High School Football
Preview 2022

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Sunday, August 14, 2022

Petty, Jackets poised for grand season

Photo by Austin Frayser
Starkville quarterback Trey Petty wasn’t the unquestioned starter heading into the 2021 season, but he won the job and ran with it. Petty had a breakout season as a sophomore, launching him on a national stage.

**BY COLIN DAINES**

colindaines@cdispatch.com

Last Oct. 1, the Starkville Yellow Jackets came into the fourth quarter against Clinton down 21-24. They found the end zone with just a couple minutes left to tie the game. A quick stop on defense and chance of possession game them the chance to win, and with 19 seconds left on the clock, sophomore quarterback Trey Petty threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Braylon Burnside for a 30-yard touchdown. Starkville beat Clinton, 28-21. Standing at about the 20-yard line, watching this happen, I turned to a man dressed in a NES jersey and hit after the ball.

“Is this quarterback really a sophomore?” I asked.

He smiled.

“Yes,” he said, “he is.”

He smiled.

“Me and (Harris), we were both doing well, I didn’t think either one of us was better than the other really. It was Coach’s decision at the end of the day,” Harris and Petty shared playing time in a lopsided Week 1 win over Columbus, but Petty convinced himself as the start, or in a 38-7 win at Olive Branch Week 2. From there, his confidence as himself and the offense only grew.

“I’m a competitive person, so I’m gonna go out there and compete no matter who’s on the other side, but I think I definitely got better as the season went on, and that built my confidence even more,” Petty said.

Petty has been a quarterback since he was 7 years old. In Pee Wee football, he played with a lot of guys he still plays with now for the Jackets. He’s got several friends on the team, and for now, he’s not worried about the pressure of being a top quarterback recruit. He enjoys playing the game with his friends, and that connection is just as important to him as winning.

“If good, it shows our community is heading in the right direction, not everybody is involved in the streets and stuff nowadays with the team, and I think the chemistry is better because we’ve been playing as long together,” Petty said. “We hang out all the time, outside of school and practice on the weekends, stay at each other’s houses, and do all sorts of stuff outside of football.”

Petty enjoys getting away from the game every once in a while, playing video games with his friends, going out to the pool or playing basketball and just being a kid while he still can be. The pressure of being recruited by college programs hasn’t gotten to him, and while he knows he will have to make a decision eventually — he has set the goal of playing quarterback for a Power Five program — he’s not distracted. He wants to win with Starkville, and he wants to take things as they come. More importantly, he just wants to play ball.

“Schools talk to me as much as they can, obviously as a sophomore they couldn’t really but I took as many visits as I could,” Petty said. “It’s been going good. Lots of coaches have been interest- ed in me. Honestly right now I’m just try- ing to let that play out. I’m playing ball, and if it comes it comes. By my senior year, that’s when I really need to make decisions about my future with football and thinking about the next level, but for now I’m just playing ball.”
ATHLETICISM the key to successful 2022 for young Columbus team

BY THEO DEROSA

Athleticism the key to successful 2022 for young Columbus team

Columbus Falcons

High School Football Association: Class 5A, Region 1
2022 Record: 6-3, 3-2 Class 5A, Region 1

BY THEO DEROSA

Jim Lytle/Special to the Dispatch

Columbus, which hasn't had a winning season since 2015, has a ways to go in that regard. But there are encouraging signs so far, particularly when it comes to jumping-starting an offense that has been sluggish for years.

"I know we've got the fastest team in the state for sure," Erby said. "We've got pretty much the best O-line I've ever seen here. I guarantee we're going to be running the ball and passing really well." And even despite the losses on the other side of the ball, Erby and the Falcons seemed optimistic about keeping opponents off the scoreboard.

"I feel like Columbus really is a sleeping giant, known for their defense, who is going to be better than we're going to do it this year." he said.

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2022 Schedule

Aug. 26: at Tupelo
Sept. 2: vs. Starkville*
Sept. 9: vs. New Hope*
Sept. 23: at DeSoto Central
Oct. 7: at Corinth
Oct. 14: vs. Saipan Central
Nov. 4: at Tippah
Nov. 11: vs. Starkville
Nov. 18: vs. Lee County

*All starred games begin at 7:30 p.m. due to an MHSAA mandate for varsity games.

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Sizable senior class could fuel breakout year for New Hope

BY THEO DEROSA

NEW HOPE — It took New Hope High School football coach Seth Stillman over a minute to count up the number of seniors on his roster.

For the Trojans in 2022, that could be a very good thing.

“Last year’s New Hope team had 12 seniors. This season’s squad features 25,” New Hope assistant coach Alex McCarter said.

“If we have a chance to be as good as our seniors are,” Stillman said. “We have a lot of senior leadership this year.

Chief among those senior leaders is linebacker Alex McCarter, defensive back Alex Dowkins, running back Ladarius Tate, linebacker Qua Jefferson, and wide receiver Richard Guy Jackson and Jeremiah Harkins. The Trojans already had 13 seniors last season, and their defense that carried them couldn’t be in better hands.

“Defense, you can get momentum from that,” Stillman said. “You can change games because you win those battles.

“We think we can beat our opponents,” McCarter said. “You have to play them because they can move on to the rest of your nonconference games and hopefully build on that in your district.

“I think that you win that game to really get the momentum from that one.”

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“This time around, the seniors can make it happen,” McCarter said. “I think that one of seniors can live up to their billing, it could be a big year for Stillman’s crew.

“Most of the years, we don’t have enough,” Stillman said. “But if they don’t, then it means a ton, especially with it being Week 1.

“It means a ton, especially with it being Week 1,” McCarter said.

“We were a little bit better than our record last season, but we didn’t make the playoffs. But if we continue to work hard and continue to push us there, I think we’ve got a change to be pretty good.”

New Hope quarterback Ty Cowell is tripped up during a 2020 game against Saltillo. Cowell was one of 13 seniors on his roster.

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New Hope Trojans

The DispaTch

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<td>Sept. 16:</td>
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<td>at Columbus</td>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
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<tr>
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<td>vs. MISA Region 1-A vs. West Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 7:</td>
<td>vs. Lafayette</td>
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<td>Oct. 21:</td>
<td>vs. Lake Cormorant</td>
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<td>Oct. 28:</td>
<td>at Cleveland Central</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 4:</td>
<td>vs. Martin County</td>
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The Trojans already made a jump in their first season under Stillman, who was promoted from defensive coordinator after coach Wade Tackett resigned. New Hope went 6-28 in three seasons under Tackett but posted a respectable 5-5 campaign in 2021 despite missing the playoffs.

“Most of the years, we haven’t been getting that many wins, but last year we won a little bit hotter,” McCarter said.

“We have a chance to be pretty good as our offense line is.”

The Trojans also added two new starters — Tate, two linemen (both of whom started as freshmen) and pass-catcher Grant Fleming.

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HOSPITAL. FOOTBALL. PREVIEW

THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

NEW HOPE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

- Ty Crowell, wide receiver

Last year’s New Hope team had 12 seniors. This season’s squad features 25.

So the stage is set for a big year for Stillman’s crew. If his crop of seniors can make it happen, “I think we have a chance to be pretty good,” McCarter said. “We have a lot of senior leadership this year.

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Caledonia quarterback Daniel Wilburn finds a hole in the Amory defense during the Cavaliers' 30-18 home win over the Panthers in this Sept. 3 file photo.

North state loss won't stop Caledonia from setting the standard high

Caledonia Quarterback Daniel Wilburn finds a hole in the Amory defense during the Cavaliers' 30-18 home win over the Panthers in this Sept. 3 file photo.

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The Cavs were the victim of a bad bounce on a late-game Wilburn run. That bounce set up another close game, and Wilburn was stuffed on another close drive. "We fought hard; obviously, we came up short," Kelly said. "But we're not going to stop working. Hopefully still on the rise."

"The biggest thing I'm pressing doubt about that. We've got some great kids that we still need to grow up," he said. "They're not last year's team. We had a really good football team in 2021. I trust them to show up to practice and to play."

"We graduated some great athletes," Cerese said. "We've got a lot of kids that we still need to find their identity. They're not last year's team. We had a really good football team last year, but there's a lot of kids that have made the playoffs so they still need to find their identity. They're not going to be in that locker room. We're all ready. You can talk about it, but we're using it as a mirror.

"We're all ready. You can talk about it."
Columbus Christian Academy Rams
Midsouth Association of Independent Schools Eight-Man Football Class 2A, District 1, 2022. Record: 2-0. (Eight-Man Football Class 2A, District 1)

High school football preview

Columbus Christian Academy has a new head coach this year, as Alonna Huggins takes over after spending the past three seasons as an assistant coach. Huggins is looking to improve on last year's 2-7 record and graduate the team's top talent.

**2022 Schedule**

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<td>Aug. 26</td>
<td>Long Neck</td>
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<td>Sept. 2</td>
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<td>Sept. 16</td>
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<td>Trinitas</td>
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<td>Birmingham Academy</td>
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Columbus Christian Academy Rams

New coach, big roster spark optimism for Columbus Christian Academy

By TERRY DEROUS

STEENS — Columbus Christian Academy head coach Jacob Wilcox has his Rams having a great first season so far, and he's hoping they can keep it up.

"We've got a great group of guys and we actually have numbers on both sides of the field," head coach Andrew Pace said. "So far, so good. Just a heck of a lot better than last year."

The Rams have a young team, but Pace said they're developing quickly. "We've got a lot of young kids who are really gaining some experience," he said. "And it's been fun."
Heritage Academy Patriots

Heritage Academy’s 2022 schedule is written in black marker on the top left corner of a whiteboard in the Patriots’ coaches’ office.

Head coach Lance Pogue knows his team might appear in a different font on its opponents’ schedules.

“Heritage is somebody that people don’t look at as a contending team,” Pogue said. “We’ve got to get ourselves back to where we win every year, and we’ve got to keep it together.”

Pogue hasn’t had to be too Magnolia Long to realize that. The four-time Patriots’ coach spent the previous five seasons at Jackson Prep — but Heritage Academy’s 2019 state title is well aware of Heritage’s state titles in 2015 and 2021. And he’s taking an approach that seems to mirror the adage “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” with the adage “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” with Heritage Academy’s state title.

“Until you actually get out there,” Naugher said. “Until you actually go play somebody, it’s hard to say, but I think we’re at a point where we need to go play somebody.”

The Patriots hope to continue that into 2022. Their schedule isn’t easy. It includes a rematch with powerhouse Jackson Prep — but Heritage Academy is ready to face just about anyone but itself.

“You just got to be ready to play up to its potential. If Heritage Academy can run with that. This is not a team that’s going to play up to its potential. Pogue called every game the ‘Super Bowl’ for each of the Patriots’ opponents. We’ve not been in a position to say, ‘OK, this week we may just relax a little bit,’ he said. ‘We’ve got to win every game.’

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Heritage Academy’s Lane Goodman is brought down by South Pontotoc defenders during a Sept. 10 game. Goodman returns for the Patriots in 2022.

“It’s just really amazing that we’ve accomplished all of this,” Naugher said. “In our name,” he said. “In another number next to our name.”

2021 Record

12-1 (4-0 Class 5A, District 1)

11-Man Football Class 5A, District 1; MAIS this year.

Heritage Academy enters season riding high off 2021 title.

‘Championship caliber’: Heritage Academy enters season riding high off 2021 title

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West Lowndes looks to build on strong 2021 season

By COLIN DAINES
colindaines@cdispatch.com

West Lowndes Panthers
Mississippi High School Activities Association: Class 1A, Region 3.
2021 Record: 10-3 (7-0 Class 1A, Region 3).

The start of a new season brings excitement for any football team, and the confidence is high with or without good reason. At West Lowndes, however, there is good reason.

“We’re getting great young talent,” West Lowndes Panthers head coach Anthony King said, looking over his team’s offensive skills in practice. “We’re starting to get more and more players up. Some have been working out pretty much all year and are looking good, and some were gone for the summer or had summer jobs but are showing up.”

The Panthers went on to win their opener in 2021, and despite losing 1-2 in their first three games, they were strong enough to go undefeated in district play. They entered the playoffs with an 8-2 record. An offense led by quarterback Fred Rice leaned on its running schemes, but it was a motivating experience for the team who had their sights set on replacing their high impact seniors and going 1-2 in their first two games. The defense led by quarterback came in the spring game, and King continued to build on the Panthers’ spring game, which Johnson said went well, and he thinks he has a pretty good arm even though running is his greatest strength. It will fit the offense well with a powerful offensive line.

The Panthers’ attack was strong enough to defeat the team that beat us last season, so we’re looking forward to be coming after us, but we’re looking forward to it. We want big games, we want to be tested all year, and the team that beat us in the playoffs was the state champion, so we’re running for them.”

Senior defensive back Rodarious Price didn’t shy away from the expectations. “We’re all excited for our team. We’re all confident, though, and he gets a chance to lead a group of guys for the first time.”

Rodarious Price didn’t hide his elation for his team’s reputation going into the new season. “We won district last year, so a lot of teams will be coming after us, but we’re looking forward to it. We want big games, we want to be tested all year, and the team that beat us in the playoffs was the state champion, so we’re running for them.”

The DispaTch
www.cdispatch.com

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Sept. 2: vs. Noxapater
Sept. 9: vs. Edwards
Sept. 16: at Leake County
Sept. 23: vs. Hamilton
Oct. 6: at French Camp
Oct. 14: vs. Leake County
Oct. 21: vs. Ethel
Oct. 28: vs. Noxapater*
Nov. 4: vs. Vardaman*
Nov. 11: at Ethel
Nov. 18: vs. Noxapater*
Nov. 25: vs. Vardaman*

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Starkville High Jackets
Mississippi High School Activities Association: Class 6A, Region 2. 2021 Record: 11-2 (6-1 Class 6A, Region 2)

The Jackets found themselves on a thrilling ride through the 2021 regular season run and into the playoffs, followed by a disappointing loss in Starkville earlier this season. Chris Jones had no problem "I was very proud of our kids, but we saw a lot of mistakes, but we’ve learned from them and it will help eliminate a ton of errors," he said. "I think experience like it can be a good thing, but that’s part of the process of getting better on both sides of the ball," he noted. "We’re off to a good start, but there’s a lot of room for improvement after some hiccups last year." He said the team is ready to line up and what to do. "That gives me more confidence," he added. "We’re playing like we did last year, and I like the way we’re playing like we did last year, and it feels the same. We’ve gained last year as sophomores and juniors. I think we’re going to pay off for us this year."

The 2021 season was the last time the Jackets played with value and it’s a culture of fighting for each other most of their lives. "In my opinion, we’re one of the most storied football programs in Mississippi, and they want to live up to that. There’s also an awareness of the skill around them for players who have known each other most of their lives," Jones said. "It’s bigger than me; it’s the culture here," Jones said. "We’ve grown up wanting to be great, wanting to win, and I think they’re used to shining in the spotlight before. They know this is their opportunity to make the tradition that’s been there, and even better."

This season could be championship or bust for the Jackets, and the mindset now and every season is the same, simple and direct.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 2022

**STARKVILLE High JACkETS**

**HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW**

Chris Jones said. "We made some mistakes last year that we need to correct due to being young, but that’s part of the process. Some of the guys on both sides of the ball, he’ll have to take on some of the best of the best. They will face each of the last six teams throughout the course of the spring and summer that we’re a lot better than we were last year just by knowing how to line up and what to do. There’s a way to play the game the right way, and we’re a set of kids playing the right way because of the experience they gained last year as sophomores and juniors. I think it’s going to pay off for us this year."

"In my opinion, we’re one of the most storied football programs in Mississippi, and they want to live up to that. There’s also an awareness of the skill around them for players who have known each other most of their lives," Jones said. "It’s bigger than me; it’s the culture here," Jones said. "We’ve grown up wanting to be great, wanting to win, and I think they’re used to shining in the spotlight before. They know this is their opportunity to make the tradition that’s been there, and even better."

"The culture here," Jones said when asked about the winning mentality present in the team and the tradition that makes the program. "This is one of the most storied football programs in Mississippi, and they want to live up to that. There’s also an awareness of the skill around them for players who have known each other most of their lives," Jones said. "It’s bigger than me; it’s the culture here," Jones said. "We’ve grown up wanting to be great, wanting to win, and I think they’re used to shining in the spotlight before. They know this is their opportunity to make the tradition that’s been there, and even better."

This season could be championship or bust for the Jackets, and the mindset now and every season is the same, simple and direct.
Starkville Academy carries enthusiasm and drive into new season

BY COLIN DAMMS

Starkville Academy Volunteers

October 11, 2022

Starkville Academy carries enthusiasm and drive into new season

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Starkville Academy carries enthusiasm and drive into new season

On a muddy field in the November cold, the Starkville Academy football team made a playoff run to claim the championship.ならない Championship Academy. より多くの depth with the Volunteers weren't favored to win, losing 30-0 in the regular season, and in the end they couldn't finish the fight. The game's final score of 11-12 indicates a similar far closer game to the first loss. No team was ever in the ciphertext the Vols had in finding the end zone against the Patriots. They taught with hard intensity and physicality against their rivals, and it wasn't until late that the Pats put the game away.

At the end the Vols were emotional in defeat, underscoring the year was over, and for seniors their time with the team was over, but it was a season they were proud of, and one that exemplified what head coach Chase Nicholson strives for from his team, and leave it all out there no matter what. You want to go out and compete no matter what. There's a lot of excitement, a lot of competition, and we're all thinking that we'll do pretty well this year.

One of the players they were grateful for, and one that exemplified what head coach Chase Nicholson strives for from his team, and leave it all out there no matter what. "I think that's what we work for every day," Nicholson said, reflecting on the work ethic throughout the team and the environment that fosters it. "I think it's practicing in a game-like atmosphere, practicing like you're gonna play with the same physicality and intensity of a game." Johnson said.

One of the players who graduated last year was starting quarterback Randall Futral. Junior Briggs Bennett and sophomores Luke McKenzie have been fighting to start Futral as starting quarterback, and Nicholson intends to give both of them a fair shake when the season gets going. "We're gonna give both of them an opportunity to get game time and improve their games. We've gotta have a solid QB1 but also a back-up who prides his chances and game time as well because I've gotta have them ready if something happens. That's what's best for the team, I can't sell out on one and then something happens. That's what's best for the team, I can't sell out on one and then something happens. Work I had the other isn't ready. So they'll both get plenty of time, have opportunities to lead the team, and they're both gonna be good at it and enjoy the competition." Senior Josh Word has plenty of interest in who will win the starting job, as he'll be the one's lead leaders on the offensive line at left tackle this season. There's not much concern from him about either candidate, though, because he's very encouraged by what he's seen from their work with the rest of the offense in the summer. "It's been great seeing how much they want to work and want that position, we've got two good quarterbacks fighting everyday for it," Word said about the competition. "It's still ongoing, it'll go until week one for sure. There's a lot of competition, and we're all thinking that we'll do pretty well this year.

There hasn't been a decision yet on who will be QB1, but that hasn't caused any distraction for the team. Nicholson likes to create a positive environment for the players, because for the coaches and players both football is fun, and putting in the work and maintaining the intensity just comes along with it. "For me it's exciting, Nicholson said of the competition, "I can't miss the excitement, a lot of competition, we've got two good quarterbacks fighting everyday for it."

Senior defensive end and Heritage Academy receiver Mitchell Woodard (21) catches a pass for a touchdown in the Starkville Academy defeat on Friday against Jack School in Meridian. Their first home game will take place Friday against Jackson Academy.

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2022 Schedule

Aug. 19: vs. Lamar School
Aug. 26: vs. Trinity
Sept. 2: vs. Enterprise
Sept. 9: vs. Magnolia
Sept. 16: vs. Heritage
Sept. 23: vs. Wesson Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Bayou Academy
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Nov. 18: vs. Wesson Academy
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Dec. 2: vs. Jackson Academy

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Starkville Academy Volunteers

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West Point looks to revitalize after consecutive championship game defeats

BY COLIN DAMMS
colinst@gmail.com

West Point High School football players ambled into the school on Tuesday evening, under the watchful eyes of their coach, David Foster. The team had been invited to the school, where they had the opportunity to take a tour and learn about the history of the school.

Foster, who is in his 13th year at the helm of the program, was pleased with the turnout from both coaches and students.

"It's great to see so many people here," Foster said. "We've had a lot of interest in the program, and we're excited to get this season started." 

The team has been hard at work this off-season, preparing for the upcoming season. Foster said that he and his staff have been working hard to improve the team, and he is confident that they will be ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

"We've got a lot of work to do," Foster said. "But we're confident that we can make some strides this year."

The team will open their season on August 18th against Tunica Academy. Foster said that he is excited to get the season started, and he is looking forward to seeing what the team can accomplish.

"We've got a lot of talent on this team," Foster said. "And we're confident that we can make some noise this year." 

In other football news, the Mississippi High School Activities Association released their 2022 schedule.

Mississippi High School Activities Association: Class 5A, Region 1

2022 Schedule

*All games begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Aug. 19: vs. Cleveland Central

Sept. 2: at Lafayette

Sept. 9: vs. Greenville

Sept. 16: vs. Corinth

Sept. 23: at Delta Academy

Oct. 2: at West Memphis Christian School

Oct. 7: at DeSoto School (Ark.)

Oct. 14: at West Memphis Christian School

Oct. 21: vs. Greenville

Oct. 28: vs. Tunica Academy

Nov. 4: at Cleveland Central

Nov. 11: at West Memphis Christian School

Nov. 18: vs. Corinth

Nov. 25: at DeSoto School (Ark.)

The schedule is subject to change due to weather, injury, or other factors.

Hebron Christian Eagles

Mississippi Association of Independent Schools: Eight-Man Football Class 1A, District 1

Hebron Christian continues rebuilding football program under Foster

BY COLIN DAMMS
colinst@gmail.com

Last season, Hebron Christian School was unable to field a varsity football team.

"We had such high expectations for our team," said head coach David Foster. "But we just didn't have the players to make it happen." 

Foster said that he will be working hard to build a solid program, and he is confident that he can make some strides this season.

"We've got a lot of work to do," Foster said. "But I'm excited to get started." 

The team will open their season on August 7th against Tunica Academy. Foster said that he is looking forward to seeing what the team can accomplish.

"We've got a lot of talent on this team," Foster said. "And we're confident that we can make some noise this year." 

In other football news, the Mississippi High School Activities Association released their 2022 schedule.

Mississippi High School Activities Association: Class 5A, Region 1

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West Point running back Cameron Young scores against Picayune in the MHSAA Class 5A championship game in Hattiesburg. Young has graduated, but Keshawn Henley is set to step into his role for the team this season.

West Point looks to revive dynasty after consecutive championship game defeats

Colin Damms/Dispatch Staff
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Kenneth Thomas, M.D.
Catherine Eldridge, FNP-C

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Lori Conn, FNP
Sara Cox, NP-C
Rebecca Stanford, FNP-C

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WEST POINT
Oak Hill coach Rosenthal looks to continue progress into Year 3 with Raiders

BY COLIN DAMMS

Oak Hill Academy participates in a preseason practice in West Point. The Raiders improved to 5-7 and won their district last season.

Building a winning program and establishing a culture is a painstaking process, especially for a program that hasn't experienced much success in such endeavors. Oak Hill Academy hadn't won a winning season since 2017, but hasn't won a playoff game in 30 years. The Raiders have a lot to do in terms of continuing to build, but third-year head coach Bill Rosenthal sees the fruits of his team's labor.

The Raiders went 2-0 in Rosenthal's first season as coach in 2020, but they fell to the effects of COVID-19 as much as anyone. In 2021 they improved to 5-7, which included a first-place finish in MAIS Class 4A, District 1, and a playoff appearance. COVID contributed to an impact that this year Rosenthal is hoping for a more normal season and a healthy squad.

“It is what it is,” Rosenthal said, “you have to go by what the CDC says. We lost a game last year where about six kids were out with COVID and lost our first game last year. I’m just glad it’s died down some. I know it’ll be back, but I hope our kids are smart enough to take care of themselves and do what they need to do to stay healthy!”

They’re had some work to do in the offseason by way of replacing lost talent and experience, but Rosenthal saw the bright side in enduring the COVID years by gaining most of his young- ers a chance to play varsity football. Even in the worst losses last year he saw room for improvement and areas where marginal differences can swing games the Raiders way. In short, he wants his team to think hard, establish the run and take care of the football.

“The games we won (last season) we were able to stop the run, run it well ourselves, and we didn’t turn the ball over. When we lost, we had turnovers and got down early, and you can’t play catch-up and beat good football teams,” Rosenthal said.

And the Raiders played against some good football teams. Three of their losses in 2021 were against teams who had legitimate shots at winning the state title, including Tri-County Christian Academy, who eventual- ly did win the Class 4A championship.

“I think in four of the games we were turned over a total of 20 times, and you just can’t do that,” Rosenthal said.

Another major part of managing those goals was replacing quarterback Cameron Dill, who as a senior in 2021 led the team to their first playoff appearance since 2010. Junior Noah Brand has battled with senior John Ross Crane for the starting quarterback job and looks to be the start- er with Crane remaining a leader on defense. If you ask either of them, though, it’s never been about the competition, it’s been about them growing as leaders and finding the best way for them to help the team.

“It’s been a battle for sure,” Brand said of the level of play between himself and Crane. “And whoever gets the job, that’s what’s best for the team and we’re gonna be behind them or matter what. We’re trying to help the team win.”

Crane and Brand were on the same page when it came to doing their best to help the team, and both were can- did about their strengths and weaknesses as well.

“We don’t have as much experience as [Cameron Dill] did,” Crane said, “and neither of us have been starting quarterbacks before, so we’ve just out here doing our best to build and help the team.”

Brand has some experience running Rosen- thal’s offense at quar- terback from his time in junior varsity, and Cra- we has only played as a back-up to Dill. Regardless of who wins the job permanently, Rosenthal stressed the importance of having both prepared and both as leaders to lead the team, and in that regard they certainly understand their role.

There is confidence that the team will have the playmakers in the run and passing game, they just need the right person conducting the silence.

Friday’s jamboree gave the Raiders a better idea as to who will lead them, and from there the processes begin. Oak Hill hopes to continue its progress under Rosen- thal’s and, possibly, build on its 5-7 record from last season. They will have confidence from their 3-4 record in district play last season, let alone their improvement from just one district win the year before despite moving up to Class 4A, but nothing is given in football.

The game keeps moving and the work continues to bring consistency to the pro- gram.

2022 Schedule

Aug. 13: at Center Hill Academy
Aug. 19: at East Rankin
Aug. 26: at Benton Academy
Sept. 2: vs. Winona Christian
Sept. 9: vs. Lamar Academy
Sept. 16: vs. Canton Academy
Sept. 23: vs. Lee Academy
Sept. 30: at Central Holmes
Oct. 7: vs. Marshall Academy
Oct. 14: vs. Canton Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Christian Academy
Oct. 28: at Swepsonville
Nov. 4: at Merrimac Academy
Nov. 11: vs. Central Holmes
Nov. 18: vs. Center Hill Academy

11-Man Football Class 4A, District 1; 2021 Record 5-7 (3-1 11-Man Football, Class 4A, District 1)
2023-2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULES

MHSAA CLASS 1A, REGION 3

District 1: Delta Academy (Ark.), Woodland Christian Academy (Ark.), Southwestern Christian Academy (Ark.), and Heritage Academy.


MHSAA CLASS 4A, REGION 1

District 1: Brookhaven Christian, Central Holmes Christian, Faith Christian Academy, and Heritage Academy.

District 2: Warren Central, West Lowndes, and West Point.

MHSAA CLASS 6A

District 1: Canton Central, Columbus Christian,ph ish Academy, and Magnolia Heights.

District 2: West Point, and West Lowndes.

MHSAA CLASS 1A, REGION 1

District 1: Delta Academy (Ark.), Louisiana Christian Academy, and Heritage Academy.


MHSAA CLASS 4A, REGION 1

District 1: Brookhaven Christian, Central Holmes Christian, Faith Christian Academy, and Heritage Academy.

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District 2: West Point, and West Lowndes.
Noxubee County seniors seek elusive state title after two near misses

BY THEO DEROSA
derosa@cdispatch.com

The Tigers’ senior
West Point senior Jamarquez Melton makes a touchdown catch over Noxubee County defensive back Antonio Fowler Jr. on Sept. 12 in Macon.

For seniors like Kelly, the 2022 season represents a last chance to

The Tigers had a down season last year, losing in the second round of the Class 3A playoffs, but they have high expectations in 2022.

Young is optimistic.

“Where have you graduated in mind to win a state championship?” Noxubee County coach Teddy Young asked.

“This is a great thing,” Young said. “I think it’s going to be a good season.”

For him to be as young as he is, he’s a great leader,” Kelly said. “With someone to be young and push you to be the best you can be, it feels good,” Little said.

The senior class, they’re hun

“It feels good,” Little noted.

West Point defensive back Maritavious Walker ran for 749 yards and five scores as a sophomore last season.

Taylor’s weapons include Little (516 yards, 10 touchdowns), young standout Omarr Conner; running back Martavius Wicks ran for 749 yards and five scores as a sophomore last season.

Taylor and Wicks are part of a young group that offers plenty of promise according to Little.

“After him be so young and push you to be the best you can be, it feels good,” Kelly said.

Taylor’s leadership ability might surpass any of his other attributes.

“For him to be so young and push you to be the best you can be, it feels good,” Kelly said.

“With someone to be young and push you to be the best you can be, it feels good,” Little said.

They have graduated in mind to win a state championship,” Noxubee County coach Teddy Young asked.

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We’ve got younger guys coming in to work and showing that they really want to play and really be good,” he said.

If they can break out — and if Noxubee County’s seniors can lead the way — the Tigers could add another trophy to their collection come December.

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Area
Team
Football
Schedules

COLUMBUS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 2-0, 6-0

Aug. 26: vs. Oxford Christian
Sept. 2: vs. Shannon*
Sept. 9: vs. McRae*
Sept. 16: vs. Tupelo*
Sept. 23: vs. Hazelwood
Oct. 7: vs. Delta Academy
Oct. 14: vs. shoemakers
Oct. 21: vs. North Sunflower Academy

*All starred games begin at 7:30 p.m. due to an MHSAA mandate for varsity football games in August and September. All other games begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

COLUMBUS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 1-3, 4-0

Aug. 26: vs. Oxford Christian
Sept. 2: vs. Jackson Prep
Sept. 9: vs. East Union
Sept. 16: vs. Washington School
Sept. 23: vs. Starkville Academy
Sept. 30: vs. West Point*
Oct. 7: vs. Bayou Academy
Oct. 14: vs. Magee Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Pillow Academy

HEBREWS CHRISTIAN EAGLES

2022 record: 5-5, 1-0

Aug. 26: vs. Battlefield
Sept. 2: vs. Armoree County
Sept. 9: vs. West Point*
Sept. 16: vs. West Marion Christian School
Oct. 7: vs. Calhoun Academy
Oct. 14: vs. Delta Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Live Oak Academy
Oct. 28: vs. DeSoto School

Star games begin at 7:30 p.m. due to an MHSAA mandate for varsity football games in August and September. All other games begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

HERITAGE ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 11-3, 4-1

Aug. 26: vs. Caledonia* Oct. 7: at Amory*
Aug. 26: vs. Vardaman Oct. 21: vs. Corinth*

Heritage Academy

2022 High School Football

OAK HILL ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 4-1, 0-0

Aug. 26: vs. Caledonia*
Sept. 2: vs. Jackson Prep
Sept. 9: vs. East Union
Sept. 16: vs. Washington School
Sept. 23: vs. Starkville Academy
Sept. 30: vs. West Point*
Oct. 7: vs. Bayou Academy
Oct. 14: vs. Magee Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Pillow Academy

NEW HOPE RAMS

2022 record: 5-5, 1-0

Aug. 26: vs. Calhoun* Sept. 2: vs. Shannon*
Sept. 9: at Winnsboro NMS Sept. 16: at Green Wave Sept. 23: at West Point*
Oct. 7: vs. Lake Cormorant Oct. 21: at Central Holmes
Oct. 28: vs. Safo School

STARVILLE ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 3-0, 1-1

Aug. 26: vs. Oxford Christian Sept. 2: at University Prep
Sept. 9: at Calhoun* Sept. 16: vs. West Point*
Sept. 23: vs. Lamar School
Oct. 7: at Starkville Academy
Oct. 14: vs. French Camp Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Heritage Academy
Oct. 28: vs. Winnsboro

STARKVILLE ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 3-1, 2-0

Aug. 26: vs. Clarion AHS Sept. 2: vs. Shannon*
Sept. 9: at Winnsboro NMS Sept. 16: vs. Calhoun* Sept. 23: at Green Wave Sept. 30: at West Point*
Oct. 7: vs. Lamar School Oct. 14: vs. Winnsboro

OAK HILL ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 3-0, 0-0

Aug. 26: vs. Caledonia* Sept. 2: vs. Jackson Prep
Sept. 9: vs. East Union
Sept. 16: vs. Washington School
Sept. 23: vs. Starkville Academy
Sept. 30: vs. West Point*
Oct. 7: vs. Bayou Academy
Oct. 14: vs. Magee Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Pillow Academy

NEW HOPE RAMS

2022 record: 5-5, 1-0

Aug. 26: vs. Calhoun* Sept. 2: vs. Shannon*
Sept. 9: at Winnsboro NMS Sept. 16: at Green Wave Sept. 23: at West Point*
Oct. 7: vs. Lake Cormorant Oct. 21: at Central Holmes
Oct. 28: vs. Safo School

STARVILLE ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 3-0, 1-1

Aug. 26: vs. Oxford Christian Sept. 2: at University Prep
Sept. 9: at Calhoun* Sept. 16: vs. West Point*
Sept. 23: vs. Lamar School
Oct. 7: at Starkville Academy
Oct. 14: vs. French Camp Academy
Oct. 21: vs. Heritage Academy
Oct. 28: vs. Winnsboro

STARKVILLE ACADEMY RAMS

2022 record: 3-1, 2-0

Aug. 26: vs. Clarion AHS Sept. 2: vs. Shannon*
Sept. 9: at Winnsboro NMS Sept. 16: vs. Calhoun* Sept. 23: at Green Wave Sept. 30: at West Point*
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