hodges	OL, DL	Jr.	6'0"	245
71	Austin Ravit	OL, DL	Sr.	6'1"	340
72	Ian Bello	OL, DL	Jr.	6'0"	255
73	Orlando Bello	OL, DL	Sr.	6'0"	255
75	Wyatt Hooker	OL, DL	Jr.	6'5"	340
79	Brody Anderson	OL, DL	Jr.	6'2"	320
88	Parker Dunbar	TE, DE	Sr.	6'5"	250

The new Northwest 3A/4A Conference “is going to be a gauntlet,” Smith said.

North Surry only lost one conference game across the 2023 and 2024 seasons, but opens league play this year against two defending conference champions – Mount Airy and East Surry. Mount Airy, East Surry and West Stokes accounted for all three of the Hounds’ regular season losses in 2024.

North has won its past two meetings against Forbush and its past eight against Surry Central.



CORY SMITH | THE NEWS

North Surry’s Zamarri Sweatman (0) runs for a first down against West Wilkes.

SURRY CENTRAL GOLDEN EAGLES



CORY SMITH | MOUNT AIRY NEWS

THE FORTNER ERA begins in DOBSON

By CORY SMITH

csmith@mtairynews.com

HEAD COACH

Jamie Fortner

ASSISTANT COACHES

Wes Evans (Offensive Coordinator, Quarterbacks); Sam Nussman (Defensive Coordinator, Linebackers); Stephen Priddy (Special Teams Coordinator, Defensive Line); Karson Crouse (Running Backs, JV Offensive Coordinator); Logan Priddy (Secondary, JV Defensive Coordinator); Mason Cox (Tight Ends, H-Backs); Adam Walker (Offensive Line); Trent Shumate (Wide Receivers); Aaron Cave (Offensive Line, Defensive Line)

LAST SEASON

6-5 overall, 4-2 conference, Foothills 2A Conference third place, 2A State Playoffs first round, Points for: 29.8, Points against: 29.8

KEY LOSSES

Surry Central graduated 16 seniors from its 2024 team: Brian Williams,

Lucas Johnson, Jesse Jester, Tripp McMillen, Eli Snow, Mason Jewell, Landon Easter, Ian Hooker, Allen Huffman, Sam Wood, Wyatt Wall, Jeremiah Harris, Paydon Snow, Houston Whitaker, Henry Godinez and Hagan Simpson.

Wall led the Eagles' defense with more than 140 total tackles and 20 tackles for loss. He was the Eagles' only all-conference selection on defense, but the team graduated 10 of its 12 leading tacklers from a year ago. Jewell, Snow and Johnson combined for five of the team's seven interceptions, while seniors also contributed to four of the six forced fumbles.

Offensively, Jewell was the starting quarterback for the better part of three years, throwing for more than 1,500 yards and 20 touchdowns in 2024. Huffman approached nearly 900 rushing yards, including five 100-yard games, while Williams led the team in all-purpose yards with more than 1,500 as a split wide receiver and running back.

Williams, who was named specialist of the year for the conference, scored three touchdowns on special teams to bring his season total up to 17; he will continue his football career at N.C. Wesleyan University. McMillen was the team's top receiver with nearly 700 yards and 10 touchdowns and also served as the kicker.

The Eagles graduated almost all their starters on both the offensive and defensive lines.

SEASON OUTLOOK

Surry Central's football program will start with a clean slate in 2025. Not only did the Golden Eagles graduate 16 seniors, but the team will also be led by a new head coach for the first time in nearly two decades.

Jamie Fortner took over the program in January after longtime coach Monty Southern stepped down. The former North Stokes coach is ready for a fresh start with a young Eagles squad.

"I'm really enjoying it here at Surry Central," Fortner said. "I've enjoyed working with these boys because they



work hard, they're physical and they want to be successful. These guys are here to lay the foundation that's going to make us a program to contend with."

The young Eagles currently have just 13 upperclassmen on the roster. The program does boast large freshmen and sophomore classes.

Central returns three starters on offense: Travon Sawyers, Micah

SEE EAGLES ON PAGE 12

MOUNT AIRY GRANITE BEARS



GRANITE BEAR ATHLETICS

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GRANITE BEARS

hungry to return to the MOUNTAINTOP

By CORY SMITH
csmith@mtairynews.com

HEAD COACH

Austin Taylor

ASSISTANT COACHES

Darron Taylor (Defensive Coordinator); Tanner Hiatt (Offensive Coordinator, Quarterbacks); Jordon Tucker (Defensive Line); Tyson Clabo (Defensive Line); Richard Grissom Jr. (Defensive Backs); Nic Isom (Safeties); Wes Bowman (Defensive Assistant); Justin Combs (Offensive Line); Weston Miller (Offensive Line, Tight Ends); Justin Moore (Running Backs); Dennis Moore (Running Backs); Danny Gallimore (Wide Receivers); Caleb Thomas (Offensive Assistant); David "Murdock" Meredith (Special Teams); Gerald Travis (Gameday Coordinator); Sam Chamberlain (Gameday Coordinator)

LAST SEASON

13-1 overall, 6-0 conference, Northwest 1A Conference Champions, 1A West Regional Semifinals, Points for: 40.6, Points against: 9.0

KEY LOSSES

Mount Airy graduated 15 seniors from its 2024 squad: Landon Gallimore, Fletcher Gallimore, Cash Hemric, Yannel Arce, John Martin, Bryson Taylor, Jayle Bryant, Bryson Caudle, Dee Dawkins, JD Harper, Jayden Sechrist, Jourdain Hill, Colin Hiatt, Dyson Long and Saadiq Pilson.

Dawkins, Taylor, Bryant and both Gallimores signed to continue their football careers in college, while Caudle will play football and wrestle at the next level. Taylor and Dawkins both earned all-conference honors on defense. Landon Gallimore started at quarterback for the Bears, while both Harper and Hill were all-conference offensive linemen.



Caudle led the Bears with 112 total tackles in 2024, while Dawkins finished second among linemen with 71. Taylor put his name in the NCHSAA record book by scoring three pick-6s, which is tied for the second-most in a season in state history. He was also the team's leading punt returner.

Taylor, Bryant and Landon Gallimore combined for eight rushing touchdowns, and Landon threw all seven of the team's passing touchdowns.

Fletcher Gallimore averaged 33.6 yards per punt.

SEASON OUTLOOK

Football is back in the Granite City and the Mount Airy Bears are ready to make an impact in the 3A division.

The Granite Bears are fresh off a 13-1 season in 2024. A 14-7 Elite Eight playoff loss to Corvian Community ended the team's 43-game winning streak that spanned across three seasons and included a pair of state championships.

"Losing how we did last year has definitely motivated us in the offseason," said Mount Airy coach Austin Taylor. "Attendance has been great for both JV and varsity guys. They're ready to get back on the field."

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GRANITE BEARS

SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FRIDAY, 8/22 VS. STARMOUNT

FRIDAY, 8/29 @ EAST WILKES* *

FRIDAY, 9/5 @ WATAUGA* *

FRIDAY, 9/12 VS. JEFFERSON FOREST (VA.)

FRIDAY, 9/19 VS. ST. STEPHENS

FRIDAY, 9/26 OPEN

FRIDAY, 10/3 VS. NORTH SURRY*

FRIDAY, 10/10 @ WEST STOKES*

FRIDAY, 10/17 @ FORBUSH

FRIDAY, 10/24 VS. SURRY CENTRAL*

FRIDAY, 10/31 @ EAST SURRY*

*CONFERENCE

** 7:30 P.M. START

position players on offense but has a noticeable opening at quarterback – a position that was occupied by a Gallimore each of the past four years.

Taylor said there have been three contenders for the quarterback position in the offseason: Ahmad Francis, Aidan Pomeroy and Ty Hemric. Francis is a freshman transfer, Hemric is a sophomore that played quarterback for the JV squad in 2024, and Pomeroy previously served as backup varsity quarterback. Taylor said all three bring unique skillsets to the table that Mount Airy can utilize.

The Bears averaged more than 300 rushing yards per game this past season while passing for just over 40 yards per game. Taylor said the Bears will take a more mixed approach this season under new offensive coordinator Tanner Hiatt.

Former Northwest 1A Conference Offensive Player of the Year Taeshon Martin returns for his senior year. Martin had one of the best seasons in school history in 2024 by averaging 171.2 rushing yards per game. He ran 224 times for nearly 2,400 yards, averaged more than 10 yards per carry and scored 41 total touchdowns.

Martin won't have to carry as much as he did as a junior due to more depth on this year's roster but will remain a focal point of the offense. Taylor mentioned getting Martin more involved in the passing game while also incorporating running backs such as Kylan Mason, Braddox Sumner and Tymere Brown. Mason averaged 7.9 yards per carry off 32 touches as a sophomore, while Sumner and Brown

primarily played JV.

Mount Airy's second-leading rusher from a year ago, DJ Joyce, will likely take a reduced role on offense. Joyce, who ran for 711 yards and 13 touchdowns this past season, suffered a serious knee injury during basketball season but was medically cleared in July. Joyce will make his biggest impact on the defensive line.

Zach Goins returns as the Bears' leading receiver. Goins accounted for 357 of the team's 591 receiving yards and five of seven receiving touchdowns. Saul Oakley, Karson Strickland and Jasper Wilmoth will join Goins as wideouts, while Martin and Mason will be used as dual threat players.

The Bears' offensive line took a big hit by graduating Dawkins, Hill and Harper.

Former all-conference player Jackson Byerly, who stands 6-foot-6 and 246 pounds, will line up as the team's right tackle, while the 6'4" 260-pound Riley Leake will start at right guard. McKennon Hiatt returns as the team's 6'3" 240-pound center.

Carson Soriano and Ethan Clabo are two newcomers to the line, at least in their current roles. Soriano, a 6'0" 263-pound sophomore who spent most of the 2024 season on JV, will start at left guard. Clabo took advantage of his 6'4" 225-pound frame last season as a tight end but will start this season at left tackle.

Clabo will resume his starting job as a defensive end as well. He and Joyce combined for 88 tackles for a loss and

31.5 sacks. Joyce led the state with 57 tackles for a loss and set a new school record with 19 sacks (in the MaxPreps era, via Mount Airy sports historian Doug McDaniel).

Third Floyd also returns for his fourth varsity season on the defensive line. The 6'1" 327-pound Floyd is deceptively quick and was a crucial part of a defense that allowed just nine PPG in 2024.

Taylor said the Bears plan to fill Dawkins' role by committee for the time being.

Caudle was the Bears' leading tackler in 2024, but the team returns seven of its next 10 leading tacklers – three of which will return as starting linebackers: Mason, Oakley and Tyson Youmans. Youmans had 104 tackles this past season, and Mason and Oakley weren't far behind at 88 and 80 respectively.

Martin returns at safety, while Goins and Karson Strickland return as cornerbacks. Martin had three interceptions and 12 pass deflections a year ago, and Goins added eight pass deflections. Strickland was one of five Bears that forced multiple fumbles.

Taylor said the remaining safety spot is up for grabs with players such as Pomeroy, Hemric and Sumner in the running.

BIG GAMES

Mount Airy's ascent into the 3A division brings with it one of the Bears' toughest regular season schedules in years.

Mount Airy jumps headfirst into the deep end in Week 1 by hosting former Northwest 1A Conference rival Starmount. The Bears handed the Rams their only two losses in 2024 by scores of 17-14 and 31-23, the latter of which came in the third round of the state playoffs.

"We really want to start fast," Taylor said. "It seems that in the past few seasons it's taken us some time to settle into that first game, and we had to make adjustments. That's one of the reasons we went to Mount Tabor to prepare. Starmount's a great program so we can't afford to start slow."

Mount Airy then takes on another team that won 10 games in 2024, East

GRANITE BEARS ROSTER

#	Name	Grade	Pos.	Height	Weight
1	Zach Goins	Sr.	WR, DB	6'2"	158
2	Braddox Sumner	Jr.	RB, DB	5'8"	170
3	Aidan Pomeroy	Sr.	QB, DB	6'4"	168
4	Taeshon Martin	Sr.	RB, DB	5'10"	181
5	Kylan Mason	Jr.	RB, DB	5'9"	170
6	Scott Moore	Sr.	RB, DB	6'1"	170
7	Karson Strickland	Sr.	WR, DB	6'1"	180
8	Cashlyn Revels	Sr.	WR, DB	5'10"	161
10	Jasper Wilmoth	Jr.	WR, DB	6'1"	161
12	Tyson Youmans	Sr.	TE, LB	6'0"	256
14	Ty Hemric	So.	QB, DB	5'11"	159
15	Ahmad Francis	Fr.	QB, DB	6'2"	151
19	Saul Oakley	Sr.	WR, LB	6'2"	163
20	Tymere Brown	Jr.	RB, DB	5'8"	145
21	Alex Spainhour	Jr.	WR, LB	6'0"	163
22	DJ Joyce	Sr.	RB, DL	6'3"	243
25	Dreshon Smith	Jr.	RB, DB	5'11"	165
27	Cody Byerly	Jr.	TE, LB	5'11"	166
33	Janet Ramirez	Sr.	WR, DB, K	5'1"	144
50	Landon Wood	Jr.	OL, DL	6'0"	235
51	McKennon Hiatt	Jr.	OL, DL	6'3"	240
54	Bryson Grey	Sr.	OL, DL	5'11"	191
55	Riley Leake	So.	OL, DL	6'4"	265
59	Will Vaden	Jr.	OL, DL	6'0"	188
60	Wyatt Creed	Jr.	OL, DL	5'7"	225
64	Britton Ward	Sr.	OL, DL	6'2"	257
65	Miles Fonville	So.	OL, DL	6'2"	167
66	Ethan Clabo	Sr.	OL, DL	6'4"	225
67	Haden Goins	Sr.	OL, DL	6'2"	195
71	Third Floyd	Sr.	OL, DL	6'1"	327
74	Jackson Byerly	Sr.	OL, DL	6'6"	246
75	Carson Soriano	Jr.	OL, DL	6'0"	263
80	Zion Martin	Jr.	WR, DB	6'1"	160
82	Michael Bessent	Jr.	WR, DB	6'3"	158
88	Owen Dobbin	Jr.	WR, DB	6'3"	151

Wilkes. The Wilkes Cardinals joined Starmount, East Surry and 1A State Runner-up Corvian Community as the only teams to hold Mount Airy to fewer than 30 points.

Things don't get any easier in week three when Mount Airy travels to Boone to take on Watauga. The Pioneers are part of the state's new 6A division and have only lost twice in the past two seasons.

Mount Airy rounds out its nonconference schedule with home games against Jefferson Forest (Va.), which ranked in the top 10 of the Virginia state rankings each of the past two seasons, and St. Stephens, another 6A squad.

The new Northwest 3A/4A Conference opens with Mount Airy taking on the three schools from the 4A Division: North Surry, West Stokes and Forbush.

ELKIN BUCKIN' ELKS



BUCKIN' ELK ATHLETICS

ELKS LEANING ON YOUTH in return to MOUNTAIN VALLEY CONFERENCE

By CORY SMITH
csmith@mtairynews.com

HEAD COACH

Brad Baker

ASSISTANT COACHES

Matthew Altemueller, Daniel Blevins, Ethan Creed, Kerry Norman, Cory Rycroft

LAST SEASON

2-9 overall, 2-4 conference, Northwest 1A Conference Fifth Place,

1A State Playoffs First Round, Points for: 11.9, Points against: 28.2

KEY LOSSES

Elkin graduated 15 players from its 2024 squad: Rhet Pardue, Carter Oakes, Julian Figueroa, Peyton Luffman, Lucas Keller, Djimon Brown, Zachary Stuart, Greg Ramseur, Holt Canter, Drew Kupner, Gavin Ward, Hill Canter, David Anderson, Benjamin Spencer and William Santos.

All three of the Buckin' Elks' all-conference selections were seniors

this past season: Kupner, Stuart and Spencer.

SEASON OUTLOOK

The Buckin' Elks enter the 2025 season as part of a new division, a new conference and with an almost entirely new slate of varsity football players.

Elkin is now part of the state's 2A division and will compete in the Mountain Valley 2A/3A/4A Conference – all without the 15 members of the Class of 2025. This year's squad

boasts just four seniors: Luis Serrano, Alex Sotelo, Demetrius Wheeler and Elias Amaya.

Coach Brad Baker reported that the Elks have just five returning players with varsity experience.



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BUCKIN' ELKS

SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FRIDAY, 8/22 VS. SURRY CENTRAL

FRIDAY, 8/29 VS. NORTH STOKES

FRIDAY, 9/5 OPEN

FRIDAY, 9/12 VS. FORBUSH

FRIDAY, 9/19 @ STARMOUNT*

FRIDAY, 9/26 VS. ASHE COUNTY*

FRIDAY, 10/3 @ WILKES CENTRAL*

FRIDAY, 10/10 @ NORTH WILKES*

FRIDAY, 10/17 @ WEST WILKES*

FRIDAY, 10/24 VS. EAST WILKES*

FRIDAY, 10/31 VS. ALLEGHANY*

*CONFERENCE

**7:30 P.M. START

North Stokes and Forbush. In 2024 North Stokes was one of Elkin's two victories, Forbush outlasted Elkin 22-21 and Surry Central defeated the Elks 33-3.

Elkin begins Mountain Valley Conference competition by taking on two juggernauts in Starmount and Ashe County. The Elks have lost four-consecutive meetings against Starmount in the Battle of the Bridge and have lost 10-consecutive meetings against Ashe.

Elkin will continue conference play against three Wilkes County schools from higher divisions before ending the season against back-to-back 2A opponents: East Wilkes and Alleghany.

The game against East Wilkes is part of the annual Battle of the Bypass rivalry, which East Wilkes won 15-10 in 2024.

Alleghany has won four-straight meetings against Elkin, but three of those were decided by 10 points or fewer.

BUCKIN' ELKS
ROSTER

#	Name	Grade	Pos.	Height	Weight
2	HECTOR HERNANDEZ	11	QB, DB	5'10	165
3	HOLT WABEL	11	WR, DB	5'11	145
4	BRADEN BLEDSOE	10	WR, DB	5'7	115
5	LUIS SERRANO	12	WR, DB	5'10	140
6	AVETT SIMMONS	11	QB, LB	6'0	160
7	SOLOMON SPEER	11	WR, DB	6'0	175
8	BRAYDEN VESTAL	9	QB, LB	5'8	130
9	ALEX SOTELO	12	WR, DB	5'9	145
12	MAZE TEAGUE	9	WR, DB	5'9	140
14	BRIGGS DARNELL	9	WR, DB	6'3	170
21	KAYDEN MACK	10	RB, LB	5'10	210
23	CANNON BLEVINS	11	TE, LB	6'2	190
27	CALEB PARKER	11	WR, DB	5'10	145
30	GIAN GARCIA	11	WR, DB	5'8	130
33	WESLEY OAKES	9	WR, DB	5'9	120
40	DRAKE SHELTON	9	WR, DB	5'10	125
42	DEMETRIUS WHEELER	12	TE, DL	6'6	260
44	FERNANDO SERGOVIA	11	RB, DL	6'1	215
45	KAMERON HALL	11	RB, LB	6'0	205
51	CARSON SHAFFNER	11	OL, LB	5'10	170
52	KARSON PHILLIPS	11	OL, LB	6'1	210
54	ELIAS AMAYA	12	OL, DL	5'11	260
56	RYDER RUSSELL	11	OL, LB	5'11	175
58	ASHER JAMES	11	OL, DL	5'9	220
65	ALEXIS MORALES-PINEDA	9	OL, DL	5'7	210
66	NATHAN TERRY	10	OL, DL	5'10	200
68	RALPH GARCIA	11	OL, DL	6'2	285
73	BREY SWAIM	11	OL, DL	5'10	160
75	CARTER MURPHY	9	OL, DL	5'2	115
77	COLTON WALLACE	10	OL, DL	6'1	280
82	GAGE BRAY	10	WR, DB	5'8	125
84	ZEKE SIMMONS	10	WR, DB	6'1	145



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Reece Dobbins (21) brushes off a tackle in a 2024 game at South Stokes.

ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

EAST WILKES looks to build on strong 2024 CAMPAIGN

By ROBERT MONEY
 robert.money@thestokesnews.com

HEAD COACH

Travis Walker

Assistant Coaches

Andrew Elmore, Eddie Guessford,
 Robert Johnson, Jeff Mickel, Preston
 Perry, John Vestal

Last Season

10-3 overall, 4-2 conference,
 Northwest 1A Conference third place,
 1A State Playoffs Third Round, Points
 for: 31.1; Points against: 17.8

Key Losses

East Wilkes faces minimal roster
 turnover after graduating a few key
 contributors from its 2024 squad.

The Cardinals lose their starting
 quarterback and leading rusher
 in senior Preston Blackburn, who
 accounted for 1,649 total yards of
 offense. Blackburn completed 31 of
 55 passes for 570 yards and eight
 touchdowns while adding a team-high
 1,079 rushing yards and 14 scores on
 the ground.

On the defensive side of the ball,
 they lose the production of linebacker

CARDINALS SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FRIDAY, 8/22 @ HIBRITEN

FRIDAY, 8/29 VS. MOUNT AIRY

FRIDAY, 9/5 VS. NORTH IREDELL

FRIDAY, 9/19 @ NORTH WILKES*

FRIDAY, 9/29 VS. WEST WILKES*

FRIDAY, 10/3 @ STARMOUNT*

FRIDAY, 10/10 VS. ALLEGHANY*

FRIDAY, 10/17 @ ASHE COUNTY*

FRIDAY, 10/24 @ ELKIN*

FRIDAY, 10/31 VS. WILKES CENTRAL*

MOUNTAIN VALLEY 2A/3A/4A CONFERENCE*

Logan Sadler and his 79 tackles,
 including 40 solo stops. Sadler also
 contributed 10 tackles for loss, one
 sack, and one fumble recovery.

Blackburn proved additional
 defensive value with 97 tackles,
 second on the team. The Cardinals
 will also miss the presence of David

CARDINALS ROSTER

#	Name	Grade	Height	Weight	Pos
1	Ty Bumgarner	Sr.	6-0	175	B, OLB
2	Braylen Walker	Sr.	5-10	135	WB, DB
3	Austin Nash	Sr.	5-9	175	WB, DB
4	Avery Johnson	Sr.	6-1	170	WR, DB
5	Rye Dobbins	Jr.	6-0	165	WR, DB
7	Kaydon Oliver	Sr.	5-9	165	RB, OLB
8	Dalton Wood	Sr.	5-11	165	WR, DB
9	Trent Cook	Jr.	6-1	170	WR, DL
10	Holden Spicer	Jr.	5-9	155	QB, FS
11	Grant Triplett	Jr.	5-8	175	RB, S
14	Aaron Bahena	Jr.	5-11	165	WR, DB
15	Destiny Baker	Sr.	5-8	160	K
17	Carson Poplin	So.	5-8		RB, LB
20	Connor Church	Jr.	5-10	170	FB, DE
21	Reece Dobbins	Sr.	6-1	180	WB, DB
23	Chris Silva	Jr.	5-8	155	WR, DB
25	Andrew Pendry	Jr.	5-8	165	WR, OLB
32	Colten Vestal	Jr.	5-8	160	RB, OLB
34	Levi McCann	So.	5-9	175	B, LB
39	Yosmar Silva	So.	5-7	150	RB, DB
40	Ayden Guessford	Sr.	5-11	205	RB, MLB
46	Brady Shore	Sr.	5-10	210	OL, LB
50	Peyton Mahan	Sr.	6-0	310	G, NG
51	Aiden Irwin	Jr.	6-2	210	T, OLB
52	Rhett Hudson	Sr.	5-8	190	T, DL
53	Braylon Walker	Sr.	5-10	190	T, C, DL
54	Dereck Limon	Jr.	6-0	230	C, NG, G
59	Andrew Patrick	Jr.	6-1	200	T, DL
62	Franky Fuentes	Jr.	5-7	205	G, MLB
63	Sam Nelson	Sr.	6-3	265	OL, DL
64	Evan Mills	So.	6-1	215	T, DL
70	Isaac Collins	Sr.	5-11	210	G, DL
71	Shawn Semones	Jr.	6-0	280	G, NG
73	Ryan Ford	Sr.	6-0	255	G, NG
77	La'Bren Mann	Jr.	6-0	285	G, NG

Ramage and his 56 tackles, four tackles for loss, and three pass breakups.

Season Outlook

Coming off a successful 10-3 season, the East Wilkes Cardinals enter 2025 with high expectations but a measured approach under head coach Travis Walker.

The Cardinals, who made significant strides last year, face the challenge of replacing graduated talent while maintaining the momentum from their most successful campaign in recent memory.

"The expectations this year, coming off a 10-3 year, are fairly high for this team," Walker said. "With that being said, we have to realize that last year's team was last year's group, and this is a new year for us. My expectation is for us to get better each and every week, as well as play with great effort. We must take each game at a time and not look ahead to anyone."

East Wilkes will compete in a restructured conference this season, featuring familiar faces that

should create compelling matchups throughout the year.

"We feel good about this new conference because it is familiar to us," Walker explained. "It's like the old MVAC and has some natural rivalries in it. Everyone is familiar with one another, a lot of the same teams that we play anyway, so it should make it an interesting conference."

Walker identifies speed, particularly in the backfield, as the Cardinals' primary strength heading into the season. However, questions remain about the offensive line's ability to create opportunities for those playmakers.

"I feel like our team strength is overall speed, especially in our backfield, but our guys up front still have to block for them and get them going," Walker said. "I wouldn't say our OL is a weakness, but kind of an unknown right now. Within the last week, we have had to plug in a few guys, due to some circumstances, and that is now a wait-and-see situation to see if they can get it done. I feel like they can, but they also

must believe it themselves."

The Cardinals return three experienced players who will anchor both sides of the ball and have garnered college attention.

Austin Nash and Reece Dobbins return as three-year starters in the backfield and on defense, bringing veteran leadership and proven production. Ayden Guessford, a two-year starter at B-back and three-year defensive starter, rounds out the trio of impact players.

Nash rushed for 649 yards and nine touchdowns while adding 252 receiving yards and three receiving scores. Nash's 13 total touchdowns ranked second on the team behind Blackburn's 15.

Guessford recorded 509 yards rushing with nine touchdowns, while Dobbins gained 427 yards in the backfield with four touchdowns.

Defensively, Guessford returns with a team-leading 109 tackles. Nash registered 63 tackles, and senior Brady Shore was fifth on the team with

SEE CARDINALS ON PAGE 30



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

Braylon Walker (53) takes down a South Stokes ball carrier during a 2024 conference game.



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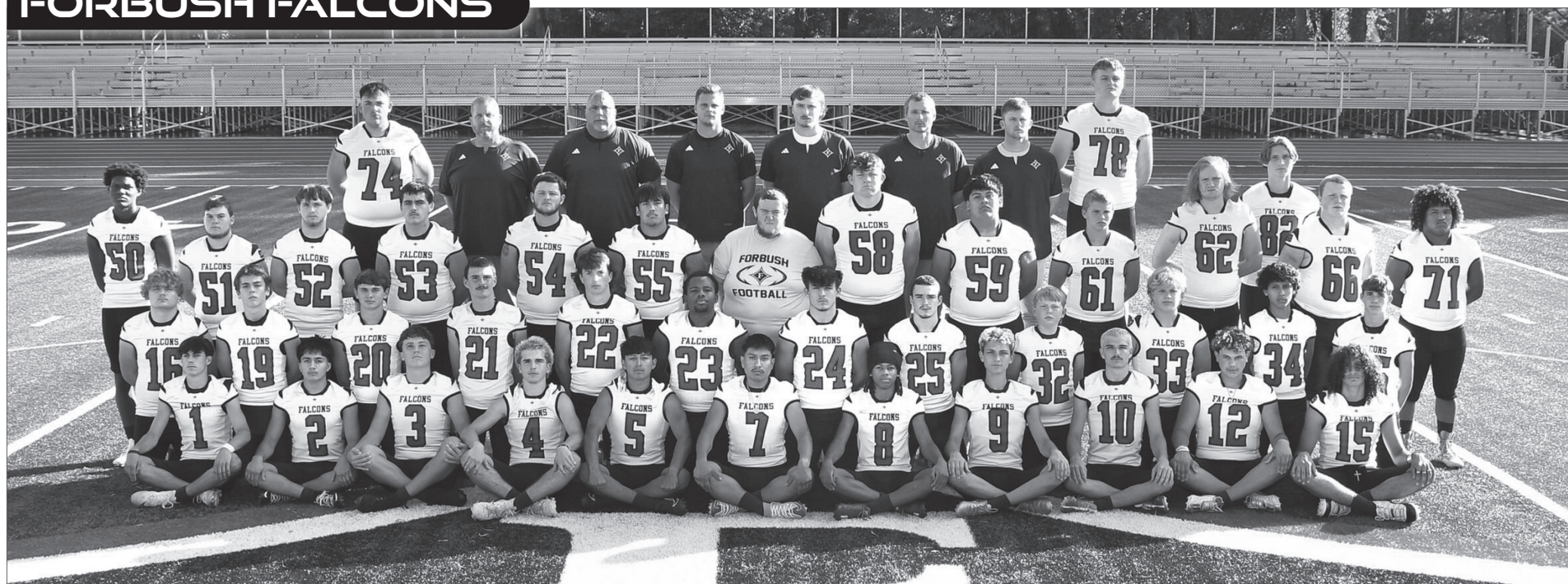
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FORBUSH FALCONS



FALCON ATHLETICS

FALCONS FLYING high into NEW SEASON

Staff Report

HEAD COACH

Logan Holder (Offensive Coordinator, Quarterbacks)

ASSISTANT COACHES

Holden Poindexter (Wide Receivers); Jeremy Helton (Offensive Line); Joe Sikes (Defensive Coordinator, Linebackers); Casey Graham (Defensive Backs); Tom Boyles (Defensive Line)

LAST SEASON

3-7 overall, 1-5 conference, Foothills 2A Conference sixth place, did not qualify for 2A State Playoffs, Points For: 14.2, Points Against: 31.0

KEY LOSSES

Forbush graduated 15 seniors in the Class of 2025: Joseph Barnes, Wyatt Chappell, Alex Clevenger, Nate Ayers, Hayden Bales, Jovanny Zarate Arellanes, Chase Lane, Brady Collins, Brady Trivette, Levi Reece, Lucas Pettit, Jake Pettit, Juan Hernandez, Riley Jester and Landon Marler.

Two Class of 2025 members earned all-conference honors as seniors: Bales and Barnes. Barnes was the team's leading receiver with 47 catches for 661 yards and three touchdowns. Bales was second on the team with 23 receptions for 298 yards and two touchdowns. Clevenger joined Bales

and Barnes as the only seniors that scored more than one touchdown in 2024.

Defensively, the Falcons graduated their second-leading tackler, Ayers, and one of the team's leaders in sacks, Trivette. Ayers also handed placekicking duties.

The following graduates were part of either the offensive or defensive lines: Reece, Hernandez, Jester, Marler, Lucas Pettit and Jake Pettit.

SEASON OUTLOOK

Leading the charge for Forbush will be new head coach Logan Holder. The first-year head coach had previous stops at Mount Airy, Davie and East Surry as an assistant. He was part of Mount Airy's 1A State Championship in 2022, then most recently won a conference title as the offensive coordinator at East Surry.

"We are excited about this upcoming season," Holder said. "We have had good participation this summer and look forward to the team's hard work paying off."

Holder's first varsity squad consists of a large senior class as well as a flock of talented young players that helped the JV Falcons go 7-3 a year ago.

Joining Holder as a newcomer to the program is quarterback Santana Garcia. As a sophomore at Walkertown, Garcia completed 57% of his passes for 2,250 yards, 21 touchdowns and 18 interceptions.

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FALCONS SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FRIDAY, 8/22 VS. BISHOP MCGUINNESS**

FRIDAY, 8/29 @ WHEATMORE**

FRIDAY, 9/5 VS STARMOUNT**

FRIDAY, 9/12 @ ELKIN**

FRIDAY, 9/19 OPEN

FRIDAY, 9/26 @ ATKINS

FRIDAY, 10/3 VS. WEST STOKES*

FRIDAY, 10/10 @ SURRY CENTRAL*

FRIDAY, 10/17 VS. MOUNT AIRY*

FRIDAY, 10/24 @ EAST SURRY*

FRIDAY, 10/31 VS. NORTH SURRY*

*CONFERENCE

**7:30 P.M. START



Linebacker Skylar Kimber paced Forbush in tackles with 79 in 2024. Giovanni Valerio-Real was next with 64 total tackles, followed by Benitez with 59 and Kaleb Bales with 48.

Bales led the Falcons with 11 tackles for a loss and two sacks as a sophomore. Valerio-Real and Benitez combined for Forbush's three total interceptions, while Benitez, Kimber and Ian Brewer combined for four of the team's six fumble recoveries.

BIG GAMES

Forbush looks to make the playoffs for the first time since 2021. The 2024 Falcons performed well at home, going

3-2, but went 0-5 in road games. The Falcons were outscored 221-44 on the road.

Forbush opens the 2025 season with a pair of games against newer opponents. The Falcons first host a Bishop McGuinness team that finished 6-5 a year ago, then travel to Wheatmore, which finished 1-9 in 2024.

The first big test of the season comes against Starmount in Week Three. The Rams have won at least 10 games in back-to-back seasons and shut out the Falcons in two of their past three meetings.

The Falcons have nearly a month away from home by facing Elkin on Sept. 12, having their bye week Sept. 19 then facing former Western Piedmont 2A Conference foe Atkins on Sept. 26. Elkin went 2-9 in 2024, and Atkins finished 3-7.

October brings about league play for Forbush in the Northwest 3A/4A Conference. Three of Forbush's

SEE FALCONS ON PAGE 30

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STARMOUNT RAMS



RAM ATHLETICS

STARMOUNT ready to Ram the COMPETITION

By CHRISTOPHER LOMAX
Special to the Tribune

HEAD COACH

Josh Pardue

ASSISTANT COACHES

Monty Chipman, Dillion Reaves, Kris Allen, Blake Chipman, J.Max Swaim, Cole Patterson, Chris Brown, Austin Laws, Peyton Mullins, Noah Tomlin

LAST SEASON

11-2 overall, 5-1 conference, Northwest 1A Conference Runner-up, 1A State Playoffs Third Round, Points for: 45.1, Points against: 9.8

KEY LOSSES

Starmount graduated 18 players from its 2024 squad: Luke Collins, Colton Allen, Kinston Crater, LT

Adams, KJ Allen, Brayden Snow, Kenny Gardener, Evan Shore, August Townsend, Sebastian Rodriguez, Ethan York, Hunter Johnson, Brayden Cass, Jacob Groce, Jacob Mabry, Mario Harlee and Landon Roberts.

Six senior members of Starmount's high-powered offense in 2024 were presented all-conference honors: Collins, Crater, Mabry, Harlee, KJ Allen and Colton Allen. Mabry and Harlee were part of an offensive line that cleared the way for more than 5,000 yards of total offense, including more than 3,100 yards on the ground. Crater and Collins made up more than half of the team's rushing yards and nearly half of its rushing touchdowns. Collins threw for more than 2,000



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784 yards with 10 touchdowns and caught 4 passes for 98 yards with a score. On defense, he had 25 tackles and 4 tackles for loss. As a returner, he returned 4 kickoffs for 96 yards. “Jymir has added speed and strength that should complement his running style.”

SAVIAN BILLIPS #17 (RB/LB) - All-Conference. He ran 21 times for 191 yards with 4 touchdowns. On defense, he had 47 tackles, 17 tackles for loss, and 2 sacks. As a returner, he returned 3 kickoffs for 43 yards. “Savian has added weight and strength this spring semester to handle multiple roles on defense.”

DOMINIC ADAMS #24 (WR/DB) - “Dominic has gotten stronger and faster this spring. He increased his maxes by an average of 20lbs each lift. We look for him to become a large contributor.”

SAM SHORE #66 (OL/DL) - All-Conference. He had 43 tackles, 14 tackles for loss, a sack, an interception, and a fumble recovery returned for a score. “Sam is extremely athletic and is one of our best overall athletes and lineman.”

KEVON PROPST #0 (RB/LB) - All-Conference. He ran 10 times for 91 yards with a touchdown. On defense, he had 110 tackles, 31 tackles for loss, 4 sacks, and a fumble recovery. “Kevon has added strength and sped.”

CODY HERNANDEZ #15 (RB/LB) - All-Conference. He ran 22 times for 174 yards with 2 touchdowns. On defense, he had 69 tackles, 17 tackles for loss, 2 sacks, 2 interceptions, and a fumble recovery. “Cody has added serious strength in the spring semester. He is a coach on the field.”

SILAS BROWN #54 (OL/DL) - All-Conference. “Silas is a hard-nosed player that has gotten stronger this spring. He is a great trapper.”

DEUCE BEST #1 (QB/S) - He ran 18 times for 195 yards with 5 touchdowns and completed 7 of 9 passes for 112 yards with a touchdown. “Deuce added weight, speed, and strength this spring semester.”

BRODY PICKETT #52 (OL/DL) - “Brody is a hard-nosed player and

yards with 31 passing touchdowns and only seven interceptions. KJ Allen led the team with 669 receiving yards, followed by Colton Allen with 479; each Allen made 11 touchdown receptions as well.

Collins was also named Northwest 1A Conference Specialist of the Year as the Rams’ punter and was an all-conference defensive back. Collins grabbed a team high six interceptions and deflected eight passes. Shore also received all-conference honors on defense by recording 97 total tackles, 31 tackles for a loss and six sacks.

KEY RETURNING PLAYERS

Starmount’s football staff gave their thoughts on some of their returning players.

COREY ARMSTRONG #23 (H-Back/DE) - All-Conference. He had 57 tackles, 26 tackles for loss, 4 sacks, and a fumble recovery. “Corey is extremely physical on defense. He has gotten stronger this spring and will be a leader on defense.”

COLE FREED #3 (WR/DB) - He had 5 receptions for 53 yards. “Cole added weight and strength this spring semester.”

AAMIR ADAMS #7 (WR/DB) - Honorable Mention All-Conference. He caught 16 passes for 178 yards with 4 touchdowns. “Aamir has great hands and is a solid blocker. He has become more physical on defense.”

LUKE BURCHETTE #8 (LB/DE) - He had 37 tackles, 10 tackles for loss, a sack, and a fumble recovery. “Luke is a great technician and has gotten bigger this spring.”

JYMIR BILLIPS #16 (RB/DB) - All-Conference. He ran 118 times for

RAMS

SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FRIDAY, 8/22 @ MOUNT AIRY**

FRIDAY, 8/29 VS. EAST SURRY**

FRIDAY, 9/5 @ FORBUSH

FRIDAY, 9/12 OPEN

FRIDAY, 9/19 VS. ELKIN*

FRIDAY, 9/26 @ ALLEGHANY*

FRIDAY, 10/3 VS. EAST WILKES*

FRIDAY, 10/10 @ WEST WILKES*

FRIDAY, 10/17 VS. NORTH WILKES*

FRIDAY, 10/24 @ WILKES CENTRAL*

FRIDAY, 10/31 VS. ASHE COUNTY*

*CONFERENCE **7:30 P.M. START

will contribute on both sides of the ball.”

GAVIN BROOKS #56 (OL/DL) - “Gavin has a high motor and great range.”

RYLAN WHITE #78 (OL/DL) - “Rylan is a big, strong kid who will play to the echo of the whistle. He has gotten bigger and stronger this spring.”

BIG GAMES

Starmount opens the 2025 season against the team it ended the 2024 season against: Mount Airy. The Rams were the first team in more than two years to play Mount Airy to a one-score game, but came up short 17-13 in the regular season and 31-23 in the playoff rematch.

The Rams’ two remaining nonconference games will be against East Surry, which won the Foothills 2A Conference Championship in 2024, and Yadkin County rival Forbush. It’s rivalry week once again following Starmount’s bye as they host the annual Battle of the Bridge against Elkin.

The game against Elkin kicks off a seven-game stretch against Mountain Valley 2A/3A/4A Conference opponents, which features tough matchups against the likes of East Wilkes and Ashe County.

RAMS ROSTER						
#	Name	Grade	Pos.	Height	Weight	
0	Kevon Propst	Jr.	RB, LB	6'0"	205 lbs	
1	Deuc Best	Jr.	QB, DB	6'1"	170 lbs	
3	Cole Freed	Sr.	WR, LB	5'11"	175 lbs	
5	Brodie Wright	Jr.	RB, LB	5'10"	165 lbs	
6	Derek Thompson	Jr.	DB, WR	5'9"	150 lbs	
7	Aamir Adams	Sr.	WR, DB	6'1"	165 lbs	
8	Luke Burchette	Sr.	TE, LB	6'0"	195 lbs	
9	Landry Mathis	Jr.	WR, DB	6'1"	170 lbs	
11	Ryley Rodriguez	So.	WR, S	6'3"	155 lbs	
12	Isaiah Strickland	Jr.	RB, LB	5'11"	170 lbs	
13	Casius Strickland	Jr.	WR, DB	5'11"	160 lbs	
14	Brayden Rucker	Jr.	TE, DE	6'1"	195 lbs	
15	Cody Hernandez	Jr.	RB, LB	5'11"	200 lbs	
16	Jymir Billips	Sr.	RB, DB	5'11"	145 lbs	
17	Savian Billips	Sr.	RB, LB	5'11"	175 lbs	
18	Bryson Cortez	Fr.	DB, ATH	5'9"	145 lbs	
20	Jere'Mihia Hurt-Bailey	So.	S, WR	5'11"	165 lbs	
21	Axl Gonzalez	Sr.	WR, DB	5'10"	150 lbs	
22	Colt Hemric	Jr.	DB, WR	5'11"	145 lbs	
23	Corey Armstrong	Sr.	TE, DL	6'2"	215 lbs	
24	Domnic Adams	Sr.	WR, DB	5'9"	140 lbs	
32	Eli Lovill	Jr.	WR, DB	5'10"	160 lbs	
34	Easton Pardue	Fr.	LB, FB	5'10"	160 lbs	
44	Gage Cooper	Fr.	LB, RB	5'6"	165 lbs	
52	Brody Pickett	Jr.	OL, DL	6'2"	225 lbs	
53	Hayden Shores	Jr.	OL, DL	6'2"	236 lbs	
54	Silas Brown	Jr.	OL, DL	6'2"	260 lbs	
56	Gavin Brooks	Jr.	DL, OL	6'1"	215 lbs	
66	Sam Shore	Sr.	OL, DL	6'3"	250 lbs	
70	Ty Hamby	Jr.	DL, OL	6'3"	245 lbs	
71	Lucas Brumfield	Fr.	OL, DL	5'10"	220 lbs	
78	Rylan White	So.	OL, DL	6'2"	240 lbs	

NORTH STOKES VIKINGS



SARAH GRUBBS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS

VIKINGS look to build under **NEW COACH**

By **ROBERT MONEY**
 robert.money@thestokesnews.com

HEAD COACH
 Kolt Bullington

ASSISTANT COACHES
 Stephen Creech (Offensive Coordinator, Quarterbacks), Nathan Vass (Offensive Line), Levi Smith (Defensive Line), Hunter Blose (Running Backs), Luke Bullington (Offensive Assistant), Hoyt Bullington (Defensive Assistant), and Austin Boyles (First Responder, Trainer)

LAST SEASON
 2-9 overall, 0-6 conference, Northwest 1A Conference seventh place, 1A State Playoffs first round, Points for: 6.2, Points against: 36.5

KEY LOSSES
 The Vikings must replace significant production from their 2024 graduating class, including quarterback John Pratt (351 passing yards, 3 touchdowns) and leading receiver Carter Joyce (29 catches, 242 yards).
 Defensively, North Stokes lost team



leader Justin Rakes, who recorded 76 tackles and two interceptions. Senior linemen Josh Woods and Lane Stevens also departed, along with running back Noah Fulp and receiver Jonathan Bryant.

SEASON OUTLOOK
 First-year head coach Kolt Bullington takes over a North Stokes football program looking to bounce back from a challenging 2024 campaign that saw the Vikings finish 2-9.
 The Vikings face a new conference alignment this fall, moving to the

VIKINGS SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
 FRIDAY, 8/22 VS. CHERRYVILLE
 FRIDAY, 8/29 @ ELKIN - 7:30 P.M.
 FRIDAY, 9/5 @ JORDAN MATTHEWS
 FRIDAY, 9/12 VS. PATRICK COUNTY, VA.
 FRIDAY, 9/19 AT CHATHAM CENTRAL*
 FRIDAY, 9/25 @ WINSTON-SALEM PRE-

PARATORY ACADEMY*
 FRIDAY, 10/3 VS. BISHOP MCGUINNESS*
 FRIDAY, 10/17 @ SOUTH DAVIDSON*
 FRIDAY, 10/24 VS. COLLEGE PREP & LEADERSHIP ACADEMY*
 FRIDAY, 10/31 VS. SOUTH STOKES*
 *GREATER TRIAD 1A/2A CONFERENCE GAMES

Greater Triad 1A/2A Conference alongside fellow Class 1A schools Chatham Central, South Davidson, and Winston-Salem Prep, plus Class 2A programs Bishop McGuinness and South Stokes.

“Our expectation this year is to continue building a strong, disciplined program that competes every Friday night,” Bullington said. “We want to see consistent growth week to week — both individually and as a team.”
 North Stokes will rely heavily on its

defensive front seven to establish an identity this season. The Vikings’ return experience along the defensive line, led by junior Wyatt Collins, a 6-foot-2, 285-pound two-way starter drawing college interest.

“Our biggest strength right now is our front seven on defense,” Bullington said. “It’s a tough, physical group that plays with intensity. They will set the tone for us, and we expect them to be a difference-maker each week.”
 Sophomore Alex Brown returns as



SARAH GRUBBS | FOR THE STOKES NEWS

North Stokes seniors Darrell Priddy (42), Joshua Moser (16), Aiden Bennett (2), Micah Robinson (7), Isaac Hicks (1), Gavin Hernandez (19), Noah Bennett (11), Talon Cole (3), and Lucas Lankford (29).

a two-way lineman after starting as a freshman, while sophomore tight end/linebacker Zach Taitt (5-10, 195) brings back seven receptions from 2024.

North Stokes managed just 126.2 yards per game of total offense in 2024 while allowing 340.9 yards defensively. The offensive line presents the biggest question mark, lacking both experience and depth.

"We're inexperienced in some key areas, particularly along the offensive line," Bullington said. "Depth is also a concern there, so keeping that group healthy and continuing to develop them will be critical."

The Vikings return leading rusher Gavin Hernandez, who gained 626 yards and scored one touchdown in 2024.

Junior Jackson Bodenhamer, a 6-foot, 190-pound multi-sport athlete, led the team in receptions and yards during 7-on-7 competition and could make an immediate impact at receiver.

Senior Isaac Hicks makes his varsity debut at defensive end after impressing coaches with his 435-pound squat — tops on the team. Freshman Nate

Harrison (6-0, 180) could contribute at tight end and linebacker.

Other players to watch are Wyatt Collins (Jr.), a returner on both sides of the ball; Jackson Bodenhamer (Jr.), a multi-sport athlete who led the team in receptions during the team's 7-on-7 competitions this summer; and Alex Brown (Jr.), another returner on both sides of the ball.

Bullington believes his team's commitment to improvement will translate to better results on the field in the new conference alignment.

"We're excited about the new conference," he said. "It's going to be competitive, we believe we have a great shot to contend for the conference championship. It'll come down to who can stay focused, stay healthy, and execute week in and week out."

As North Stokes prepares for the upcoming season, Bullington's emphasis on building a culture of discipline and accountability appears to have taken root with his players, setting the stage for what he hopes will be a more competitive showing in their new

conference home.

BIG GAMES

Starting the season 1-0 is a big game for anyone, and the Vikings will look to secure that win at home against Cherryville, who finished 3-8 last season. Another game circled on the calendar is out-of-state rival Patrick County, Va., during week four. Other

notable games are against Chatham Central, who the Vikings beat last year 20-8, South Davidson, which was the other win North Stokes earned, and of course, county-rival South Stokes in the last game of the season.

SEE VIKINGS ON PAGE 30

WEST STOKES WILDCATS



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

WEST STOKES faces major roster **TURNOVER**

By ROBERT MONEY

robert.money@thestokesnews.com

HEAD COACH

Trent Lowman

Assistant Coaches

Chris Nelson (Defensive Coordinator, Inside Linebackers, S&C), Parker Pratt (Special Teams Coordinator, DL), Justin Rogers (Defensive Backs), Chris Brown (Defensive Backs), Sean Burnett (Outside Linebackers), Greg King (Co-Offensive Coordinator, Quarterbacks, Running backs, Wide Receiver), Brandon Dawson (Running Backs), Mike Grayson (Wide Receiver/Tight Ends), Steve Whitt (Offensive Line/S&C), and Daniel Lynch (Offensive Line)

Last Season

10-3 overall, 5-1 conference, Mid-State 2A Conference Runner-up, 2A State Playoffs third round, Points for: 30.9, Points Against: 18.8

Key Losses

The Wildcats face a complete offensive overhaul heading into the

2025 season after graduating their top four offensive producers, including quarterback Sam Reeves and leading rusher Lindann Fleming.

Fleming's departure represents the most significant loss for the Wildcats. The senior tailback rushed for 1,427 yards and 21 touchdowns while averaging 129.7 yards per game. He also led the team in total offense with 1,801 yards and topped all scorers with 140 points on 23 total touchdowns.

West Stokes must also find a new signal-caller after losing Reeves, who completed 98 of 189 passes for 1,507 yards and 15 touchdowns. The senior quarterback added 121 rushing yards and accounted for 1,628 total yards of offense.

Senior running back Aydden Cherry, who rushed for 749 yards and 12 touchdowns while adding 29 catches for 304 yards, also graduated. His 1,128 total yards of offense ranked second on the team behind Fleming.

The receiving corps takes a major hit with the loss of Derek Studer, who caught 16 passes for 371 yards and

five touchdowns while averaging 23.2 yards per reception. Other departing receivers include Mikah Webster (159 receiving yards, two TDs) and return specialist contributors.

The defensive side faces equally challenging losses, led by linebacker Daniel Stanley. The senior recorded 116 total tackles, including 65 solo stops, to rank second on the team in tackles.

Jackson Roscoe (71 tackles) and Jonah McCoy (67 tackles) also graduated, along with Noah Wilkinson (48 tackles). The four seniors combined for 302 tackles, representing a significant portion of the team's defensive production.

Perhaps the most critical area needing attention is special teams, where the Wildcats lose their entire kicking game with the graduation of Specialist of the Year, Myles Knox.

Knox handled both placekicking and punting duties, converting 47 of 51 extra points (92.2 percent) and seven of 11 field goal attempts (63.6 percent). As a punter, he averaged 34.0 yards on 31 attempts for 1,053 total yards.



The senior kicker contributed 68 points to the team's scoring total, averaging 5.2 points per game.

West Stokes graduated eight offensive starters, including offensive lineman Jordan Cave, Luke Whitt (Wingate University), Kyle Sellers (Greensboro College), and Jackson Sammons (transferred to Grimsley High School), losing over 3,000 yards of total offense and more than 300 points of scoring production.

Season Outlook

West Stokes enters 2025 facing significant roster turnover and the challenge of developing inexperienced



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

West Stokes' Class of 2026 football players.

players in a new, more competitive conference.

The Wildcats' offensive hopes rest largely on senior Nate Akers, who emerged as a reliable dual-threat weapon in 2024. Akers caught 29 passes for 425 yards and five touchdowns while adding 41 rushing yards and one score. He also contributed 122 total tackles on defense, showcasing his versatility and football instincts.

Junior Devan Gastley returns with defensive experience (52 total tackles) but is also the likely candidate for taking over for Reeves at quarterback.

Several role players return with potential for larger contributions, including seniors Charlie Reeves (3 catches, 57 yards) and Micah Long, juniors Jah'mari Morris, who showed flashes as a kick returner (206 yards on 7 returns), Dallas Frasher, Omari Graham, and Dalton East.

Sophomore Cole Knox, who appeared in four games and completed all four pass attempts for 84

yards, could factor into the quarterback competition with Gastley.

"We have a lot of players with little to no varsity playing experience, but they are very talented and understand how to work hard," Head Coach Trent Lowman said. "We have to get better every day and stay the course no matter what the outcome."

The team's primary challenge will be replacing the production of graduated seniors, who accounted for the majority of the team's offensive statistics and defensive leadership. The Wildcats must develop depth and experience quickly while maintaining the competitive standard established last season.

West Stokes transitions to a new conference alignment, which Lowman views positively, despite the increased competition.

"It's a beast of a league, but it's great for everyone to play against schools without driving 90 minutes or more to get there," he said. "It's easier for families, cheaper for schools, and

WILDCATS

SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FRIDAY, 8/22 @ NORTH DAVIDSON

FRIDAY, 8/29 @ SOUTH STOKES

FRIDAY, 9/5 VS. NORTHEAST GUILFORD

FRIDAY, 9/12 VS. COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF DAVIDSON

FRIDAY, 9/19 VS. STATESVILLE

FRIDAY, 10/3 @ FORBUSH*

FRIDAY, 10/10 VS. MOUNT AIRY*

FRIDAY, 10/17 VS. EAST SURRY*

FRIDAY, 10/24 @ NORTH SURRY*

FRIDAY, 10/31 @ SURRY CENTRAL*

*NORTHWEST 3A/4A CONFERENCE GAME

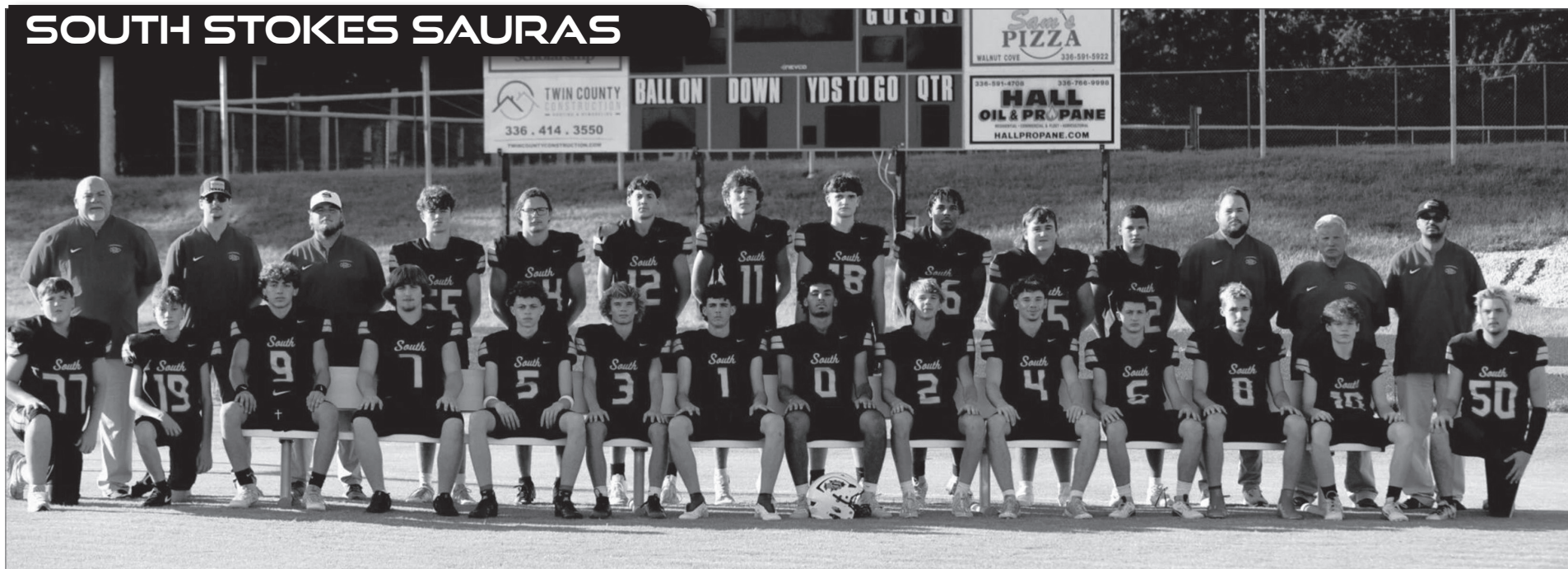
just makes sense. There's a lot of wins, championships, and deep runs over the years from teams out of this league. I can see a few teams from our conference making runs in the playoffs

each season."

Lowman identifies athleticism in key positions and overall team size as primary strengths, along with the

SEE WILDCATS ON PAGE 31

SOUTH STOKES SAURAS



ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

SOUTH STOKES prepares for REBUILDING

By **ROBERT MONEY**

rmoney@thestokesnews.com

HEAD COACH

Josh Mickey

ASSISTANT COACHES

Charles Brewer (Assistant Head Coach, Running Backs, Defensive Line), Chad Amos (Defensive Coordinator, Linebackers), Mickey Tuttle (Offensive Line), Sam Cooper (Wide Receivers, Defensive Backs), Ja Anderson (Assistant Coach)

LAST SEASON

1-10 overall, 1-5 conference, Northwest 1A Conference sixth place, 1A State Playoffs first round, Points for: 111, Points against: 44.6

KEY LOSSES

The Sauras must replace their entire offensive leadership, including quarterback Connor Cox, who completed 123 of 252 passes for 1,265 yards and 10 touchdowns while

maintaining a 48.8% completion rate.

The most significant loss comes with the transfer of junior Keymani Brown, who led the team with 533 rushing yards and four touchdowns on 117 carries, averaging 4.6 yards per attempt and 53.3 yards per game.

Senior Parker Barron, who graduates after serving as the team's top receiver with 36 catches for 448 yards and three touchdowns, also handled the kicking duties with a 10-of-12 success rate on extra points.

Senior Desian Leeper provided a consistent deep threat with 13 receptions for 206 yards and two touchdowns, averaging 15.8 yards per catch. His brother, Dezjerian Leeper, contributed 563 return yards and one touchdown on special teams while adding defensive versatility.

Additional offensive departures include senior Amari Conrad, who rushed for 253 yards and caught 14

passes, and senior Justin Joyce, who provided depth in the backfield and receiving corps.

Senior Elijah Tyler, who recorded three receiving touchdowns and contributed 289 receiving yards on 26 catches, will focus on soccer instead of returning to football.

The defensive losses are equally substantial, beginning with Barron, who led the team with 84 total tackles, including 59 solo stops and 25 assists.

Joyce ranked second with 66 total tackles, while senior Bryce Epperson contributed 45 tackles from his position. Senior Elijah Tilley added 37 tackles and provided pass rush with one sack.

Senior Dalton Hutchings anchored the line with 26 tackles, while senior BJ Gray, despite limited playing time, recorded 31 tackles and contributed on special teams before not playing in 2024.

SEASON OUTLOOK

South Stokes football coach Josh Mickey doesn't sugarcoat the challenge ahead for his Sauras squad in 2025.

After finishing 1-10 overall and 1-5 in Northwest 1A Conference play last

season, South Stokes faces the task of rebuilding with a roster that lost 10 key seniors to graduation.

"We're in a rebuilding year, there's no question about that," said Mickey. "We lost a lot of experience and leadership with those 12 seniors, but that creates opportunities for our younger players to step up and make their mark."

The Sauras struggled offensively in 2024, averaging just 177 yards per game while allowing 363.1 yards to opponents. The team only managed 122 points in 11 games, compared to 491 allowed.

Among the notable departures are the team's top offensive contributors from last season. The coaching staff will need to find new playmakers to fill significant voids in both the running and passing games.

"Last season was tough, but it taught us a lot about what we need to work on," Mickey said. "We need to get back to fundamentals and build from the ground up. The kids who are coming back have seen what it takes, and they're hungry to prove themselves."

The offensive attack will be led by freshman quarterback Luke Amos, who Mickey expects to make an



South Stokes seniors Jamison Canty (0), Nick Turner (1), Frank Kennedy (8), Tucker Monday (11), and Caden Hart (50).

ROBERT MONEY | THE STOKES NEWS

immediate impact despite his youth.

Jamison Canty returns after catching 13 passes for 127 yards and two touchdowns while also handling punting duties with a 29.0-yard average on 42 attempts. Blaine Ellis recorded 32 total tackles (22 solo, 10 assists) with one pass deflection, Elijah Wright tallied 18 total tackles with two pass deflections, Michael Brown contributed 19 total tackles on defense, and Sawyer Scott made 17 tackles and averaged 2.9 yards on seven kickoff returns.

Other players to watch include senior lineman Caden Hart, who Mickey believes “has a chance to have a good season on both sides of the ball,” and safety/running back Tucker Monday. Monday missed the 2024 season with a broken collarbone but is expected to be fully healthy for the upcoming campaign.

Wide receiver/defensive back Nick Turner returns after catching one pass for 13 yards last season. Despite limited production, Mickey sees potential in both Monday and Turner.

“Tucker will be a very physical player for us on defense and Turner has good hands and is very

knowledgeable of our offensive scheme,” Mickey said.

The Sauras will benefit from a new conference alignment, which Mickey views as an opportunity for improvement. North Carolina high school athletics underwent a major realignment for the 2025-29 cycle, with the NCHSAA expanding to eight classifications.

“I’m very excited for the new conference,” Mickey said. “I think everyone in our conference will be competitive and it should be a fun year.”

Mickey believes his team’s secondary will be its greatest strength, while acknowledging the challenges ahead in rebuilding other areas of the roster.

“We feel our skill positions will be good for us this year,” Mickey said. “Our secondary should be the strength of our team.”

The Sauras open the 2025 season looking to improve on last year’s lone victory, which came against North Stokes in a thrilling 22-21 conference win. With youth throughout the lineup and a new conference structure,

SAURAS SCHEDULE

KICKOFF AT 7 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
FRIDAY, 8/22 @ NORTH WILKES – 7:30 P.M.

FRIDAY, 8/29 VS. WEST STOKES
FRIDAY, 9/5 @ MCMICHAEL
FRIDAY, 9/12 VS. SURRY CENTRAL
FRIDAY, 9/19 @ COLLEGE

PREP & LEADERSHIP ACADEMY*
FRIDAY, 9/26 VS. BISHOP
MCGUINNESS*

FRIDAY, 10/10 VS. SOUTH
DAVIDSON*

FRIDAY, 10/17 VS. CHATHAM
CENTRAL*

THURSDAY, 10/23 @ WINSTON-
SALEM PREPARATORY ACADEMY*

FRIDAY, 10/31 @ NORTH STOKES*
*GREATER TRIAD 1A/2A CONFERENCE GAME

Mickey and his staff will focus on development and building for the future.

Despite the challenges, Mickey

remains optimistic about his young team’s potential and the opportunities

SEE SAURAS ON PAGE 30

FROM FALCONS PAGE 21

conference opponents – East Surry, Mount Airy and North Surry – won at least one conference title in the past two seasons, while West Stokes’ only conference losses in the past two seasons came against powerhouse Reidsville.

Forbush hasn’t defeated a Surry County team since 2022, when it beat both North Surry and Surry Central. The Falcons last defeated East Surry in 1996.

Forbush won its most recent meeting against Mount Airy, but that took place 25 years ago (via Mount Airy sports historian Doug McDaniel).

Forbush defeated West Stokes when they last faced off in 2021, but before that West held a double-digit win streak in the series.

FALCONS ROSTER

#	Name	Class	Pos.	Height	Weight
1	Noah Haughwout	Sr.	WR, DB	5'9"	150
2	Alan Benitez	Sr.	WR, DB	5'8"	150
3	Spencer Foster	Sr.	WR, DB	5'11"	185
4	Hunter Wolfe	So.	WR, DB	5'10"	175
5	Keanu Escalante	Sr.	RB	5'9"	175
7	Giovanni Valerio-Real	Sr.	WR, OLB	5'9"	185
8	Kazir Wright	So.	WR, CB	5'10"	155
9	Keaton Forrest	Sr.	WR, DB	6'1"	165
10	Tyler Winters	Sr.	WR, CB	5'11"	170
12	Trey Speaks	Sr.	TE, WR	6'1"	215
15	Santana Garcia	Jr.	QB	6'3"	185
16	Adam Bowman	Jr.	RB, MLB	5'9"	185
19	Carter Smith	Fr.	QB	5'9"	165
20	Liam Dunn	So.	WR, OLB	5'9"	165
21	Christian Sapp	Sr.	WR, DB	6'1"	165
22	Caleb Barnes	Jr.	WR, DB	6'1"	165
23	Skylar Kimber	Sr.	RB, LB	5'9"	220
24	Devin Brown	So.	RB, LB	5'10"	210
25	Huston Warden	Fr.	RB, DB	5'9"	165
32	TJ Shook	Sr.	WR, DB	5'6"	135
33	Will Tomlin	Fr.	ILB	5'8"	170
34	Stephen Mendoza	Fr.	WR, DB	5'9"	145
45	Luca Casertano	Fr.	K	5'9"	145
50	A'dynn Clark	Jr.	OL, DL	6'1"	205
51	Stevie Knight	Jr.	OL, MLB	5'6"	170
52	Dakota Miller	Jr.	OL, DL	5'8"	170
53	Robert Gumpert	Sr.	OL, DL	5'10"	215
54	Albert Brayfield	Sr.	OL, DL	6'0"	220
55	Ian Brewer	Sr.	C, DL	5'9"	210
58	Eli Wells	Sr.	OL, DL	6'4"	265
59	Noah Gonzalez	Fr.	OL, DL	5'9"	235
61	Kaiden Cave	So.	OL, LB	5'10"	205
62	Tucker Durham	Sr.	OL, DL	6'2"	210
65	Connor Hunolt	Fr.	OL, DL	6'1"	230
71	Jonathan Zarate	Jr.	OL, DL	5'7"	200
74	Jonah Hayden	Sr.	OL, DL	6'1"	280
78	Tyler Bryant	So.	OL, DL	6'7"	275
82	Jaxon Ashley	Fr.	TE, DL	6'4"	200

FROM VIKINGS PAGE 25

VIKINGS ROSTER

#	Name	Grade	Height	Weight	Pos.
2	Aiden Bennett	12	5`9	140	WR/DB
3	Talon Cole	12	5`8	165	WR/DB
7	Micah Robinson	12	5`11	170	WR/DB
10	Holden Shelton	10	5`11	160	QB/DB
11	Noah Bennett	12	5`9	150	QB/DB
12	Jackson Bodenhamer	11	6`0	190	WR/LB/LS
16	Joshua Moser	12	5`9	160	RB/DB
19	Gavin Hernandez	12	5`10	185	WR/LB
20	Nate Harrison	9	6`0	180	TE/LB
23	Gage Miller	10	5`8	150	RB/DB
25	Sully Beavers	10	5`9	130	WR/DB
29	Lucas Lankford	12	5`5	100	RB/DB
38	Wyatt Lawson	9	5`6	155	FB/LB
41	Dalton Whitener	10	6`0	160	TE/DE
42	Darrell Priddy	12	5`6	150	RB/LB
44	Ethan Edwards	10	5`11	155	TE/DE
45	Zach Taitt	10	5`10	195	TE/LB
50	Gavin Umberger	10	5`11	205	OL/DL
51	Isaac Hicks	12	5`11	205	OL/DE
52	Andrew Dunlap	9	6`0	235	OL/DL
54	Zach Anthony	10	5`4	170	OL/DL
77	Wyatt Collins	11	6`2	285	OL/DL
80	Lantz Fagg	10	5`9	150	K
88	Ethan Mabe	9	5`10	145	QB/DB

FROM CARDINALS PAGE 19

73 tackles. “Austin and Reece are three-year starters in the backfield as well as on defense. Ayden is a two-year starter at the B back position as well as a three-year starter on defense,”

FROM BEARS PAGE 15

Mount Airy has won 17-consecutive meetings against North Surry, with the latest installation going to the Bears by a score of

FROM SAURAS PAGE 29

that lie ahead in the new conference alignment.

BIG GAMES

The Sauras open against a North Wilkes team that was 1-9 last season. A win against them would propel

SAURAS ROSTER

#	Name	Grade	Height	Weight	Pos.
0	Jamison Canty DB	SR	6'2"	170	WR/
1	Nick Turner DB	SR	5'11"	155	WR/
2	Sawyer Scott	JR	5'11"	150	TE/LB
3	Ethan Newsome DB	JR	5'8"	130	WR/
4	Blaine Ellis DB	JR	5'11"	140	WR/
5	Isaac Mitchell DB	SO	6'0"	160	WR/
6	Joseph Vaughn	FR	5'10"	140	RB/LB
7	Tristan Brown	FR	6'1"	205	RB/DL
8	Frank Kennedy DB	SR	5'11"	150	WR/
9	Luke Amos	FR	6'0"	165	QB

them into week two against cross-county rival West Stokes. McMichael is another came circled on the calendar as the Sauras lost to them by three points last season. Other big games include conference opponents Bishop McGuinness and county-rival North Stokes.

10	John Czerkiewicz	SO	5'9"	130	RB/DB
11	Tucker Monday	SR	6'1"	175	DB/RB
12	Abe Jennings	JR,	6'0"	180	TE/LB
18	Cameron Bratton	SO,	6'3"	200	TE/DE
24	Linkin VanRijsewijk	SR	5'10"	175	RB/LB
50	Caden Hart	SR	5'11"	200	OL/DL
51	Carter Duncan	JR	5'11"	210	OL/DL
52	Michael Brown	JR	5'10"	165	OL/DL
55	Colten Wilmoth	SO	5'11"	185	OL/DL
56	Jeremiah Davis	FR	5'10"	195	OL/DL
65	Logan Johnson	FR	5'11"	230	OL/DL
70	Logan Ferguson	SO	5'10"	175	OL/DL
77	Conner Chaney	JR	5'7"	190	OL/DL

Walker noted. “Those three are getting some college looks, and we are expecting big things from them.”

Big Games

East Wilkes will face former conference foe Mount Airy during week two of the season. The Cardinals dropped a 28-13

decision last season to the Bears, and the game has always drawn big crowds. Also, probably two of the Cards’ biggest rivals is Starmount and Elkin. East Wilkes lost to the Rams last season, 35-20, and will face the Rams mid-season and then travel to Elkin, whom they beat last

year 15-10, in game nine. Additionally, Alleghany has been noted as a rival game, and of course, in county teams, North Wilkes, West Wilkes, and Wilkes Central are not only bragging right games, but conference games in the newly aligned Mountain Valley 2A/3A/4A Conference.

50-14. Mount Airy last faced West Stokes in 2019 and won four-straight meetings between 2015-19. The Bears’ most recent meeting against Forbush was 2000 (via Mount Airy sports historian Doug McDaniel).

The regular season ends with two county matchups against Surry Central and East Surry. Mount Airy has won its past seven games against Central and 18 of the past 19. East Surry was the most recent team to

defeat Mount Airy in the regular season, doing so in 2022, but the Bears have won the past two meetings by a combined score of 77-7.



FROM WILCATS PAGE 27

players’ desire to succeed. However, the lack of varsity experience remains the team’s biggest concern as young players adjust to the speed and physicality of high school football.

The Wildcats return minimal offensive production from 2024’s unit that averaged 312.8 yards per game, creating opportunities for emerging players to establish themselves while putting pressure on the coaching staff to develop multiple options at skill positions.

Defensively, West Stokes must replace significant tackle production, though returning players like Akers and Gastley provide a foundation to build upon.

With proper development and the work ethic Lowman emphasizes, the Wildcats possess the talent to remain

competitive, though growing pains are expected as the roster gains necessary experience throughout the season.

Big Games

The Wildcats play a brutal non-conference schedule with a season opener at North Davidson and then travel to county-rival South Stokes in week two and will try and extend their four-game winning streak over the Sauras. Other non-conference games include Northeast Guilford, Community School of Davidson, and Statesville.

The new Northwest 3A/4A Conference makes all games big games for the Wildcats with natural rivalries already formed. West Stokes will play Mount Airy for the first time since 2019, and renew rivalries against East Surry, North Surry, and Surry Central.

WILDCATS ROSTER

#	Name	Grade	Height	Weight	Pos.
0	Jay Taylor	10	5-6	130	WR-DB-KR
1	Devin Gastley	11	6-2	200	QB-DB-LB
2	Jah'mari Morris	11	6-11	55	WR-DB-KR
3	Charlie Reeves	12	6-4	180	WR-OLB
4	Chris Twyman	12	5-1	120	5RB-DL
5	Cole Knox	10	5-9	150	QB-WR-DB-KR
6	Ashton Stevens	12	6-0	180	RB-DB-KR
7	Morgan Dowdy	11	5-10	175	WR-DB
8	Dallas Frasier	11	6-2	205	TE-LB
9	Tyler Doby	12	6-0	190	RB-LB-P
10	Nate Akers	12	6-4	230	TE-LB
11	Kymani Brown	11	5-7	150	RB-WR-DB-KR
12	Jonathan Payne	11	5-7	155	QB-DB
13	Logan Payne	12	5-10	165	WR-DB
15	Alex Pegram	12	6-0	185	TE-LB-LS
17	Cooper Pratt	10	6-0	185	TE-LB-LS
18	Cayden Covel	11	6-0	175	WR-DB-KR
19	Ayden Pilcher	12	6-0	200	RB-LB
23	Preston Stevens	9	5-7	150	WR-DB-KR
25	Kyle Childress	10	6-1	175	WR-DB
27	Isaac Boyles	10	6-3	185	TE-OLB
32	Chase Bowman	11	6-0	160	WR-DB
33	Jayden Hernandez	11	6-0	175	WR-DB-K-P
34	Tristen Sands	12	5-8	185	RB-LB
41	Tyrese Borders	11	6-2	215	TE-DL
42	Hector Alfaro-Vasquez	11	5-9	185	RB-DL
50	Deacon Friedrich	11	6-3	215	OL-DL
51	Elijah Bolejack	11	6-0	220	OL-DL
52	Hunter Coontz	11	6-2	225	OL-DL
53	Jack Adams	12	6-2	215	OL-DL
54	Micah Long	12	6-5	260	OL-DL
55	Isaac Silmser	12	6-2	245	OL-DL
56	Ayden Smith	12	5-1	123	0OL-DL
57	Jayden Hammond	11	6-0	235	OL-DL
58	Omari Graham	11	6-4	280	OL-DL
59	Chase Graham	12	6-0	210	OL-DL
60	Jonathan Carico	11	5-10	185	OL-DL
63	Owen Blevins	12	6-1	185	OL-DL
72	Dalton East	11	6-6	330	OL-DL
73	Colt Melton	12	5-11	215	OL-DL
78	Ethan Smith	11	6-0	250	OL-D

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