

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



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PREVIEW

MORGANTOWN HIGH

PRESTON HIGH



Morgantown aiming for turnaround season

BY MICHAEL GRIFFITH
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For Morgantown High head coach Sean Biser and the Mohigan football team, the 2021 season wasn't ideally what they pictured to begin the year.

MHS finished the regular season with a record of 5-5 before bowing out of the Class AAA state playoffs in the first round to Bridgeport by a score of 34-7.

The Mohigans opened the year with two straight losses at home. The first to visiting South Charleston that ended in a score of 37-28. The following week saw the same story unfold when MHS made the short trip south and went home with a road loss at Bridgeport, 31-20.

The next week saw a turnaround for Biser and his team, as they defeated Hedgesville handily by a

score of 63-19. This gave MHS some momentum going into a huge game on the road against Woodrow Wilson. Despite fighting hard, MHS left with a loss by just one point, 28-27, and found itself at 1-3 just four games in.

The next four games would reveal a different MHS team however, as the Mohigans earned wins in three out of the next four contests, bringing their record to an even 4-4 and giving them a lot of momentum going into the Mohawk Bowl against highly-ranked University.

Then-sophomore quarterback, Maddox Bowers, suffered an MCL sprain late in the year and was sidelined with a few games to play. A loss to UHS would set the Mohigans back slightly, but they bounced back to finish the regular season .500 by defeating

Spring Mills in the season finale.

"We found our stride toward the end of last year and we found what we like to do scheme wise," Bowers said. "Injuries made guys step up and play and they played well so now we have a variety of different guys that can be used offensively. Being our third year in the system, we are getting more comfortable in the system with the language and assignments."

As mentioned by the now-healthy MHS QB, this will be the third year with Biser as the head coach and really only the first year that will feel mostly normal for he and his team as COVID has hindered the first two. This has given the players and coaches both more time with each other during the offseason to practice and work out.

"One of our biggest things

this summer has been the time our kids have out in the weight room," Biser said. "We aren't where we need to be by any stretch, we aren't as strong as we should be, but as a whole we are much stronger than we have been. The heart of our team has gotten much stronger and it shows by the time they've put in during the offseason. The kids have really bought in to our program and have really spread the word and encouraged more kids to come out and we have some great effort put into the team."

One goal that stays true among the entire Mohigans team is simply winning. With a strong lineup on both sides of the ball, and some starters healthy once again, MHS is looking to make some noise. Bowers said he thinks they have what it takes.

"Our goal is to return Morgantown High back to

MORGANTOWN SCHEDULE

AUG. 25: at South Charleston, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 2: Bridgeport, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 9: Bye
SEPT. 16: at Hedgesville, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 23: at Musselman, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 30: at Wheeling Park, 7 p.m.
OCT. 7: Fairmont Senior, 7 p.m.
OCT. 14: at Parkersburg South, 7 p.m.
OCT. 21: John Marshall, 7 p.m.
OCT. 28: University, 8 p.m.
NOV. 4: Linsly, 7 p.m.

where it belongs, which is playing in the first week of December and I believe we have a good shot to make a run this year," he said. "We've got a lot of experience returning and our guys have been putting in the work in the weight room and on the field."

The Mohigans will begin

the 2022 campaign in similar fashion as the last as they face the Black Eagles of South Charleston in the opening week of the season, this time on the road.

They return home the following week to host Bridgeport in the home opener for MHS on Sept. 2.

TWEET @ahhh_griff



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

Morgantown coach Sean Biser points during a scrimmage against Capital at Pony Lewis Field.



William Wotring/The Dominion Post

Morgantown players celebrate during the Capital scrimmage.

Preston coach Deep ready to move into year 2 without COVID hiccup

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

KINGWOOD — Coaches will tell you that their teams make the greatest amount of progress from Game 1 to Game 2.

Unfortunately, for Preston football coach Mark Deep's first season last year, his Knights never really got that chance.

"COVID really hit us hard," Deep said. "We had several players out in our first game, then we had to cancel Game 2, played with just 22 the Week 3, then could play the next two games. We could not even practice until the end of September. Yeah, it was tough going up here."

Think about what a first-year coach, with new playbooks on both sides of the ball, a new coaching staff, a completely new philosophy needs the most for his team — practice reps and game experience. Yet for the Knights, much of that critical installation time was stripped away due to the pandemic.

However, Deep is definitely a silver-lining kind of guy, both in terms of what his team accomplished and what the season revealed.

"We lost big to some very good football teams, like Bridgeport, Fairmont Senior and University, but so did a lot of other schools," he said. "We had a 1-point loss to Washington, we were right there with North Marion, and we lost by six to Brooke, so we were competitive in plenty of games despite our health issues. And that was while starting five freshman at the end of the year. That kind of varsity experience for underclassmen can be very important for a building program, because there really is no substitute for experience."

The young Knights should be much more comfortable with the base 4-2-5 defense Deep installed last year, as well as the multiple offense that will again feature an I-formation rushing attack mixed in with RPOs (run-pass-options) and reads. But while this year's

team will be quicker and more instinctual, Deep discovered during his first year at the helm a glaring weakness — literally — as well as a potential solution.

"We were a big team last year," he said, "but we simply lacked strength, and we were going to make sure to address that issue right away. We hired Dave Cox to be our strength coach and challenged every kid to follow the program over the winter and offseason. It's not enough to go to the gym — you have to work really hard to make a significant change. And the kids have bought in, and we can see the difference."

Senior offensive guard and strong safety Logan Specht has noticed as well, and he's encouraged.

"Our slogan this year is 'We Not Me'," Specht said, "and it feels like the guys are working so much harder in practice, helping each other improve every day. Each of us is taking responsibility for doing our own job, and trusting that

the guys next to us will do their job, too. That trust is huge for a football team. Huge."

"The combination of knowing the systems much better and the team coming together makes me feel like things are gonna be different. I know people have heard that before, but we like what we're building here, and we can't wait to see what we can be."

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AUG. 26: Hampshire, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 2: North Marion, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 9: Fairmont Senior, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 16: Bye
SEPT. 23: East Fairmont, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 30: at Woodrow Wilson, 7 p.m.
OCT. 7: Bridgeport, 7 p.m.
OCT. 14: at Washington, 7 p.m.
OCT. 21: at University, 7 p.m.
OCT. 28: Buckhannon-Upshur, 7 p.m.
NOV. 4: Brooke, 7 p.m.



Preston head coach Mark Deep looks on during the game against John Marshall last season.

William Wotring/
The Dominion Post
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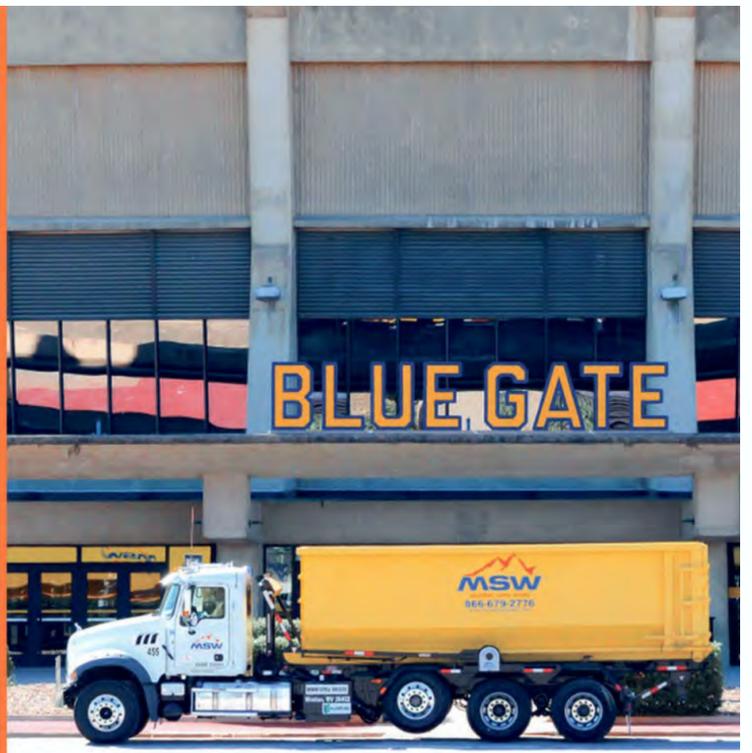
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Wheeling Park returns with a majority of offense

BY CODY TOMER
The Intelligencer

WHEELING — This will be a season unlike any other for Wheeling Park football coach Chris Daugherty.

Not only will he be leading his Patriots against a daunting schedule but he will also be entering his first year as the school's athletic director.

Nonetheless, it's a challenge Daugherty is excited to take on.

"Running the OVAC All-Star Game and helping put that on was a good taste of what I'll have to deal with in the fall," Daugherty said. "Even though I had no coaching responsibilities, it was nice to kind of oversee and help the OVAC as much as I could."

The Patriots finished last year 5-4 after having several games called off due

to COVID and injuries also plagued the team throughout the course of the campaign.

"Last year, we had a glimpse of looking really good but at other times we didn't look so hot," Daugherty said. "I think a lot of that had to do with us catching COVID after the Steubenville game and then we went into the University game with only one practice. Then we lost another game due to COVID from another team so we kind of had a lull in the middle of the season. I thought we looked pretty good during the first two games but we never really regained that."

Not only was Park facing issues with COVID a year ago, but it had a brand new crew hitting the field on offense.

"We had 11 new faces on offense last year," Daugherty said. "It took us awhile to kind of get going but they got better as the year went on. This year will be different. We lost some defensive talent but we're bringing back almost our whole offense so we should be able to execute at a high level."

While the Patriots are returning a lot, there will be some big shoes to fill in certain positions.

Colt Thomas was a standout at linebacker for Daugherty, along with running back Hunter Nixon, defensive back Nate Shelek and linemen Jacob Stewart and Devon Rayford.

"Losing Colt Thomas is big because he was the brains of our defense," Daugherty said. "He flew around and is going to play college ball at Marietta. Hunter Nixon battled injuries last year but that guy — when healthy — was one of the best kids we've

had in awhile. Shelek was the brains of the back end of our defense and losing kids like him, Ray-Ray (Rayford) at defensive tackle and Jacob Stewart, that's tough. But, we have some kids we can plug in there. They've put in the work and it's their turn."

After leading the charge as a junior, senior quarterback Brett Phillips is back and ready to sling the ball around to a plethora of outstanding targets.

"Brett improved and sophomore Aiden Davis improved," Daugherty said of his top two quarterbacks. "We feel good about the quarterback position. We're blessed to have two really good kids. I think Brett will have an even better year than he did last year and he'll add to that wonderful junior year he had."

Junior wide receiver

Jarrae Hawkins has been turning heads all offseason with his impressive 40 times at college camps and after dealing with some injuries a season ago, he looks to be back and ready to shine for the Patriots.

"Part of our drop off last year was Jarrae being injured," Daugherty said. "He is a difference maker and he is going to be a game-changer. We all know he is fast and has a lot of change of direction so he has a lot of upside."

What really makes Hawkins dangerous is while the opposing defense is keying on him, there are plenty of other receivers on Park's roster who will make the opposition pay.

"I'm really happy with our supporting cast of receivers," Daugherty said. "Seniors Will James and Christian Bryan and juniors Keohn Stephens Jr.

and Mykel Davis, they've all raised their game to where they will be major factors on Friday nights."

Other receivers to keep an eye on this fall are seniors Isaiah Zelaski, Quinton Velas and Jordan Bachie; juniors Kam Shanley, Jared Marsh, Max Reasbeck and Ian Richards; and sophomores Mason Charlton, Xavier Neider, Taven Mayo, Bradley Kraft, Gabe Larence, Brent Marion, Noah Short and Trent Simon.

"I'd like to think our strength is going to be our quarterback and our wide receiver crew," Daugherty said. "Having the ability to have four or five kids to make a play in the air or make a run is huge for us. It's not just going to be one guy, it's going to be a hand-ful."

SEE PARK, C-7

New coach Mark Cisar takes reins at John Marshall

BY CODY TOMER
The Intelligencer

MOUNDSVILLE — The last time Mark Cisar stood on a sideline as a head football coach, he led the 2012 Union Local Jets onto the gridiron.

Now, 10 years later, he is once again holding the reins as the head coach but this time at John Marshall after helping Justin Kropka last year as an assistant coach for the Monarchs.

Cisar is also the head baseball coach for the JM baseball team, which he believes will help him pick up where he left off at Union Local.

"It helps being the head baseball coach," Cisar said. "I know what to expect dealing with the kids, media and things like that. I'm excited about this oppor-

tunity with a bunch of seniors coming back."

In one season under Kropka, John Marshall finished 6-4 and lost 13 seniors to graduation, including RB/LB duo Ben McCardle and Nate Menendez.

"We lost both inside linebackers in McCardle and Menendez. We'll have to replace both of them. Jared Kerkes was a starting defensive end and fullback that we lost and Grant Neiswonger was probably our best lineman last year and he's gone too. We lost our center Alex Francis but we have the pieces to replace those guys now. We're seven or eight deep on the line right now with big kids."

Also graduating were linemen Ethan Neely, Braden Hagedorn, Jordan Rouse and Logan Bundy;

wide receivers Patrick Ostrander, Koda Moore and Noah Beckett; and tight end Gage Hoskins.

Returning at quarterback this season is senior Jacob Coffield, who got a year of experience under his belt last year.

"Coffield is our offensive leader," Cisar said. "He does a great job commanding our offense and hopefully he can hurt the defense with his arm this year. We know he can run it. Getting that experience last year gave him the knowledge of the game and hopefully that helps him out with his reads."

Providing QB depth are sophomores Brooks Harrison and Hayden Gaiser.

It also helps having a young stallion in the backfield like sophomore Klyp-

san Wallace, who galloped for over 1,000 yards as a freshman.

"Klypsan is a special athlete," Cisar said. "He reminds you of that typical Oklahoma State tailback. He reminds you of Boogie Johnson. He's 5-foot-8, 190 pounds and is as strong as can be. He has good football knowledge and good vision. He wants contact. He had a big year last year with 16 touchdowns and for a freshman, that's amazing."

Senior running backs include JD Wells, Luke Burton and Mickey Goddard, while sophomore Carter Adkins could also see carries.

Senior Jace Riding will be a valuable presence at fullback.

Cisar is especially excited about the wide

receiver corp this season.

Twin brothers Brennan and Braden Sobotka enter their senior year and will provide an offensive spark through the air with their hands and speed, as will classmate Ashton Collett, junior Demario White and sophomore Wesley Hughes.

"Having so many skill guys is nice," Cisar said. "If we need to throw it, we can throw it. We'd like to run it inside with a kid who ran for over 1,000 yards last year but we have good receivers who can catch it. We should be able to spread it out and have a balanced offense. I'd love it if we could run it about 35 times a game and throw it about 20 times."

Other options at receiver who will likely make an impact include seniors

Jace Bartsch, Cody Hartman and Ryan Ward; juniors Mason Hagedorn, Conor Fitzpatrick, Wyatt Korn and Curtis Whorton; and sophomores Luke Beaton, Kaden Harding, Landon Carroll, Rhett Clovis, Kaden Bungard and Zander Ward.

Fitzpatrick will also handle kicking and punting duties after a stellar sophomore campaign.

Tight ends include senior Kody Harding and sophomores Eugene Henry III and Clay Howard.

Manning the trenches of the offensive line will be a talented group of Monarchs.

"We can throw if we need to but if we need 1 or 2 yards, we can line up and run the ball," Cisar said. "It

SEE REINS, C-7

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Morgantown defensive lineman Neal entering senior season with high hopes

BY MICHAEL GRIFFITH
MGriffith@DominionPost.com

It doesn't matter if it is on the gridiron or the hardwood, if you see Morgantown High athlete Dakota Neal coming at you, it would probably suit you best to get out of the way or get what's coming to you.

When it comes to the MHS senior, one thing stands out: Personality.

Whether lining up on defense or offense, Neal brings electricity to his

teammates and coaches alike. It's something that helped the MHS boys' basketball team capture the 2022 state championship, as well.

It's sort of like that one guy in a football movie that everyone just gets along with and enjoys. That's what Neal brings to the table when it comes to being a teammate and classmate at MHS.

"Koma has done a wonderful job for us, he is athletically talented but the

kids are also drawn to him as a person as well," MHS coach Sean Biser said. "He does have that 'dog' mentality and we just want to keep him going in the right direction and channel it all. He has a few schools looking at him and I think he can play at the next level. I stay on him, but he's the guy that I can do that with and pick on a little. He has a great personality."

Standing at 6-foot-1 and weighing in at 235 pounds, Neal is a difference maker on both sides of the ball for

Biser and MHS. Primarily, he lines up on defense for the Mohigans as an outside defensive lineman. This allows Neal to use his athleticism and speed to get in the backfield.

On offense, he lines up at tight end, using his speed once again, and some decent hands, to make an impact. Having Neal blocking once in a while is also a plus for MHS.

Entering into his final season at MHS, Neal's goals

are fairly simple.

"I want to be the best I can be and get as many coaches and schools looking at me as possible," he said. "But our team goal is to always compete with every team and expect to win no matter who they are."

Being a leader is something that comes natural for Neal. But he loves the role as he says it helps push him to be better.

"I love being looked at as

a leader because I've always wanted to be the person someone looks up to," he said. "It also pushes me to be better and always give 100% effort no matter what. You never know who is watching you."

Biser alluded to Neal adopting the role naturally as well saying that he is a player who Biser developed a close bond with as a coach and friend. Neal said the two are very alike when it comes to their football passion.

"I love playing for coach Biser, he is always wanting to win just like me so we get a long well," Neal said. "We both know a lot about the game and love talking about game and practice situations. He has taught me a lot about life off the field also and how to be a better person in general."

Winning isn't an unfamiliar thing for Neal, either. After winning a ring in basketball, he said he is even hungrier for a ring in football now.

"Absolutely, winning a ring in basketball makes me want one in football even more," he said. "One because I've always wanted to make my family proud and I want to represent the school I attend at MHS."



Morgantown's Koma Neal (27) will be a senior leader this season.



Morgantown's AJ Thomas makes a play during the Capital scrimmage.

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Brooke looking to take next step after finishing 5-4 last season

BY CODY TOMER
The Intelligencer

WELLSBURG — Brooke football coach Mac McLean led the Bruins to a 5-4 season last year and while that was a great improvement, he is ready to focus on the upcoming campaign.

“Every interview I’ve had this year starts out talking about last season,” McLean said. “We played older than we actually were but we had some key injuries. Now our expectations are to take the next step forward this season.”

In order to take that next step, the Bruins will have to do so without some key players who graduated last year.

Nicholas Costlow (WR/DB), Luke Secrist (TE/LB), Stephen Harris (WR/LB), Ethan Marker (OL/DL), John Casinelli (OL/DL), Jacob Donley (OL/DL), Daniel Rawson (OL/DL) and Jakob Baustert (WR/DB) all picked up diplomas last year.

“Jake Donley, Luke Secrist, and Dan Rawson were all OVAC All-Stars,” McLean said. “It will be rough replacing them but they left good ground work behind them.”

Despite the loss of some key pieces, McLean is thrilled about the number of upperclassmen on this year’s roster.

“We have two big strengths this season,” McLean said. “Our senior leadership and the numerical size of our junior class. Our juniors were a huge part of what we did last year and it’s good to have them back. As far as senior leaders go, Logan Gaschler,

Tanner Griffith and Will Harvey have each been in our program for a long time and they have stepped up and become vocal leaders for us.”

Leading the offensive line this year will be Griffith, along with juniors Blake Cloe, Bryce Bateman and Joey Clem, along with sophomore Slater Schroeder.

“We’re excited about the experience on our offensive line,” McLean said. “Jake Donley is the only part of our offensive line who is departing. Tanner Griffith played center last year for us and he is a hard-nosed high school player: Joey Clem started every game last year and Blake Cloe is back, too. He started every game at tackle last year and Slater Schroeder started every game at guard last year. Bryce Bateman is new up front as it stands right now.”

The quarterback position is another strength for Brooke as junior Braelyn Sperringer returns after a strong sophomore campaign.

“Sperringer is back for his junior year and he had a breakout season last year,” McLean said. “He’s excited to take the next step. He is mature beyond his years. His freshman year he was a wide receiver but he picked up the reins last year and he earned himself some accolades. He works on everything. He’s a three-sport letterman and he’s really filled out a good bit. He’s a more physical presence now I believe.”

Juniors Jace Campinelli and Gavin Moore are back to handle the carries out of

the backfield, while juniors Anthony Bachinski and Gus Gilbert will be solid receivers for McLean.

“Both of our running back got carries last year in Jace Campinelli and Gavin Moore,” McLean said. “They both had pretty good seasons on both sides of the ball. Anthony Bachinski and Gus Gilbert were both injured last year so I’m excited about having both of them back on the field together at the same time spreading out a defense.”

Junior tight end Garrett Hornick is also an asset in Brooke’s offense.

“Garrett is a very capable blocker at tight end,” McLean said. “He had four touchdown receptions last year, too, so he is also a good pass-catching tight end.”

The defensive end position is uncertain at the moment but McLean will count on some key veterans on defense.

“Our biggest question mark is defensive end,” McLean said. “Tanner Griffith saw the most reps at defensive tackle. Junior Mason Rees will see time on the line and senior Blake Shorts has had a knee injury that cost him two seasons but he is coming back for his senior year and we’re excited to have him.”

“Sophomore Garrett Moore and Logan Gaschler are going to be at linebacker and we’ll be rotating a lot of guys at middle linebacker with Rees, sophomore Darion Hilton and Campinelli. We have the entire secondary coming back, too, led by Gavin Moore and Bachinski.”

Preston’s Likens is bigger, stronger entering his sophomore season

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

KINGWOOD — “Nothing great in this world has ever been accomplished without passion.”

When German philosopher Georg Hegel uttered his most famous quote, he probably wasn’t talking about high school football. After all, he was German, and he died in 1831 — but that fundamental truth about the human condition echoes to this day.

Last year, Ethan Likens, a 14-year-old freshman middle linebacker and fullback for Preston, all 171 pounds of him, entered his first varsity preseason camp wanting one thing more than anything else.

“He wanted to start, right from Day 1,” PHS head coach Mark Deep said. “You couldn’t help but notice him on the field, flying around, 100% effort in every drill, every snap. Ethan is one of those kids who might get beat bad on one play, then comes back with a tackle for loss on the next. By the end of the year, he was in there every snap.”

So, what’s it like for a just-turned teenager to be going through on-the-job training against mature veterans preparing for college?

“It was pretty ... interesting,” Likens said. “Everyone was so much bigger and faster and better compared to middle school. Varsity football?



William Wotring/The Dominion Post file photo

Current Preston sophomore Ethan Likens rushes the ball for the middle school Squires program in 2020. Likens as bulked up since and is dedicated to football.

It’s like a completely different sport. Plus, we were learning a new system, so everything was kind of coming at you super fast. It was great.”

Great? OK, great. Of course, there was also another issue with Likens’ baptism of fire.

“Any time you have a freshman playing varsity, you have to be very aware of protecting their health,” Deep said. “It takes a toll on your body, and we made sure he didn’t take on too much too soon.”

Fast-forward to December, after the uniforms were returned to storage — a tough decision awaited.

“I was a pretty successful wrestler in middle school, and I had to decide if I wanted to continue,” Likens said. “But wrestlers are always trying to shed weight, and if there was anything I learned on the football field in the fall, it

was that I needed to add weight, and get bigger and stronger. That wasn’t going to happen in wrestling.”

So, quicker than you can say “German philosopher,” Likens became, at least for the time being, an ex-wrestler and an even more dedicated football player — and one that added 20 pounds of muscle and explosiveness as well.

“It’s been great working with coach (Dave) Fox, our strength coach,” Likens said. “He’s taught us correct lifting techniques, healthy habits, and keeps us motivated and positive. And I really think it will pay off for us this year. I’d love to break the school record for tackles in a season, because I know that will help us be successful. I can’t wait to get started.”

Georg would be proud.

TWEET @dompostsports

PARK

FROM PAGE C-3

With the loss of Nixon to graduation, the running back position is still up for grabs.

“We’re still evaluating the running back position,” Daugherty said. “Senior Max Wiley and junior Zac Lydick stick out right now but we’re still evaluating everybody.”

Vying for reps, along with Wiley and Lydick at running back, are seniors Erick Brothers Jr. and Brayden Lucas; Junior Owen Tipton; and sophomores Coven Burkle, Brody Cot-

trill, Trey Kocher, Isaac Swauger, Jordan Combs, Andrew Pasden and Gianni Robison.

Senior Jaden Palmer and sophomore Jameson Maynard could see time at tight end.

In the trenches, Daugherty will count on seniors Max Cunningham, Miquan Macklin, Charlie DiSaia, David Lemasters, Jaxsen Edgmon, Michael Hogan, Ian Litman, Harmon Lewis and Evan Vansickle; juniors Jordan Beasley, Trent Werner; Mason Parsons, Robert Metz, Dakota Beaver, Derek Croghan and Carson Miller; sophomores Xander Ackley, Jack Klein, Dom

Purcell, Cameron Bryan, Hunter Means, Ben Anderson, Austin Rufner, Cayden Davis, Kieran Moses, Coldin Burkhardt, Jayden Woods-Davis and Luke Miller.

“Mikey Hogan is back for his second year as a starter and he’ll be a stand-out for us on the front line,” Daugherty said. “Charlie DiSaia will be at defensive end for the second straight year as a starter and he’s going to be a big factor. Erick Brothers Jr. is out for his third year as a starting linebacker and we’re excited about that too. We have the defensive pieces and it’s just building around them.”

REINS

FROM PAGE C-3

helps to have seniors Cole Porter (6-5, 300) and Bryce Cook (6-1, 225), and juniors Andreas Hunter (6-5, 300), Caleb Yates (6-3, 290) and Victor McElwee (6-2, 255) coming back.”

Other linemen who will be counted on consists of seniors Ty Rogers and Mathieu Wright; juniors Jason Minor, Tanen McNeil and Scott Schenerlein; and sophomores Hudson Markwas, Silas Summers, Hunter Wright, Allick Summers, Logan Stevey and Gage Hercules.

On the other side of the ball, Cisar will look for Riding to fill in for the loss of Menendez and McCardle at the lineback position.

Riding will be joined by the likes of Wallace, Coffield, Hartman, Whorton, Harrison, Wells, Henry III, Burton, Goddard, junior Andrew Lyons and sophomore Maverick LeMasters.

Braden and Brennan Sobotka will join forces in the secondary. Also vying for defensive back snaps will be White, Hagedorn, Bartsch, Hughes, Beaton, Gaiser, Fitzpatrick, Korn, Collett, Kaden Harding, Adkins, Carroll, Ryan Ward, Clovis, Bungard, Howard and Zander Ward.

With what looks to be a

balanced offense and strength on defense, Cisar’s squad is aiming for the playoffs.

“Our one goal is that we want to get in the playoffs,” Cisar said. “Somehow, some way, whether it’s the No. 1 or No. 16 seed, we want to get in. It would be

great to be around the middle of the pack but our schedule is as rough as it can be. University is going to reload. They have athletes, their quarterback is coming back and it will be a challenge right from the get-go. We’ll find out where we’re at Week 1.”

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



THE DOMINION
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PREVIEW

UNIVERSITY HIGH

TRINITY

CLAY-BATTELLE HIGH



Coming off 10-0 season, University hoping to keep momentum

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

Last year's University High football team completed an unblemished, 10-0 regular season, and every time a team heads into the postseason with a zero in the L-column, it's magical.

However, for venerable head coach John Kelley, the magic of coaching at UHS for 36 years doesn't really come on Fall Fridays — it comes right now, during the preseason.

"Don't get me wrong, we love the challenge of winning football games," he grinned, "but I think my favorite part of coaching is rebuilding, finding out the best way to put your team together to give them the best chance to be successful. Game prep during the season can be so fast and hectic, but in the preseason, you are

more focused, more concise with what you're accomplishing.

"It's very satisfying to watch a player or a unit or even a whole team go through the irreplaceable, critical process of defeat, respond to that challenge and then improve. I know the previous two years were tough ones, but look at what we were able to do last season when all those upperclassmen with all that experience learned how to get the job done together."

A solid core of 11 starters return for the Hawks, and Kelley sees the offensive and defensive lines as the strengths of both units.

"Games are won and lost in that small, three-yard gap," he said, "so we're glad to have experience, talent and depth up front. We graduated a lot of talent, especially at our skill posi-

tions, but we'll still be explosive and quick offensively. Our secondary has several good players — we just need to sort out the proper roles for them. And we need to stay healthy, because experienced, veteran depth could become an issue if we have to go far down the depth chart."

While a veteran coach might have a more relaxed attitude heading into games, players like senior lineman Gavin Powroznik often have a bit more emotional response to the upcoming season.

"I think that we are absolutely not satisfied after last year, not at all," Powroznik said. "It's a new year, with new players, and now we've got a target on our backs. But the seniors remember 3-7 two years ago, and besides, we didn't finish the way we wanted (a semi-final playoff loss to

Cabell Midland). We're still hungry, and we have a lot to prove.

"We are going full metal jacket every day in practice because we all have learned or are teaching the new guys that it's the only way you get better, the only way you can prepare yourself for fourth quarters late in the year. Every day in practice is a game-time scenario, and we know it's gonna pay off."

Quarterback Chase Edwards stepped away from football for health reasons, while wide receiver and DB Sage Clawges transferred to St. Thomas More in Connecticut.

Luke Hudson is the favorite to win the starting quarterback job. He played last season when Edwards was injured.

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UNIVERSITY SCHEDULE

AUG. 26: at John Marshall, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 2: at Parkersburg South, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 9: Brooke, 7:30 p.m.
SEPT. 16: Wheeling Park, 7:30 p.m.
SEPT. 23: at Fairmont Senior, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 30: Buckhannon-Upshur, 7 p.m.
OCT. 7: Albert Gallatin (Pa.), 7:30 p.m.
OCT. 14: Bye
OCT. 21: Preston, 7:30 p.m.
OCT. 28: at Morgantown, 8 p.m.
NOV. 4: at Spring Mills, 7 p.m.



University's Jaedean Hamack makes play during the Musselman scrimmage.



University coach John Kelley talks with quarterback Luke Hudson during the team's scrimmage against Musselman and Keyser at Mylan Pharmaceuticals Stadium.

William Wotring/
The Dominion Post

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Low numbers, no problem as Trinity readies for the gridiron

BY ERIC HERTER
Sports@DominionPost.com

A freshman quarterback, low participation numbers and a third-year head coach certainly sound like a recipe for disaster.

But not when it comes to the Trinity Christian football team.

In fact, expectations have never been higher — for a program in its fifth year of existence.

"Another playoff run — that's our hope," TCS head coach Chris Simpson said.

Last year, the Warriors finished 7-3 and did indeed make the school's first-ever appearance in the Class A playoff field. Despite the 32-

0 loss to James Monroe in the opening round, it was a step in the right direction for a program that has just 16 players on the roster.

The good news for Trinity is nine of those 16 players return from last season and all nine of those returning players were starters.

"I learned a lot last year about our guys and their character," Simpson said. "We are ahead of schedule in my book. I thought it would take us four to five years coming into this program of this size. We have small numbers because we are the smallest school that competes in football. But it goes to show you, if you

SEE TRINITY, D-3

TRINITY SCHEDULE

AUG. 26: Hundred, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 2: at Bridgeport (Ohio), 7 p.m.
SEPT. 9: Millersport (Ohio), 6 p.m.
SEPT. 16: Hancock (Md.), 7 p.m.
SEPT. 23: at Calhoun County, 7 p.m.
SEPT. 30: at Massanutten Military Academy (Va.), 4 p.m.
OCT. 8: St. Johns Prep, (Md.), 7 p.m.
OCT. 14: Clear Spring (Md.), 7 p.m.
OCT. 21: at Tygarts Valley, 7 p.m.
OCT. 28: Bye
NOV. 4: at Madonna, 7 p.m.

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TRINITY

FROM PAGE D-2

have good quality, character guys that work hard every single snap, you can achieve a lot of amazing things.”

Simpson acknowledged that his team is never going to have the biggest roster or be the strongest team on the field. Instead, the Warriors pride themselves on their football IQ. Simpson said his team spends much of its time in the film room and drilling the team on how to break down an opponent and being smart about where there are opportunities to attack each opponent.

Even with the nine starters back, the Warriors are looking at a new quarterback in Simpson’s Air Raid spread offense.

Freshman Parker Hopkins will start at quarterback this year and Simpson said he is excited about the possibilities that Hopkins brings.

“We are going to try and break him in slowly,” Simpson said. “We have opened up our run game a lot this year, too. He had a couple of really good weeks in the three-weeks period and sometimes as a coach, you just get a feeling.”

Hopkins really showed something during the 7-on-7 competitions this summer.

“I see a lot of great things out of him,” senior running back/safety Levi Teets said. “He has really impressed me with his ability. I think he will continue to improve as the season goes along and I think with how our offense likes to throw the ball, he is going to be a playmaker for us.”

One of the reasons Simpson was able to give Hopkins the reins of the offense is the depth he has returning on the offensive line. The Warriors are bigger, stronger and more athletic than they were last year.

Caleb Parks, a junior, has taken every snap at center for Simpson and is ranked as one of the top 20 offensive linemen in the state right now. The left side of the offensive line also returns as sophomores Landon Goodwin and Aaron White both return at guard and tackle, respectively. The right side of the line will be manned by 6-foot-2 freshman Brayden Parks and 6-4 senior transfer Bryce Bailey.

“Our offensive line is really going to help, we have made some big improvements with our line,” Simpson said. “We have added some size. The

one really good thing about making the playoffs, last year, is it really taught the kids how good the competition in the state is. It also taught them how important the weight room is.”

That offensive line will provide throwing time for Hopkins and running lanes for Teets, a second-team all-state pick last season, and fellow senior Zane Yeater who missed all last season with an injury. Yeater could provide a big boost at running back and slot receiver as he was an all-conference player at Paden City after his freshman and sophomore years.

“It’s huge adding him,” Simpson said. “He’s a great teamwork guy. He never missed a practice last year. He was always the first guy out for practices, even with his crutches.”

Kyle Knight is the only returning wide receiver for

the Warriors that caught a pass. He will also handle punting and kicking duties for Trinity and that’s a big weapon considering that Knight was an honorable mention all-state soccer player last year.

“I can play chess all game as a coach with our field position because of Kyle,” Simpson said.

Last season, Knight averaged over 40 yards per punt and Simpson said he is very comfortable kicking field goals from 40-yards in and Knight has hit from as long as 52 yards in practice.

“Kids like that are very rare in single A football,” Simpson said.

On defense, it will be Teets leading the way from his safety position out of the 4-2-5 defensive scheme. Simpson said Teets is like having a coach on the field.

Marcos Kniska and Josh

Jorge will man the important outside linebacker spots for the Warriors while Landon Goodwin is moving from the defensive line to the Mike linebacker position. Simpson also said that newcomer Austin Hardin is going to play a hybrid linebacker/defensive line position.

The Warriors open their season on Friday when the host Hundred. But that contest isn’t what the Warriors have their eyes on.

Trinity has hopes for a conference title, they finished second to Paden City last year, and another trip to the state playoffs.

“That is the goal this year,” Simpson said. “I feel confident, if we have the push, we think we are going to have, we should be just fine.”

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University offensive lineman ready to anchor Hawks in 2022

BY MARK SCHRAF
Sports@DominionPost.com

Sports cliché No. 873 — the big, slow, slow-witted football offensive lineman. Ask anybody at any level of the game, and they'll all say the same thing: "Linemen often are the most intelligent and athletic players on the field," said University head coach John Kelley, who ought to know, considering he has been manning the UHS sidelines for 36 years. "They need to know their own assignments as well as their teammates' on both sides of them, adjust to pre-snap defensive shifts, read and react to the play as it unfolds. They have to be strong, balanced, quick, adept at hand-to-hand combat, utilize multiple techniques, and be consistent, calm and explosive."

It's no wonder that high school teams with senior-laden lines are often successful, and the Hawks are fortunate to have a senior leader at right tackle in Gavin Powroznik.

"Gavin's been a starter at tackle and defensive end for us for four years," Kelley said, "and he's worked so hard on the field and in the weight room. He's so intelligent and very experienced, so he never gets flustered and rarely makes mistakes. He's always done

whatever we've asked him to do, the kind of quiet leader you can build an offense around."

Powroznik is shocked the time has arrived. "I can't believe we're seniors," Powroznik said, shaking his head. "In some ways, I feel like I've been on this field for most of my life, but it also seems like the time's just flown by. I feel so fortunate to be out here with my teammates, soaking up like sponges everything our coaches teach us. And every day we get to work with someone like Rich Braham, an NFL lineman. Man, it's such a gift, like being at lineman camp. He's so technique and detail oriented, and it's inspired me to be the same way as much as I can. We're really blessed."

While many offensive linemen prefer the proactive, kinetic power of run blocking, Powroznik definitely has his own opinion. "Oh, pass blocking, for sure," he said. "We call it the quick six," that six-second count that gives the quarterback time to find open receivers — and nobody can cover our receivers for that long. We take a lot of responsibility as a unit to keep the pocket clean, and we love to make our skill guys look good. And when we start to hit for big chunks through the air, defenses have to back



William Wotring/The Dominion Post file photo

University's Gavin Powroznik (54) sets a block on a Wheeling Park player last season.

up, and that allows us to run more effectively. The more unpredictable we are on offense, the harder we are to stop, and the line takes a lot

of pride in making that happen." An excellent student, Powroznik has been weighing some offers to play at the

next level while keeping an eye on WVU's Criminal Justice program, hoping eventually for law school to become a defense attorney —

and a chance to protect the innocent just like he's been protecting quarterbacks. **TWEET** @dompostposts

Cameron looks to avenge playoff loss in Class A

BY CODY TOMER
The Intelligencer

CAMERON — An unbeaten regular season last year was overshadowed by an unexpected first-round exit in the playoffs for the Cameron Dragons.

As he enters his fourth year at the helm, Cameron coach Tim Brown has his team concentrating on focus, communication and committing less penalties in order to make sure that heartbreaking end to the season doesn't repeat itself.

"We had a great season and one bad day," Brown said. "We're going to have a lot of focus on penalties. We

can't have 175 yards of penalties and we can't jump offside five times. We were offside three times all year and then we were offside five times in that playoff game — we can't have that kind of mental breakdown. So, we're going to focus on not having penalties and making sure we're paying attention. Even the way we run the weight room now is in 30-second intervals and we switch. We're talking and communicating together. Everything we do is about communication and making sure everybody is on the same page. I think we had a lot of talent last year but were just unfocused at times so we're trying to sure that up a little bit."

Picking up diplomas last year were senior running backs Isaac Ball and Jordan Presto; receivers Landon Tustin, Connor Powell and Colton Lyons; O-linemen Xavier Stoneking, David Yeater, Cole Cumpston, Landon VanTassel, Clayton Bryan and Tyler Fortune.

Ball led that senior class with 1,520 yards rushing and 20 total touchdowns to go with his 51 tackles and seven interceptions on defense, which earned him first team all-state.

"Isaac Ball was a senior last year and he was outstanding in all phases of the game," Brown said. "It's going to be hard to replace someone like that. Eight of

the guys that graduated last year started both ways for us, so we are losing a lot of experience."

Picking up the slack will be four returning seniors and another who is in his first year but learning the ropes very quickly.

"Seniors Gunnar Bryan (OL/DL), Cole Burkett (WR/CB), Adam Angel (WR/C/LB) and Payton Neely (WR/DB) are four of the best athletes in the state," Brown said. "They are multi-sport athletes and they bring us a lot of stability and they will be our leaders. Also, senior Mason Debolt came out this year and is doing a great job for us. He's been to every summer camp."

It also helps when the quarterback has two years of starting under his belt and is locked and loaded for an even bigger junior campaign.

"Colson Wichterman is back for his third year starting at quarterback," Brown said. "He's faster, stronger and he's looking good back there. He has good rapport with the rest of the team, which is fantastic and when you have a quarterback that everybody is used to and works well with everyone, that makes a big difference."

Freshman Kason Angel provides strong depth at QB.

"Kason Angel is going to be our backup quarterback for Colson," Brown said. "He is a very skilled kid

who is going to help a lot. He can throw the ball for a freshman. He is a big, athletic kid and we are expecting big things out of him."

Neely is looking to take the role of starting running back and filling the shoes of Ball.

Last year, Neely was second team all-state as a receiver with 612 yards and nine scores. He also had a kickoff and punt return for touchdowns.

"Payton is a tremendous athlete," Brown said. "He's been able to play quarterback, tailback and honestly anywhere on the field. He will be a pretty dangerous running back. Junior J

SEE CAMERON, D-7

Madonna getting acclimated with new head coach Mauro Monz

BY ANDREW GRIMM
The Intelligencer

WEIRTON — Mauro Monz certainly has a diverse history in his 25 years of coaching football, whether at Pennsylvania high schools, youth programs or as an assistant for several college programs.

However, what the veteran coach has seen in his short time at Madonna preparing for his first season leading the Blue Dons has already impressed him.

"It's been a great experience," Monz said. "There is a lot of talented athletes and a lot of tradition, a lot of pride in the school and the

community. "The kids have been great. This is a great opportunity."

Monz, who was most recently an assistant at the University of Albany, has been an assistant for Youngstown State, Akron, Robert Morris and Duquesne, where he was a record-setting DB in his playing days, and has been a successful high school head coach in the Pittsburgh area.

So what drew the veteran grid boss to a Class A school in the Ohio Valley? It simply felt like home from the beginning.

"One of the big reasons I was attracted to Madonna

was the history and the tradition of the school, I have a similar background growing up in a Catholic school," Monz said. "Madonna has) like-minded people."

It also gave him a chance to come closer to home.

"I believe timing is everything," he said. "I had a great run as a tight ends coach at the University of Albany, but it was pretty far away from home and this was a chance to be closer to home."

"Football has been great to me and this is a great opportunity to have a chance to be able to come back and coach kids, help kids be able to go to college and play sports, grow and do what

they want to do in life."

When he joined the school earlier this year, Madonna was coming off the boys basketball team's run to the state tournament and he got to experience the excitement of the baseball team making a run to the regional final.

"It's his goal to bring that excitement to the football field."

"I came in during the spring and started when they were coming off a great basketball run and got to see the kids play baseball during a great run, got to see a lot of the kids play and get to

know some people," he said. "The excitement and the enthusiasm everyone had was great and I'm hoping we can take that and use it this fall."

Monz's coaching staff is made up of a lot of former Madonna players who wanted to come back and help the program, another thing that excites Monz about the tradition at Madonna.

They are Connor Arila, Dante Greco, John Barnhart and Robbie Valenti, all of whom played for the Blue Dons in the past.

"When I interviewed at Madonna, the principal (Jamie Lesho) is a Madonna grad, the AD (Mike Arlia) is a Madonna grad, everywhere you went, whoever

you asked about Madonna, they talked about the tradition and history," Monz said. "People want to come back, and it's not like that everywhere. People take that granted. That was something that made me want to come to Madonna, these guys love their school and have a lot of pride for it in the community."

"I saw it right away." That tradition, championships and accomplishments of the past, Monz is well aware of as he implements his style and brings his own ideas looking to write the next chapter.

"There is a lot of great

SEE MADONNA, D-7

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Good Luck Hawks!

Clay-Battelle has big expectations heading into the 2022 season

BY ERIC HERTER
Sports@DominionPost.com

BLACKSVILLE — The Cee-Bees were back in a big way in 2021.

After missing the playoffs for seven straight years since 2014, veteran coach Ryan Wilson led the Clay-Battelle football team to a 9-3 record and a first-round exit in the Class A playoffs in 2021. Now, C-B is ready for a repeat performance in 2022.

“We have had a great turnout for the weight room,” Wilson, in his 28th year, said. “Our numbers for the three weeks were some of the best that we have had for a while.”

That optimistic outlook

CLAY-BATTELLE SCHEDULE

- AUG. 26:** Massanutten Military Academy (Va.), 7 p.m.
- SEPT. 2:** at East Hardy, 7 p.m.
- SEPT. 9:** at Valley-Wetzel, 7 p.m.
- SEPT. 16:** at Beallsville (Ohio), 7 p.m.
- SEPT. 23:** Tygarts Valley, 7 p.m.
- SEPT. 30:** Webster County, 7 p.m.
- OCT. 7:** Bye
- OCT. 14:** Cameron, 7 p.m.
- OCT. 21:** at Hancock (Md.), 7 p.m.
- OCT. 28:** Calhoun County, 7 p.m.
- NOV. 4:** Hundred, 7 p.m.

is bolstered by the fact that Clay-Battelle returns 18 players from a year ago, including two starters along the offensive line. Jacob Kassay and Tate

Elliott all started last year on the line while Easton Rowan saw considerable time, as well. Gabe

SEE BIG, D-7

Carson Shriver is C-B's Swiss army knife

BY ERIC HERTER
Sports@DominionPost.com

BLACKSVILLE — It takes a certain level of competition to get most athletes' blood flowing.

But not when it comes to Clay-Battelle do-everything quarterback Carson Shriver. He is so competitive, that he even takes the littlest things very serious. “Carson is a competitor,” veteran Cee-Bees head coach Ryan Wilson said. “He’s a competitor at rock, paper, scissors.”

That little peek into Shriver's competitive side

SEE SHRIVER, D-7



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Clay-Battelle quarterback Carson Shriver passes the ball during practice this summer in Blacks ville.



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Trinity iron man Teets ready for senior season

BY ERIC HERTER
Sports@DominionPost.com

Five years ago, Trinity Christian didn't even have a football team.

Fast forward to present day and now the Warriors are getting ready to graduate the first class in school history to play four years on the gridiron.

"It's really exciting to be the first class to go through their school career actually having a team," senior running back/safety Levi Teets said. "It's exciting to help build something at the school for the future."

In the future, many of the Warriors might just look at Teets as a founding father of the football program.

Teets, a second-team all-state pick last season, returns for his fourth year in a program that won just two contests when he was a freshman.

"That first year, we won the first two games and thought we were really

nice," Teets, who will also play at slot receiver this year, said. "Then we lost eight straight. After that freshman year, I was questioning if we were ever going to be good."

His sophomore year, the Warriors won four games in a COVID-filled season and then last year things changed. In 2021, the Warriors went 7-3 on their way to the first-ever playoff appearance.

Part of that change came from Teets, who has played tackle football since the third grade, and the rest of the team that decided to change the attitude around the program along with head coach Chris Simpson.

"The first two years we really weren't that successful," Teets said. "The football program honestly wasn't taken that seriously around the school. But last year, us actually being able to make the playoffs, showed that we are a serious program and people actually



Benjamin Powell/The Dominion Post

Trinity's Levi Teets works during practice this summer.

have to look out for us."

Teets said that last year, he thinks the Warriors caught teams by surprise. That won't happen this year as the program returns nine starters.

"I think a few teams thought we were an easy opponent, they were going to be able to put their backups in and score some touch-

downs," Teets said. "But we came with a different energy. We took it a lot more serious last year. In the weight room, in practice and that showed on the field. We were a lot more aggressive and played a lot more as a team."

Quite frankly, that was the opportunity that Teets had been waiting for from the moment he came to

TCS. The school didn't even have a middle school program when he was in seventh grade, but during his eighth-grade year the middle school program started with an eye towards having a team during Teets' freshman year.

It's a good thing that happened, because Teets likely would not have continued his education at Trinity if not for the football program.

"Football has been a big part of my life," Teets said. "It's one of the reasons that I wanted to stay here and help build something. If there wasn't football, there's a pretty good chance I wouldn't be here."

Now, the 5-foot-7, 160-pounder, is a force to be reckoned with on the field. Simpson said that Teets not only has his respect but the respect of the entire team.

"He's just a dynamic kid," Simpson said. "He is so talented. We allow him to make all the defensive sec-

ondary calls. He is such a special player for us."

In fact, Simpson has big dreams for Teets after graduation.

"If he doesn't coach one day, I have failed," Simpson said. "You don't always get kids who understand the game at that level. He teaches all the young kids in the secondary where to be. It's like having another coach on the field."

Despite all the awards and accolades from the state and his coach, Teets said he is focused on winning. He said he doesn't care about statistics or how many times he touches the ball during the game.

"I like having the ball in my hands," Teets said. "But if someone else is open or running better, I'm happy to block. I just want to win. My main goal is to lead the team back to the playoffs and hopefully win a game there this time."

TWEET @dompostsports

CAMERON

FROM PAGE D-4

Ross is a stronger, bull type of kid who can play there and Wes Starcher is a young sophomore who has good skills and will be good at the running back position."

Burkett will lead the receiving corps this year, along with Debolt and Adam Angel, juniors Ash-

ton Hoge and Delbert Van-Tassell and sophomore Mason Scott.

"Burkett is back and he is a tremendous receiver," Brown said. "Mason Debolt is a heck of an athlete. He is a hard-working kid, he's a great kid and he fits right in. We're expecting big things on both sides of the ball from him."

"I give Adam props, too. He can play any position.

He's a tremendous athlete, wrestler, baseball player and football player but we needed a center. He had never played center before. He was a quarterback, running back and everything else but he said he would do it and we became so much better so quickly because he is so quick and so strong. He can pull from that position, which is sort of unheard of in high school.

MADONNA

FROM PAGE D-4

history and tradition and it is my responsibility, our responsibility as a staff to keep that going," he said. "Anytime you come in and are changing a program, you have your own style, it's a new coaching staff, but we embrace the tradition, too, and hopefully that shows,

that is the goal."

Monz replaces Dan Rovira, who guided Madonna for the past two seasons and was 13-7 overall. Rovira led Madonna to the playoffs in his first season, but the Blue Dons dropped some tough games down the stretch last season and just missed out on the Class A field after at one point in the season sitting in the

top-3 of the rankings.

The group Monz is guiding this season, however, is a much different and younger team than those were as the Dons lost 12 seniors to graduation last spring.

Of that group of 12, none will be harder to replace than four-year starting quarterback Santino Arilia, who set every school passing record.

SHRIVER

FROM PAGE D-6

is no joke. Shriver even kept a record at how well he did at rock, paper, scissors during 7-on-7 contests this summer.

"I went 16-0," Shriver said with a laugh. "I didn't lose one. I grew up with two other brothers and I have always been this way."

That competitive side is something that Wilson is hoping to harness once again this fall as Shriver returns for his senior year.

Last season, Shriver helped the Cee-Bees to a 9-3 record and their first

appearance in the playoffs since 2014. This year, Shriver said he is hoping for more.

"I feel like we can be state champions this year," Shriver said. "I feel like we can go all the way. Obviously, we have got to take it one game at a time and see what happens."

What happened in 2021 was Shriver all over the field. He played running back, wide receiver, defensive back, punter and of course quarterback. However, he did split time behind center at times for the Cee-Bees.

Not this year, Wilson has committed to sticking with

Shriver behind a veteran offensive line and Shriver has put in the work to develop into a better passer.

"I have been to a bunch of college camps this year and they have given me some pointers," Shriver said. "I have really hit the weight room and I have a stronger arm; stronger legs and I have put on some weight."

Shriver said he has also spent time on the football field working with receivers.

"Last year, I was more of the running quarterback," Shriver said. "This year, if I need to throw the ball I can if that is what I need to do."

The ability to be a dual-threat quarterback is not only going to help the Cee-Bees, but it has also helped on the recruiting trail.

Shriver said he does not have any offers to play collegiately yet, but he has talked with several schools.

"My goal really is to play college football," Shriver said. "I don't have any dream school; I just want to play at any level."

Shriver said he hopes to study either nursing or education. If he does become an educator, he hopes to eventually be a football coach.

This summer, he has had the chance to teach some of

the younger Clay-Battelle players that have come out for the team.

"We had a bunch of freshmen come out this year," Shriver said. "It's been fun getting to help them learn our system and learn our traditions."

Now, Shriver said he is hoping to lead the Cee-Bees to a second-straight playoff appearance. That is something that hasn't happened in Blacksville since making three straight last decade. If that comes to fruition, Shriver will have left his mark on the Clay-Battelle program.

"That's something we haven't done here in a while," Shriver said. "I

think if we did that, it would be something to be proud of. It would show all the work we have put in and could set expectations higher around here."

For the head coach, he is still focused on each game and each week, but he admits that there are going to be times that Shriver does something on the field that is once-again unbelievable.

"He's just a good football player," Wilson said. "He can obviously play multiple positions but he's a playmaker and I think he is going to have a fantastic senior year."

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BIG

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Thomas is back after taking a year off football while Brendon Skavinsky, Joe Stewart and Alex Danser all have some level of experience up front.

"Our offensive line, we feel they are a fast group," Wilson said. "People are going to see some different things with them so we can take advantage of that. I like how they have picked up well with each other."

With the returning beef up front and returning quarterback Carson Shriver, the Cee-Bees should be quite explosive on offense.

"People ask me what kind of offense I run," Wilson said. "We have three categories, we can spread teams out, we can throw it and we can run it. We can

also run power. We do what we feel comfortable against a team we are playing. What is our best option of attacking a team?"

Shriver leads that attack as he currently sits seventh all-time in the C-B record book for career rushing yards. But an improved passing game and a defense that should be stingy is going to go a long way toward a return trip to the playoffs.

"If we can get back in the playoffs with me having zero rushing runs, I am okay with that," Shriver said. "Whatever it takes to win this year — I really don't care about the stats."

While Carson Shriver is going to carry his share of the load, his brother Maddox is also going to get some carries as a fullback.

"Maddox is a throwback powerful runner," Wilson said.



William Wotring/The Dominion Post file photo

Clay-Battelle coach Ryan Wilson reacts against Calhoun County in Blacksville.

Also expected to see carries is junior Zac Hall, who will also play wide receiver. Mason Chisler, a senior wide receiver, should also figure in the passing game, while senior tight end

Matthew Gadd is a big target at 6-foot-7 and 270 pounds.

"Matthew has had a fantastic summer," Wilson said. "He has really hit the weight room and he has

come in and really improved himself. He has done exactly what we wanted him to do."

Also expected to see touches on the offensive side of the ball is Adam Kolat and backup quarterback JC Spears, who also will get work at wide receiver.

Defense is going to be key for Clay-Battelle this year, as it was last season. They held opponents to just over nine points per game in all nine of their victories. That statistic includes giving up 30 points in an overtime win over Tygarts Valley and includes four shutouts. But in the three losses, the Cee-Bees gave up an average of 45 points per contest.

"Defense wins ball games," Wilson said. "The score of every ball game is 0-0 if defense can hold that, we will win a lot of games. Offense is exciting to watch, but if your defense

can't stop anyone, you're in for a toughie."

Many of the Cee-Bees play both ways, but Wilson pointed to Drew Mercer's improvement at defensive end and Gadd's beef on the defensive line as key areas of a possible defensive improvement. Joe Stewart, Thomas and a couple of freshmen coming from the middle school program — including the middle school leading tackler — could help provide some depth.

"I think we can be a play-off team," Wilson said. "The potential is there. You show up on Friday nights and see what we have. I am really pleased with our summer and chemistry and the work ethic."

The Cee-Bees open their season at home Aug. 26 against Massanutten Military Academy.

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