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2021

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

PREVIEW

MORGANTOWN HIGH ♦ PRESTON HIGH



MOHIGANS

Morgantown football team, coach Sean Biser want to take leap forward after odd COVID 2020

BY MATTHEW PEASLEE
Sports@DominionPost.com

The standard is the standard at Morgantown High. That cliché is used with many sports programs but the Mohigans truly mean it. The 2021 season is about getting back to the standard of success that the team has been used to for years.

“They’re definitely hungry,” second-year head coach Sean Biser said. “We talk about not just getting a golden ticket to make the playoffs. We have to work our way there and earn it. That’s our mentality. They’ve really embraced that.”

Last year, the Mohigans went 3-3 in an unconventional COVID-shortened season. The team is searching for its first winning season since 2016 — the last time the Mohigans won a playoff game.

Biser, who came to Morgantown after a long stint coaching at Keyser, is preaching progression to his sizeable team. He is in the early stages of rebuilding a program that last won

a state championship in 2005 and had a sustained run of deep playoff runs a decade ago.

There are more than 120 boys out for football this season and 80-some are freshman and sophomores.

“This off-season, the guys have done a good job of keeping things positive as they were looking forward to getting back at it this year,” Biser said. “It’s a little refreshing to be a little more normal this season. I can’t say it’s 100% normal now, but we are as close as we’ve been in a long time.”

Biser was named the new head coach at MHS on Feb. 25, 2020. After hosting a meet-and-greet and sign-up session, he held the first after-school weightlifting in early March. The next day, the world changed with lockdowns and quarantines.

“That was the first and last time I saw them for months,” Biser said.

This summer, he has taken advantage of the time he can spend with his players, as well as their family members. He is trying to

make up for lost time in what was such a weird first year for him in 2020. That’s part of his process of bringing the program back to its glory days.

“Last year was a lot of adapting and overcoming,” Biser said. “You try to handle everything they’re throwing at you. I can’t tell you how many times we had to change plans and adjust what we were doing. We had requirements to meet and we had to make sure everyone was safe. It seemed like every day there was something we had to change.

“Even though we had to deal with all that, I think we established a good, solid foundation. Last year, we were able to build something into what we’re trying to do now. We’re trying to create a culture and that can be accomplished this year.”

Seeing improvements in the weight room and hearing chatter amongst the senior and junior leaders has Biser confident the program is on the right track. Having the numbers the Mohigans do, too, is the biggest sign of

encouragement.

The team has been running three practice sessions a day, every day, with three separate groups for varsity, JV and freshman.

“We have a lot of depth and we’re still battling in every position,” Biser said. “Because we’ve been running with three different sessions, that’s just made it more competitive. We do have some talented kids at skill positions.”

Keonn Mallet, Broderick Washington, Davon Eldredge and Alec Duley are some of those key skill players. Junior quarterback Sebastian Dalton steps up with a year of experience under his belt. The offense will also have depth with Braedon Brooks and Charlie Nennebi potentially running the ball.

“They’ll be seeing more playing time this year,” Biser said.

The biggest benefit for the Mohigans may be that they are returning most of their experienced offensive lineman, including Sammy Teets, Nathan Hagan, Eli Stahara, and Jiavair Howard.

MORGANTOWN SCHEDULE

Aug. 27: South Charleston, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 3: at Bridgeport, 7 p.m.
Sept. 17: Hedgesville, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 24: at Woodrow Wilson, 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 1: Musselman, 7 p.m.
Oct. 8: Wheeling Park, 7 p.m.
Oct. 15: Parkersburg South, 7 p.m.
Oct. 22: at John Marshall, 7 p.m.
Oct. 29: at University, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 5: at Spring Mills, 7 p.m.

Biser was an offensive lineman for WVU in the early 1990s.

“Those guys up front are strong and experienced and we got guys behind them who want a shot,” Biser said. “We’re pretty deep and I expect us to rotate players.”

Defensively, the Mohigans will stick with their eight-man front, though they will employ multiple fronts.

Jaiden Evans and Marquis Mauney are two-way players to look out for, as well as Jarrett Lawrence

and Preston Harman.

“Just out of necessity, we had to be more simplistic last year,” Biser said. “We can expand our playbook on both sides of the ball this year.”

Morgantown hosts the first game of the year at Pony Lewis Field on Aug. 27 against South Charleston.

“The kids have really bought into our mentality and they’re fired up,” Biser said. “We’re not where we need to be yet but I’m really proud of their work ethic and commitment so far.”

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Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post photos



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MOHIGANS

Jaiden Evans taking charge of Morgantown offense and defense



Morgantown's Jaiden Evans wants to be a leader on the offensive and defensive fronts for the Mohigans this season.



Evans has a conversation with assistant coach Anthony Giambrone.

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BY MATTHEW PEASLEE
Sports@DominionPost.com

The Morgantown football team has many play-makers at different positions across the field. Newer players are stepping up to fill roles and veteran players are looking to make their mark on the program.

Jaiden Evans is a player who is trying to do both.

A 6-foot-5, 250-pound senior two-way lineman, Evans is one of the biggest guys on the field. He's been a two-way player for the past three years and has been a contributor at the varsity level since he was a freshman.

As a senior, he is hoping for more opportunities to make his way into the starting rotation.

"It's a lot of stress sometimes," Evans said. "It takes hard work. Everybody is putting in the work. You have to work when nobody else is working. That's what a lot of us have been doing. I've been focusing on getting better, myself, to help the team reach its goals."

This off-season, Evans came to the realization his time with the Mohigans was coming to an end. Not fully pleased with his performance as a freshman, sophomore and junior, Evans wanted a way to guarantee that his senior year would be one he could remember for a lifetime.

"This past year really started to snap for me," Evans said. "I knew I had to put on muscle and step it up to really reach my full potential. I knew I could be a lot stronger than I was."

"It was just time to grow up. I may not have been as motivated in the weight room but this past year after not having the junior year that I wanted, I realized that it was make or break. I was going to hit it all harder and get after it."

He is taking his role as a senior leader seriously. As he fights for a spot in the starting lineup, he is also taking the time to make sure he is making his class-

mates better and setting a positive example for the younger players in the program. Of the more than 120 players out for the MHS football team this season, 80-some are freshman and sophomores.

"I know I'm not a kid anymore, I'm an adult and I have responsibilities to myself, my team and my family," Evans said. "That's in the real world and in the football team."

"From my freshman year until now I've grown a lot. I owe a lot of my development to the coaches I've had, role models I've looked up to and the older players on the team who have set a good example for all of us. I've grown into a new role and I'm learning how to be a leader."

Evans said he took that step as a leader in Morgantown's first scrimmage against Capital. The Mohigans got off to a slow start against the Cougars, another consistent threat in AAA, but picked up their performance as the game went on.

"We got used to the flow of the game and I was proud seeing the guys step up," Evans said. "We've got a good team. A lot of kids have grown into their spots. Our offensive line is big and tough. All of our backs are ready to work. They pay attention to every little detail and make sure everything is on point. We saw what we needed to do in that scrimmage."

As Evans tries each day to live out his goal of becoming a starter, he also is striving toward the dream of playing college football.

"I would love to play at the next level, no matter where," Evans said. "Playing college football has been my dream since I first started playing football."

Evans took advantage of his height as a youngster and played basketball for several years. In his upper-classmen years of high school, he has devoted his time to becoming the best football player he can be.

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Evans tries to shed a tackle against Preston during a scrimmage on Aug. 20.



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KNIGHTS

Mark Deep looking to put his stamp on Preston football program in first year

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

KINGWOOD — Mark Deep, Preston’s new football coach, doesn’t teach at PHS, but the man is more than accustomed to handling challenges.

Heck, he even works at the Mountaineer Challenge Academy — and he insists he’s ready to face this one head on.

Deep played high school football in Pennsylvania at Connellsville and Chartiers Valley, then moved on to Potomac State, where an unfortunate automobile accident ended his playing career. But he knew he’d end up coaching — it’s perhaps even a genetic trait that runs strong throughout his family tree.

“My granddad, my dad, a bunch of uncles, and cousins ... all are football coaches,” he said. “So yeah, after my playing days were done — even though they got taken away quicker than I’d hoped. I kinda knew that I’d end up on the sidelines sooner rather than later.”

So, what did the new guy get himself into? Deep knew he certainly wouldn’t have to start from scratch.

“I have been watching what (former coach Jonathan Tennant) has been doing from afar,” Deep said, “and I knew he ran a nice, tight program, and that he was a real stand-up guy. He moved the program forward, and now I’m excited about the opportunity to continue

the progress.”

While there will be similarities in schemes from the previous regime on both sides of the ball, Deep is concentrating much of his effort to learn the capabilities of the players he has, and fit the playbook to their strengths.

“I think it’s a balancing act between changing everything right away, giving the kids too much too soon, and making sure that we are establishing a whole new mindset,” he said. “I think the kids have been fantastic, and welcoming, and they’re putting in the work and battling every day to get better and understand what we need from them. It’s a process, and it’s going well so far.”

According to senior

offensive tackle/ middle linebacker Chase Blaney, the transition has been smooth and reinvigorating.

“I really liked the old coaching staff,” he said, “but once we heard the news, we all were ready for a new approach. Our position coaches are teaching us something new every day, new techniques to put in our toolbox, and learning more about the game is always fun, especially when the new stuff works. We’re ramped and ready to go.”

On the defensive side of the line, fellow senior Tyler Jeffries agrees with the guy he’s been butting helmets with in practice since they were freshman.

“We were definitely sur-

PRESTON SCHEDULE	
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Sept. 24:	at East Fairmont, 7 p.m.
Oct. 8:	at Bridgeport, 7 p.m.
Oct. 15:	Washington, 7 p.m.
Oct. 22:	University, 7 p.m.
Oct. 29:	at Buckhannon-Upshur, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 5:	at Brooke, 7:30 p.m.

prised when we heard the news,” he said, “but once coach Deep got here, he’s made everyone comfortable. Practices are a little more relaxed, with maybe more teaching involved. No matter who’s on the

sidelines, our team is ready to give everything we’ve got this season. It’s the seniors’ last year, and I know we’ll leave it all out there on the field every Friday night.”

TWEET @dompostsports



William Wotring/The Dominion Post file photo



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post photos

Deep thinks he can continue relationships built at middle school level with Squires

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

KINGWOOD — It’s a proven fact successful high school sports programs do not suddenly emerge with a special star athlete, or a strong senior class or loads of talented underclassmen. All of those are key components of a fine team — but building a sustainably successful program starts much earlier.

Newly installed Preston football coach Mark Deep knows all about building at the beginning — he’s been involved with the county’s middle school football program for several years. And now that he’s running the show at the top, he’s ready to find out just what his work several years ago has helped produce.

“It’s definitely felt a little bit like a homecoming for sure,” Deep said. “I’ve coached probably 80% of the kids on our team at some point when they were back in middle school, so I’ve really enjoyed reconnecting with them, seeing what fine young men and fine football players they’ve become.”

As Deep has evaluated

this Knights during the three-week flex time, as well as fall practice and scrimmages, it’s been clear reintroducing some of the terminology and techniques from the past has been fairly seamless for most of the team.

“Coach Deep was my position coach back in middle school,” senior defensive tackle Tyler Jeffries said, “so I knew what to expect from him. He’s made the transition a very comfortable process for all of us, even as we are changing things up. It’s just great getting a chance to get a different perspective on your game and how you play. It’s made football a lot more interesting and challenging for my last year, but I can’t wait to put what I’ve learned into action.”

Although he’s now coaching many of his former middle-schoolers at the varsity level, Deep is making sure that every Knights player knows that expectations are going to be very different.

“I think this first year is going to be critical for us,” he said. “There’s a different mindset and different cul-

ture, a total mindset change that everybody involved with the program has to embrace. I certainly hope we don’t, but we may find out that some players aren’t willing to do what it takes to be successful — learning the playbook, commitment to fitness, extra work in the weight room. There’s a price you have to pay to play football the right way, and that’s what we expect.”

“For us to build Preston football into what it can be is my full responsibility, starting the day I accepted the position. When I first got the offer, I took the weekend to really consider what I was about to do, because I wouldn’t have said yes unless I was fully committed. The people of Preston County will rally around this football team on Friday nights — all we have to do is play a good, solid, tough, committed style of football, year after year. That’s what we’ve been trying to grow here for years, and I promise you that we leave it all on the field every time we suit up.”

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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HAWKS

University football team finally has veteran group coach Kelley seeks

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

MORGANTOWN — For the first time in a while, there's something in the air surrounding the University football team. It's not enthusiasm or passion — those are always present, and in great quantities, starting with generation-spanning head coach John Kelley, who states simply that, "If I'm out here, then I'm excited about being here, and if

I'm not — well, that will let me know it's time to hang 'em up."

No, after two seasons of youth-related on-field struggles compounded by harrowing and frustrating COVID issues, the prevailing vibe emanating from Hawks practices these days is a critical component of every successful program and every winning season — belief.

"By our standards, it's been two straight down

years, no question about it," Kelley said. "A big part of that has been how young we've been. The past three years, we've had single-digit senior classes, and no matter how talented you are, it's difficult to compete successfully against more-experienced, more-physically mature teams. And that usually results in some hard learning."

But all that struggle and battle and long-term think-

ing appears poised to pay off, as UHS enters the season with a whopping 71-player roster, including 21 seniors and 21 juniors, all with loads of varsity experience and talent.

"We even have a sophomore class with lots of game action on their resumes," Kelley said. "There are eight starters back on both sides of the ball, plenty of speed and explosiveness at our skill positions, and our O-line and

SEE UNIVERSITY, D-3

UNIVERSITY SCHEDULE

Aug. 27: John Marshall, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 3: Parkersburg South, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 10: at Brooke, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 17: at Wheeling Park, 7 p.m.
Sept. 24: Fairmont Senior, 7 p.m.
Oct. 8: at Albert Gallatin, 7 p.m.
Oct. 15: at Buckhannon-Upshur, 7 p.m.
Oct. 22: at Preston, 7 p.m.
Oct. 29: Morgantown, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 5: Oak Hill, 7 p.m.



William Wotring/The Dominion Post photos



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Snyder a proud dad to UHS backup QB Hudson

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

It isn't often a veteran high school football offensive coordinator gets so emotional after a play that he starts to tear up a little on the sidelines, especially during a preseason scrimmage. But for University assistant coach Eric Snyder, who returned to the UHS program after stepping away in 2018, it's all about family, both then and now.

"I started at UHS as an intern back in 2002 when I was attending WVU; I was in charge of the toolbox," he said. "Over the next 15 years, I coached on both sides of the ball as position coach as well as defensive coordinator, and I loved

every minute of it, but I also realized that I was just missing too much time with my family, especially my stepchildren."

However, two years ago, Snyder's stepson Luke Hudson decided he wanted to try tackle football (after playing flag football and other sports), and then last year, Hudson approached him with a request that even now, lights up his stepdad's eyes.

"He told me he wanted me to be his coach," Snyder said, "and I was like, 'Okay,' but that was really something special for sure."

Of course, Snyder still needed to be hired, so he approached his old boss, and long-time Hawks head

SEE SNYDER, D-3



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

University's Luke Hudson.

UNIVERSITY

FROM PAGE D-2

D-line goes nine deep. So we feel confident that, if injury and/or fatigue hits as it always does, we have people that are ready to step in with the same level of play. And that's a big advantage."

Senior linebacker/tight end Donald Brandel sees a different mindset that has him fired up.

"We have been looking toward this year for a while now," he said of his fellow upperclassmen. "We kept reminding each other that if we just stuck together, kept pushing each other to improve, that we would have an

opportunity to be a really strong team. We felt lucky that we got the season we did last year through the pandemic, and we're all doing our part to make sure we give ourselves a chance to have one this year, as well.

"I think COVID has reminded us of how easily it can all be taken away," he continued, "and it's made us a closer family, and made us more aware of all the moments we have together. And now, we are 100% committed to being as good as we can be. We've talked about winning, but we can't just talk about it anymore. It's time to go out and do it. And we're ready."

Junior Chase Edwards is back at quarterback after starting all of last season and the end of the 2019 campaign. At running back, Colin McBee will provide the thunder while Daminn Cunningham will provide the lightning.

At wide receiver, Jaeden Hammack returns after contributing the last two seasons, but the coaching staff is very high on Sage Clawges.

The Hawks, coming off a 3-4 season with a first-round loss in the playoffs to Musselman, will open their season Aug. 27, hosting John Marshall.

TWEET @dompostsports

SNYDER

FROM PAGE D-2

coach John Kelley had to think about it — for about three seconds.

"When Eric told me he had to step down, it was devastating," Kelley said, "because he is such a great coach, both from a football point of view and as a mentor for the kids. But I also supported him 100%, because putting your family first is what every father should do. So, when he told me he'd like to come back this year — well, it was like having a son return home. It feels very comfortable having him here, like he never left, and I guarantee

we'll be a better football team because he's back."

"I've been on cloud nine since the flex practice days in June," Snyder said, "I've missed being around John, being around football, and it's been so much fun. And with all the weapons we have on offense, and our depth and experience, I kind of feel like I won the lottery as an offensive coordinator."

So, about that play — it happened during the Hawks' final scrimmage against Laurel Highlands the Saturday before their season opener against John Marshall.

During the second quarter, with his stepson commanding the UHS offense, Hudson was flushed out of

the pocket, scrambled left toward the sideline, then alertly spotted his wide receiver, Sage Clawges, breaking off his short pattern and breaking open behind the cover corner. Head up, eyes up, the young QB delivered a pass perfectly in stride to Clawges, who did the rest of the work for a 72-yard touchdown.

"He's only been playing for two years," Snyder said, "and that moment was just so special. I had to grab a player coming off the field, so I could coach him and kind of pull myself back into coach-mode before I completely lost it. It's all been so positive, and I'm just happy and proud to be back."

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WARRIORS

Trinity football team making final adjustments as season approaches

BY AUSTIN MOORE
Sports@DominionPost.com

The Trinity football team is getting closer to game ready form as the season inches closer.

“We’ve seen a big improvement on our line of scrimmage. We’ve got more power out of them than what we expected early on,” head coach Chris Simpson said.

The Warriors are seeing growth in their skill positions, as well. The quarterback competition between Jaylon Hill and Chayce Adams is closing in going into the first scrimmage against Calhoun County — the job is “Hill’s to lose.”

Simpson hopes to get reassurance the team’s offensive plans for the season are not only manage-

able, but able to excel and let the skill positions flourish.

“I want my line to continue to prove itself, to show us that it can buy us the time we need to get the offense running and I want to prove some mental toughness to these guys,” he said.

After having the team compete with one another during the offseason, Simpson is most excited about getting back out on the field with fresh competition.

“You get stale after playing against each other for so long. It will be good to see them against some folks they don’t know and will be an excellent test for them.”

Behind the improving offensive line, Simpson is relying on his quarterback

and receivers to move the ball quickly down the field with an air-raid mentality.

“It’s short passes, quick receptions, getting the ball to athletes in space and allowing them to make a move or make a play. It’s trying to set up the run game to buy yourself more passing opportunities,” he said.

However, Simpson admits that his team’s strengths lie on the other side of the ball.

“Defensively, it’s keeping the ball in front of us and playing within ourselves. At the end of the day, we are a defensive team right now until we prove otherwise,” he said.

Simpson is modeling his unit around Texas Christian University’s 4-2-5 defensive play and puts a

lot of stock into his safety play from both Levi Teets and Carmelo Kniska.

“Our strength is definitely in our secondary between Teets and Kniska, just two unbelievable safeties for us,” Simpson said.

Teets receives high praise from Simpson, as he continues to quarterback the defense and help with their offensive attack.

“[Teets] is just a commencement leader. He’s been stepping in for us a little bit at tailback, he’s been playing slot for us and he’s still quarterbacking the defense. He’s one of those once a decade players. Just a high IQ, high hustle and really in tune with what is going on, just a great leader,” Simpson said

TRINITY SCHEDULE	
Aug. 27:	OPEN
Sept. 3:	at Bridgeport (Ohio), 7 p.m.
Sept. 10:	at Millersport (Ohio), 6 p.m.
Sept. 17:	at Paden City, 7 p.m.
Sept. 24:	at Southern (Ohio), 7 p.m.
Oct. 1:	Cameron, 7 p.m.
Oct. 8:	at Hundred, 3 p.m.
Oct. 15:	at Hancock (Md.), 7 p.m.
Oct. 22:	Tygart’s Valley, 7 p.m.
Oct. 29:	at Cameron, 7 p.m.
Nov. 5:	Madonna, 7 p.m.

As the season approaches, Simpson has his eyes set on the games against Cameron and Madonna as he described them as important milestones markers for the Warriors.

“They always have a solid team as well and we are looking to make a name for ourselves,” he said.

The Warriors begin their season at home against Bridgeport (Ohio) on Sept. 3.

TWEET @dompostsports

Trinity place kicker Kyle Knight excels at more than just football

BY AUSTIN MOORE
Sports@DominionPost.com

Trinity Christian junior Kyle Knight is proving to be a standout player for the Warriors football program.

After finishing last season on the all-state second team as a place kicker, Knight has already been named pre-season all-state second team by Coalfields for this season.

Knight is a multi-use player who spends most of his time at the punter and placer kicker positions, but also contributes to the team at the wide receiver and defensive back positions, as well. However, football is not the only sport he plays, as Knight starts in the mid-field on Trinity’s soccer team. Being such a stand-out and essential player on two teams takes dedication and time though.

Most of his days start early with the soccer team, but the practice time does not end there, as he returns to the field hours later to meet with the football team.

“I have soccer in the morning from 8:00 to 9:45 and

then I don’t have anything until football, which is from 3:00 to 6:00,” Knight said. “I don’t really have that much free time usually, but when I do I’ll be at home and I’ll work out or be on my phone.”

The time Knight spends playing sports does not end there, as he is also a member of a travel soccer team outside of the high school fall sports season.

Knight started playing football during his 8th-grade year for his middle school team, but has always spent time with soccer as he’s been playing “since pretty much forever.”

His presence on both teams does not go unnoticed, as Knight left quite the impression with his football coaching staff.

Head coach Chris Simpson, who is entering his second full-time season as Trinity’s head man, knows Knight’s potential and is excited for what the future holds, whether it will be on or off the field.

“He’s a pretty solid kid — he looks more likely to get a scholarship for DI in soccer,

but he’s still on a bunch of different radars right now, a couple different kicking lists that go across the nation. He’s a hidden talent and he’s a good, well-mannered young man as well,” Simpson said.

Knight is excited about the Warriors this football season and has mainly been working on getting comfortable with his playbook and putting a lot of his confidence into his coaching staff.

“I think it’s going to be good. Our team is getting together very well with our coaches. They know what they’re doing and they are teaching us everything they know,” he said.

Simpson is optimistic about the upcoming football season as the team is accumulating experience with several returning players. He believes the veteran presence in his locker room will mark the beginning of growth for his system and his team moving forward.

Trinity’s season kicks off at home against Bridgeport (Ohio).

TWEET @dompostsports



The Dominion Post file photo
Trinity’s Kyle Knight is a multi-sport fall athlete for the Warriors, also playing soccer.



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CEE-BEES

Clay-Battelle will be anchored by high-powered offense, hopes to see improvement on defense

BY MATTHEW PEASLEE
Sports@DominionPost.com

BLACKSVILLE — After showing dedication to the program throughout the summer, the Clay-Battelle football team came together as a cohesive unit. Head coach Ryan Wilson has been pleased with the team chemistry spearheaded by veteran leadership and a strong offensive line.

"Team chemistry goes a

long way," Wilson said. "You could see it during the three-week period in June."

Clay-Battelle took advantage of its time together over the summer and took part in 7-on-7 camps at Washington & Jefferson and WVU. The experienced offensive linemen also went to a specialized linemen camp to hone their skills.

"You could see that chemistry coming together in those competitions," Wilson

said. "You could see our guys coming together as a team. They were working together and encouraging each other. The older linemen were helping the younger linemen. Things that we were doing there transitioned into our camp in August."

Thirty-two players are out for the Cee-Bees following a 3-2 campaign in the truncated 2020 season. In the three wins, Clay-Battelle averaged 42 points per

game. Building on a strong offense is a key this season, especially with the inspired play of the offensive line.

Jacob Kassey, Allen Nestor, Braden Cohen, Tate Elliot, Seth Sheets and Drew Mercer will see a bulk of the playing time up front. Only one starting offensive lineman graduated last year, so this seasoned group is prepared to build upon

SEE C-B, D-6

CLAY-BATTELLE SCHEDULE

Aug. 27: Federal Hocking (Ohio), 7 p.m.
Sept. 3: East Hardy, 7 p.m.
Sept. 10: Valley-Wetzel, 7 p.m.
Sept. 17: Beallsville, 7 p.m.
Sept. 24: at Tygarts Valley, 7 p.m.
Oct. 1: Hancock (Md.), 7 p.m.
Oct. 8: at Massanutten (Va.) Academy, 3 p.m.
Oct. 15: at Cameron, 7 p.m.
Oct. 29: at Calhoun, 7 p.m.
Nov. 5: at Hundred, 7 p.m.



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CEE-BEES

Carson Shriver, Drew Boczek to split quarterback duties for C-B

BY MATTHEW PEASLEE
Sports@DominionPost.com

BLACKSVILLE — Best friends Drew Boczek and Carson Shriver accounted for more than 3,700 yards of total offense and 37 touchdowns over the past two seasons. Boczek played at Trinity, while Shriver was at Clay-Battelle. This year, they are teaming up as Cee-Bees quarterbacks to lead what could be one of the most-dynamic offenses in Class A football. “I’m really excited for a full season with 10 games and hopefully more with the playoffs,” Shriver said. “We’re looking good so far. We’ve got our offensive scheme in a good place and it’s been really fun to see it all come together.” Head coach Ryan Wilson’s unique dual-threat system has been in place for several years. When Shriver was a freshman, he watched Seth Casino and Levi Carrico handle the quarterback duties. Last year, Shriver joined Cooper Watson and took advantage of the opportunity as a sophomore QB. “Getting the touches that I did will help me coming into this year, personally,” Shriver said. “But we also have an experienced and bigger line — it made me realize that this really could be our year. (Last year) developed me better as an all-around athlete and a football player. Since I was a younger player, I saw

what it takes to move the ball and ultimately win games. Beyond that, I put on a lot of muscle and strength which was a great feeling and better prepared me for this year.” Boczek led Trinity to a winning record as a sophomore quarterback in the COVID-shortened campaign. As a freshman, he went 2-2 as the starting QB before suffering a broken foot. He brings to Clay-Battelle a 90.2 quarterback rating from last season. He completed 87 of 152 passes for 993 yards and 11 touchdowns last season, including a 20-of-32 passing performance for 313 yards and three touchdowns in a game against Wahama. He earned First-Team All-OVAC Mason-Dixon Conference and Honorable-Mention All-State honors last season. “I’ve done a lot of elbow workouts and throwing mechanics to get my arm stronger,” Boczek said. “I needed to get the ball further down the field so I really worked on the deep ball so I can get it out there for my receivers.” Boczek and Shriver have been close friends since playing basketball together in elementary school. They played against each other and even together on some travel teams. They’ve kept in touch in the years since and are now teaming up together on the football field. “We click really well,” Boczek said. “We’ve always

clicked really well.” Boczek was welcomed in by the rest of his C-B teammates right away. “I’ve known some of the other guys, like Tate Elliot, for a long time, too,” Boczek said. “Even meeting new guys for the first time, they’ve treated me like one of their own. They’ve treated me like a friend right away. I feel really proud to be part of this community.” Boczek tends to be the traditional pro-style quarterback who is comfortable under center, in shotgun formations and in the pocket. Shriver has quick feet and can scramble to make a decision under duress to run or throw the ball. Both Boczek — 5-10, 165 pounds — and Shriver — 5-11, 175 pounds, will see action on nearly every snap for Clay-Battelle this season. When they’re not at quarterback, they’ll line up as a receiver or running back. “Anything that helps my team win,” Boczek said. “I’ll play wherever. If I’m needed to throw in a big situation, I will, and if I’m called upon to catch a game-winning pass, that would be awesome, too. I just want to get wins and make it to the playoffs.” Like Boczek, Shriver was named First-Team All-OVAC Mason-Dixon Conference and Honorable-Mention All-State. He had 600 rushing yards and scampered to the end zone eight times in four games last season, with two

games over more than 200 yards each. Shriver also threw for 250 yards and six touchdowns. Clay-Battelle first unleashed its new offense in the first scrimmage on Aug. 14 against Zanesville (Ohio) Bishop Rosecrans. Boczek and Shriver split the quarterback duties, with Boczek getting more used to the system. He looked comfortable right away as the Cee-Bees found the end zone four times, put up more than 300 offensive yards, and the defense stepped up to only allow 56 yards of total offense, en route to a shut out. “We excelled in our passing game and in our running game,” Boczek said. “It was big for our confidence.” “We really came to play,” Shriver said. Now, the tandem will look to harken back to their early days on the hardwood, where they first developed their lifelong companionship. Their childhood innocence began a friendship that would last for the next 10 years. “We can both rely on each other to throw the ball or run the ball,” Shriver said. “More importantly, we have each other’s back no matter what. We keep each other up even when we make a mistake. I’m so glad Drew’s on my team now. “With him here, we can go far.” One of the first things Shriver told Boczek when he joined the Cee-Bees was



The Dominion Post file photo

Clay-Battelle’s Carson Shriver.



Submitted photo

Clay-Battelle’s Drew Boczek.

that the school was such a close-knit community. “Now we just want to make the community proud,” Boczek said. **TWEET** @dompostsports

C-B
FROM PAGE D-5

its solid 2020 season. “They’ve done a super job and I am just so proud of that offensive line,” Wilson said. “They’re leaders on and off the field and they open up so much for our offense. We also have a couple young kids coming on. They’ll need to step in probably by Week 3 or 4 to provide a little depth. They

have really impressed me. “They all pretty much know our run game from terminology to how we block. The offense is coming together really well.” The guys up front will be providing protection for the dual-quarterback system, paced by Carson Shriver and Trinity transfer Drew Boczek. Wilson and the coaching staff have devised schemes that play to each quarterback’s strengths. Both Shriver and

Boczek will be on the field at the same time, though, in many situations. “Both of them throw the ball really well,” Wilson said. “They’re right on target. They performed well in 7-on-7s earlier in the summer and I know they can keep that up this month into game situations. We pop them out as receivers when they’re not under center. They’re playmakers. They are skilled players and don’t need to come

off the field.” Last year, Clay-Battelle was solid on defense in their victories but surrendered more than 40 points in each of their losses. Tightening that up is a focus for Wilson. “Defensively, from the linebackers to the secondary, we really worked with them during our three-week period,” Wilson said. “Our pass coverage was a work in progress and now it’s looking really

solid. I’m pleased with that progression. We’re working on stopping the run game here early in our practice sessions and the kids have picked that up really well.” Wilson is entering his 27th year as head coach of the Cee-Bees. He has been on the staff a total of 35 years. “I’ve been very blessed,” Wilson said. “We have a great school and a great community who supports us. Everybody just wants to

get back to watching high school football on a Friday night. I know our fans will be there and we’ll show up for them.” Clay-Battelle opens at home on Aug. 27 against Federal Hocking from Stewart, Ohio. Parkersburg Catholic was originally scheduled as the opening game but the football program folded due to low numbers. **TWEET** @dompostsports



The Dominion Post file photos



Parkersburg South will have brand new look in 2021

BY JOSH HUGHES
News and Sentinel

PARKERSBURG — It’s a new look for Parkersburg South in 2021. Out are some key contributors from a year ago, but necessity created opportunities for head coach Nate Tanner’s bunch in 2020. Several players needed to step up in the face of others suffering injuries, and that has helped soften the blow of having lots of new faces. Tanner says this is a chance to start anew, as the 1-7 mark from a year ago is in the rear view. “We started our offseason program in March. The kids did really well throughout that entire process,” Tanner said. “In June, we started our flex days, and we were able to get several flex days in, throughout the month. We played a lot of 7-on-7s and continued to lift. I feel like

our flex days were almost like a mini spring ball.” After that, South began the three-week practice period with more 7-on-7s and plenty of joint practices with other schools. It’s all a part of the process for PSHS, and this offseason energized the core group of players set to lead the way. South’s biggest chunk of returning talent comes on the defensive side of the ball. Through eight games, Trent Parsons, Gage Wright, Brent Parkhurst, Brayden Whipkey and Cyrus Traugh all finished just behind South graduate Devin Gaines for the team lead in tackles. Both Traugh and Wright earned all-state defensive honorable mention spots for their efforts. That phase of the game was a tough one for the Pats, as they allowed more than 42 points per game. The

returning firepower should help in that regard, as Tanner liked what he saw over the off-season with the guys up front. Both offensive and defensive lines put plenty of work in, as lineman competitions helped prepare those players for whatever the opposition throws at them. “We had lineman competitions, and basically, our goal was to speed up the maturation process with a lot of our young guys,” Tanner said of the youth on the team. “We’re going to be having a lot of young guys that are going to be playing key roles on offense, defense and special teams. I feel like we were able to accomplish that. One position that hasn’t been decided for PSHS is the all-important starting quarterback spot. Last season, senior Sam Schuler was called upon to

throw the ball more than expected. The result was one which saw him throw for more than 2,100 yards and 15 touchdowns. Backing him up were underclassmen, Turner Garretson and Robert Shockey. Both signal callers saw limited chances under center, as combined, they threw 13 passes. Garretson finished his freshman year by going 3 for 9 with 122 yards, a touchdown and an interception. Shockey’s freshman year saw him go 3 for 4 for 25 yards. Given how reliant South was on the passing game, Tanner is taking his time coming to a decision. Both quarterbacks offer advantages that give Tanner a lot to consider. With both coming in as sophomores, the winner of the starting job could anchor the position for the next few years. “We’re still kind of 50-

50, right now,” Tanner said of the QB competition. “After playing both scrimmages, I think we’ll have a greater idea. Robert is an exceptional athlete. He wrestled for a state title as a freshman, if that gives you an idea of what kind of athlete he is. He’s an exceptional runner, and as a passer, he’s improved massively. I think a lot of that is attributed to just learning our system and going through offensive individual periods with our coaches. He’s getting a better feel for his assignments and being a quarterback, in general.” Tanner continued, this time, with his thoughts on Garretson. “You can say a lot of the same things about him. He’s probably more of a pure passer, than what Robert is,” Tanner said of Garretson. “Where Robert makes up for some stuff

with his athleticism and his ability to run, Turner can pass the ball extremely well. With his technique, he’s pretty polished. He’s worked on his craft as a passer, quite a bit. That’s more than most of the quarterbacks I’ve coached in the last ten years. I told him that if he wanted to be our starter, he needed to get a lot stronger and a lot faster. He did all of those things. He moves pretty well with his feet, and I think he’s got a lot more confidence, as a runner.” Both players wait in the wings for the chance to start, as Week 1 sees the Patriots head on the road to face Capital. The early road trip continues into the next week at University, then South finally comes home on September 10 at the Erickson All-Sports Facility to face Woodrow Wilson.

Kropka takes over at John Marshall

BY CODY TOMER
The Intelligencer

MOUNDSVILLE — Newly named John Marshall coach Justin Kropka is used to rebuilding a team — after all, he did help get Harrison Central's football program to where it is today.

Those Huskies began the program winning nine of their first 60 games in school history before Kropka helped guide them to a 73-57 mark over the next 13 seasons.

Now, after spending the last three years as an assistant coach at Wheeling University, Kropka is faced with a new task and although the current John Marshall program does have solid numbers with 50 kids coming out for the varsity team and a veteran coaching staff, the Monarchs will be rebuilding after graduating a very talented senior class full of starters all over the field.

“Those years at Harrison, we built that thing from scratch,” Kropka said. “There are a ton of things that the second time around — the experience I gained at Harrison Central gives us a little bit of an accelerant to the rebuild but it has caused me to go back and call on some of those past experiences to keep my head about me a little bit.”

John Marshall loses its quarterback in Derrick Derrow, standout receiver and defensive back in Bryce Rayl and OVAC All-Stars and dynamic duo in the backfield in tailbacks Dalton Flowers and Alex Burton, just to name a few.

Rayl earned an All-Valley selection for forcing and recovering six fumbles, recording 31 tackles and two interceptions, one of which he raced back to the endzone for a touchdown. He also paced the receiving corps with 27 catches, 360 yards and six touchdowns.

Flowers brought home second team all-state honors last year as he galloped for 1,384 yards and 16 touchdowns, followed by Burton's 887 yards and nine scores.

“We currently don't

have a kid on the team who has a varsity carry or has thrown a varsity pass,” Kropka said. “So we are starting on the ground floor. We are awfully young and the smallest class on the team is our seniors. We lost an all-state tailback, we lost our quarterback, both receivers so we are probably one of the most inexperienced teams you will find in the valley but the good thing is we are all learning together.”

Taking over at quarterback for the Monarchs this season will be junior Jacob Coffield (6-foot-1, 185 pounds), who is already taking steps forward and is progressing in his new role.

“It's his first time starting a varsity game, which is Aug. 27 at University and that is not an easy opener,” Kropka said. “He's got a good arm, he can run a little bit, and he just has the mental aspect for the game. He's learning the system, which will come with time, but he's getting better. Between coach Mark Cisar and myself there is no sugar coating anything and he is learning how to take coaching well and he has progressed a great deal within the last two weeks.”

Kropka is also excited about the talent the team has found at backup quarterback in junior Brennan Sobotka (6-2, 160).

“This biggest surprise is our No. 2 in Brennan Sobotka,” Kropka said. “He's never played quarterback but I just knew he was a competitor. He's grown leaps and bounds. He plays three sports and I like my quarterbacks to at least play two and preferably three because that means they've been under fire before, so I kind of drafted him to play QB out of the blue and he has really impressed me as far as making the right reads and making the throws. He's done a great job and now we feel a lot more comfortable with our No. 2 guy. Going into the year I knew we had Coffield but I wasn't sure about our No. 2 but he has really had a great July and August.”

Younger players abound for Brooke

BY CODY NESPOR
The Intelligencer

WELLSBURG — After a rash of injuries derailed what could have been a promising season for Brooke in 2020, the Bruins will be much more dependent on younger players in 2021.

With just seven seniors on the roster, head coach Mac McLean is hoping his freshmen and sophomore grow up quick early in the fall.

“We're going to be a very young and inexperienced team and I think we just need to keep on an upward trajectory every week,” McLean said. “These young kids need to grow up and by October we should be a veteran football team. But we're going to start really young and the determining factor is just how fast we can grow up and how well we can stand up to older competition.”

McLean returned 18 of 22 starters in 2020 and was hoping that would lead to a successful season, but the injuries hit the Bruins early and often as they sputtered to just a 1-8 record.

“I thought we were going to have a pretty darn good season last year and by week three I think 11 (players) were out for the season,” McLean said. “It just fell apart, there's only so many losses you can sustain on the depth chart before you're scrambling just to put kids out there in positions where they're going to be safe.”

McLean said he is not worried about players getting hurt this year, every team deals with injuries after all, but more so the mental tax that injuries can have on the rest of the team.

“My biggest concern isn't injuries, we will have injuries,” McLean said. “We have got to get over the mental hurdle of the first kid that goes down. We can't get into a 'here we go again' attitude. I told these guys early that there's

going to be a day when we lose somebody, we might lose two people in a game, but we cannot let it mentally drive us into the ground. We're going to have to overcome that.”

“It's important that we all acknowledge (injuries) but not overthink it,” said senior lineman Jacob Donley. “(We need to) keep our composure to not make mistakes that could cause more injuries.”

Donley (6-foot-1, 175 pounds) is one of three seniors McLean said the team will really depend on this year. The others are linebacker Luke Secrist (5-11, 203) and wide receiver Nick Costlow (5-11, 167).

“If I'm only going to have five or six seniors, they're the kind of guys I want as role models for the sophomores I have,” McLean said. “They've taken a pretty active role (in leadership). They've been really positive with the incoming freshmen, they've done everything that I've asked them to do and they deserve success.”

On the field, McLean expects the Bruins will be a defense-first team this season.

“As a coaching staff, we have made the determination that we're going to try and build around our defense,” McLean said. “We're going in with the idea that we're going to load up our defense and let our offense grow up. We have to stop somebody if we're going to win anything.”

Upfront, Brooke will feature a pair of sophomores in Hayden Parr (6-0, 311) and Tyler Wise (6-2, 190).

“The best thing about them is that they grew,” McLean said. “Upfront I'd say we're going to have a pretty good season out of those two guys.”

That group will also feature Donley, who has taken to the role of teacher for the younger players.

Next group ready to take over at Wheeling Park

BY CODY TOMER
The Intelligencer

WHEELING — One thing about high school football is that when one senior class leaves, there is another group waiting in the wings, dreaming for their shot in the spotlight.

That time has come at Wheeling Park after a stellar senior class earned its diplomas last year, leaving the door open for this year's Friday night heroes to leave their mark.

Some of the players from last year's outstanding senior class are three first team all-state players in wide receiver Shaheed Jackson, offensive lineman Caleb Bryan and kicker Andrew Glass, along with All-Valley honorees in quarterback Beau Heller and running back Stevie Mitchell, not to mention standout receivers Torrence Walker,

Sincere Sinclair and Carson Namack.

Those seniors played their final game in a post-season win but due to COVID's color map, they were eliminated and forced to watch their memorable season come to an end.

“We lost a lot of kids last year and they don't get the opportunity to come back and finish that season,” Park coach Chris Daugherty said. “It was a tough situation. Everybody was healthy but it was just a crazy year and a tough pill to swallow.”

Jackson racked up 597 yards receiving with 10 touchdowns to go with 27 tackles and three interceptions — one for a touchdown.

Bryan turned in a run grade of 97% and a pass protection grade of 98%, Glass connected on 43 of 45 extra points and was 5-for-6 field goals, including a

season-long 47-yarder.

Mitchell recorded 1,255 yards rushing and 15 touchdowns, while also charting a TD catch.

Heller amassed 1,684 yards and 23 touchdown passes, leaving big shoes to fill.

“Last year at times it was tough to find a weakness,” Daugherty said. “We had a nice set of receivers, a nice quarterback and the line played exceptionally well. We had a great tailback in Stevie to give the ball to. The downside to that is you lose a bunch of kids. The upside to it, however, is you gain a bunch of kids who are talented and excited to get after it.”

“You can tell they know ‘this is my turn.’ Last year they were kind of standing off to the side saying ‘yeah, this group is pretty good. I'm going to have to wait my turn.’ So, you can see the excitement in this

young group and they are fun to coach.”

Junior Brett Phillips (6-foot-2, 175 pounds) will try on those shoes this year as he takes on the task of leading the Park offense.

“Last year we felt like at any time, if Beau would have gotten hurt, Brett could have gone in and done great things,” Daugherty said. “Now it's his opportunity to take charge. He had a great offseason and we're really excited about what he can do. He is a dual-threat quarterback who can run and throw. It's exciting to coach a kid like him.”

Replacing last year's speedsters won't be easy either, but Jerreae Hawkins is a good start.

“I feel like we have some quality kids coming up,” Daugherty said. “Jerreae Hawkins is actually in the Junior Olympics right now so he is obviously really fast.

Attend to Win!
MONONGALIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

WELCOME BACK MONONGALIA COUNTY STUDENTS!

We hope it has been a wonderful summer and you are all ready to kick off an engaging and exciting new school year. To help make this school year a successful one, here are some highlights of the Monongalia County Attendance Policy with which all parents/guardians/students need to be familiar:

(PLEASE NOTE THE ATTENDANCE POLICY HAS CHANGED)

- **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY!**
Education is **EVERYONE's** Responsibility!
- A parent/guardian is expected to report a student's absence no later than **ONE (1)** hour after the beginning of the school day through the Online Absence Reporting System and/or bringing in a parent/medical note.
- It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure that the absence has been recorded within **THREE (3)** school days.
AFTER THREE DAYS, EXCUSES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
- The total number of unexcused absences permitted per school year is **TEN (10) DAYS.**
- If the child has **FIVE (5)** unexcused absences, written notice will be given to the parent/guardian with a set date to meet with the Principal/Attendance Designee at the elementary school and the Principal/Attendance Designee and School Based Probation Officer at the Middle and High Schools. At said meeting, a contract will be made between the student/parent and SBPO if middle/high school in regards to attendance. If the child has **TEN (10)** unexcused absences and/or the child/parents refuse to sign the truancy contract, the matter will be referred to the Attendance Director who will then begin the judicial process. A complaint will be filed in the Monongalia County Magistrate Court against **BOTH** parent(s)/guardian(s) of record. Please ensure your Student Data Information Form is up to date! Please visit bit.ly/MCSstudentinfo. If probable cause is found to believe that an offense has been committed, a summons or warrant shall be issued and a hearing will be scheduled. A referral to the Monongalia County Circuit Court will be filed if the child is age appropriate.
- Any requests for Driver Eligibility Certificates will be granted based on a student's attendance, grades and discipline. If a student misses **TEN (10)** consecutive or **FIFTEEN (15)** total days or the student drops out of school, DMV will be notified by the Attendance Director/Designee and the driver's license will be revoked or denied. If a student has been denied due to unsatisfactory attendance, he/she must maintain satisfactory attendance for one complete semester before eligible.
- **TRANSFERS:** Applications for the 2022-23 school year will be accepted March 1, 2022 through the close of the business day on May 31, 2022. There will be **NO** transfer requests accepted after the deadline for the 2022-23 school year. For up to date Transfer information visit: <https://boe.mono.k12.wv.us/Content2/94>.

The full policy can be read at <http://boe.mono.k12.wv.us/>. Please take the time to read this policy in its entirety. Should questions arise, please direct them to the Director of Attendance, Danica Rubenstein, MCS Attendance Office at (304) 291-9210 ext 1502 - **Attendance/Homeschool** ext 1511 - **Transfers**

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