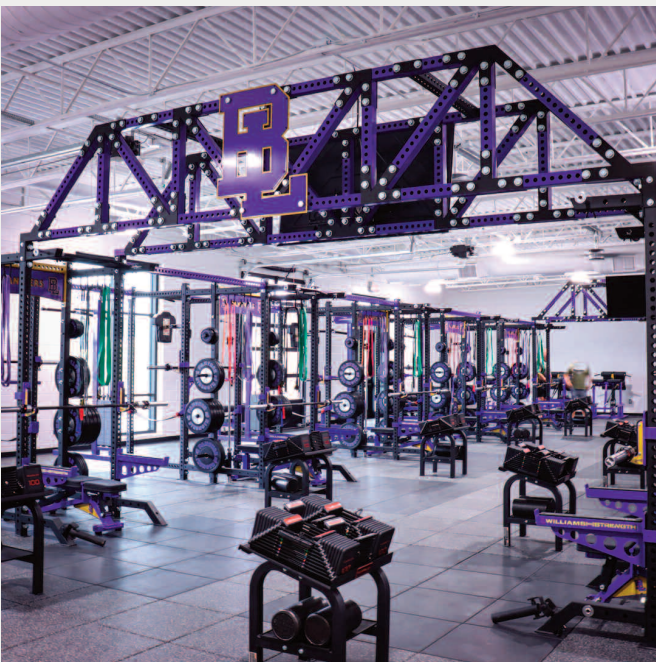




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32 Pages

2025 Region Previews Section

Taking a deep dive into AAAAA football, region by region

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Moncks Corner – Overview: While winning a region championship is certainly something to be proud of, the better teams have much bigger goals. Of course, the number one goal is a state championship and teams have won state titles without winning their own region. But region play is fun. Rivalry games every week, complete with the trash talking by fans and players.

When predicting the champion of each region, we not claiming those teams to be the top state championship contenders. But they are usually in the conversation come November.

Here's a breakdown of the eight regions in Class AAAAA, as well preseason top 10 rankings for Division I and Division 11.

Region 1-AAAAA Predicted Order of Finish

1. Greenwood
2. T.L. Hanna
3. J.L. Mann
4. Hillcrest
5. Greenville
6. Woodmont
7. Mauldin
8. Easley

Greenwood has a strong collection of athletes and coach **Chris Liner** will know how to use them. Starting with quarterback/athlete **Tristan Lewis**, a USC commitment who will likely play defense in college but definitely has improved quarterback skills.

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2025 Dutch Fork Silver Foxes football standouts

Wide Receiver **Jay Duncan** and tight end **Thomas Chandler** are formidable targets with **Khomeri Griffin** and **Bryce Seaborn** sharing duties at running back and handling the safety positions on defense. **Ahmad Scott** is a returning lineman on defense while **Dyson Davis** is a leader at linebacker.

Bennett Swygert has eight returning starters at **Hillcrest** and says a lot of underclassmen will start. Running backs **Sean Smith** and **Ny Allen** will be key components offensively. **Jackson Free** is expected to start at quarterback and **Nyjae Harris** is a top pass-catcher.

Woodmont will be led by quarterback **Amari Harris**, a transfer from Greenville. **Devontae Taylor** is a key receiver, along with **Nick Keist**. The top running back is **Lorenzo Hunley** and **Adrian Estrich** is a top returner on the line.

Anchoring the defense are **Ny Taylor** and **JT Gipson**. **Jayson Garrett** returns as a leader at linebacker.

T.L. Hanna will have some new faces this fall, starting at quarterback where senior **Gavin Magin** takes control. The running game is crucial to offensive success and top candidates include **Thomas Williams**, **Issac Galloway** and **Mike Williams**.

Walker Kelley returns at tight end and **Keegan Strickland** returns as a receiver. Returning starters up front include guard **Mehki Malcolm**, center **JaMichael Jones**, and guard **Malachi Miles**.

John Michael Tripp and **Zy West** are returners along the defensive line. Linebackers **Walker Kelley** and **Jamarion Oliver** return at linebacker. Manning the secondary are returning starters **Emari Nance** and **Jaylon Watson**.

Greenville has a new head coach as **Scot Watson** moves over from **J.L. Mann**. The Raiders were 2-9 last season. Watson is hoping quarterback **Holden Powell** can step as a starter. **Messiah Bell** and **DeAndre Dogan** are the running backs and tight end **Bradley Lucas** is a player

to watch.

Leading up front tackle **Jonny Chang** while **Bryson Massey** is a key receiver.

On defense, linemen **Franklin Whatley**, **Jireon Whitner**, **Logan Hawthorne** and **Lucas** will look to control things. Linebackers include **Jacob Christie**, **Harrison Ruth** and **Cash Williams**. **Zaquan Hagood** and **Jamarion McKinney** anchor the back end.

J.L. Mann was 9-3 last season and new head coach **Bryce Smiley** looks to continue the success.

The projected starter at quarterback is **McLeod Darnell** with **KV Massey**, **Aiden Massey** and **Buddy Griffith** handling the load in the running game. As many as six receivers will factor in the passing game, led by **Cam Robinson**, **AJ Bush** and **Nate Holmes**.

Luke Penland and **Christian Sullivan** project at tackle, with **Jantzen Sullivan** and **Wyatt Pullman** at guard. **Ace Rush** is the center.

Penland also will work along the defensive line with **Jordan Turner-Butler** returning as a senior linebacker, along with **Hunter Rogers**.

Quarterback **Roderick Langston** is the top returner at Mauldin, which has won two games in the last two years.

Region 2-AAAAA Predicted Order of Finish

- Gaffney
- Spartanburg
- Byrnes
- Dorman
- Boiling Springs
- Riverside
- Eastside
- Wade Hampton (G)

Clearly the most competitive region in the state with as many as four legitimate state title contenders. **Gaffney** gets the nod as region favorite and the top-ranked team in Division II of Class AAAAA.

See AAAAA, pg. 2

Class AAAAA Feature

AAAAA, continued from Cover

Former player and assistant coach **Donnie Little-john** is now the head man and will look to take the program to the next level. The Indians finished 10-2 last season.

“We all know what it takes to win so we have to go out there every week and play to our potential,” Little-john said. “It doesn’t matter who we play. We have to go be Gaffney every Friday night.”

The roster is loaded, starting with quarterback **Jayvon Gilmore**, talented big-time playmaker and an Arkansas commitment. Running back **Jaden McDowell** (Mercer) is back from injury and is the top running back, joined by **Josiah Hill**. Top receivers include **Taz Bradley**, **Shun Rodgers** and **Ayden Montgomery**.

The offensive line should be solid across the board with tackles **CJ Brooks** and **Scotland Dover** (App. State), guards **Seth Phillips** and **Derrius Littlejohn**, center **Cam Shippy**.

Linebacker **Kendaris Bailey** spearheads a physical defense. **Jaleel Tate**, **Kelton Smith** and **Kamani Williams** form the front. Smith is committed to East Carolina. **Ty McGill** and **Zyon Ratchford** also play linebacker. **Zyon Dawson**, **Chas Smith**, **Kaseem Shaw** and **Adreyan Monroe** form the secondary.

Spartanburg went 9-3 and played for the Upper State title. Coach **Mark Hodge** won two state titles at Chapman and the 2025 Vikings will be in the mix.

Quarterback **Trey Burke** returns at quarterback and is one of the state’s best. Junior running back **Trenton Lynch** is the top rusher and senior **Kendrion Keenon** is a play-maker at receiver. Senior **Brendon Carson** is a returning offensive lineman. Placekicker **Will Love** is the best in the state.

Defensive leaders include defensive back **Christian Davis**, tackle **JayLindra Cohen**, senior linebacker **Jacob Friedberg**, and **Jordan Atkins**.

Byrnes played every game on the road last season while stadium renovations were taking place. The Rebels’ new home cost more than 20 million dollars. Byrnes finished 6-4 last season.

Coach **Reggie Shaw** says the starting quarterback will either be **Caine Rogers** and **Walker Burdette**. **Tre Segarra**, a junior, is the top running back while **Chanin Harris** is the top receiver. Forming the offensive line is **Daniel Cornell**, **Mike Piggee**, **Zion Fullard**, **Trey McCullough** and **Josiah Chambers**.

Among the defensive leaders are sophomore defensive back **Emerson James**, linebackers **John Montgomery** and **Tyler Clark**, and linemen **Justice Hopkins**, **Taekwon Delaney** and **Josh Kyveto**.

Dorman was 6-4 last season and coach **Jake Morris** has a solid core of returning starters. Junior running back **Nick Means** is an explosive threat and **Demetris Slydell** is a transfer at quarterback. Junior receiver **Dai’Shon Watkins**-Hymes is another rising prospect.

Senior offensive linemen include **DJ Walker** and **Nathan Chboy**.

Seniors **Christian Waring** and **Zavion Meadows** return along the defensive front. Seniors **Jardin. Darby** and **Daniel Becker** return at linebacker.

Boiling Springs went 7-4 last season and coach **Matt Reel** lost some key senior leaders. Key seniors that will lead the way this season include cornerback **Jeremiah Favorite**, linebacker **TJ Collins**, receiver **Grayson Crowe**, tight end **Jaden Grate**, defensive back **Kuron Nesbitt** and receiver **Tresean Suber**.

Look for junior linebacker **DJ Leak** and end **Dennis Glenn** to make an impact defensively. Sophomore guard **Dakari Green** will be among the leaders up front.

“Our defense returns some big-time players and has more depth than we have had. We have a solid core group moving up from the jayvee that undefeated last year. The potential is there for us to be very competi-

tive.”

There will be no surprise as to **Riverside’s** biggest threat. That distinction belongs to receiver **Somad Eaddy**, who is headed to Wake Forest after high school. Eaddy needs the ball and quarterback **Gideon Merhib** will deliver it. Another key offensive threat for coach **Matt Rochester** is running back **Jaiden Taylor**. **Marquis Skinner** and **Mason Gardner** are two solid tackles.

AJ Hertel, **Adrian Stancel**, **Tyvin Grady** and **Tywon Martin** form a solid defensive front. Linebackers include **Garrett Bell**, **Keegan Rowland** and **Dean Alverson**. Working in the secondary are **Elijah Terry**, **Adrian Campbell**, **Owen Downs** and Eaddy.

Eastside made some strides last season, winning four games, and coach **Andre Woolcock** is looking for continued improvement.

Peyton Schrader is slated to start at quarterback with **Kelyn Durham** the lone backfield mate. Receivers **Walker Lewis**, **Anson Reynolds** and **Christian McDowell** will see plenty of opportunities.

Up front are tight end **Messiah Pearson**, tackles **Carter Williams** and **Jay Gray**, guards **Jason Sprague** and **Jason McGee**, and center **Jon Donovan**.

Jenson Stone and **Pierson Kranning** will be on the defensive line. **MJ Posey**, **Lucas Tankersly** and **Brady Fowler** are the linebackers. Lining up in the secondary are **Zac Harding**, **Christian McDowell**, **Cayden Workman**, and **Zyair Robinson**.

Region 3-AAAAA Predicted Order of Finish
Northwestern
Clover
Indian Land

Catawba Ridge
Rock Hill
Nation Ford
Fort Mill

The defending Division II state champions at ern are primed for a repeat in 2025. Repeating a 14-0 record may be difficult but coach **Page Wofford** has plenty of talent and experience returning to his roster.

The most experience returns along the offensive line where all five starters played last season. Seniors **Chris Coleman**, **Nasir Hannah** and **Noah McCoy** are the center and guards, respectively. The tackles are junior **Beau Chumley** and **Elijah Prophet**.

The line will be protecting a new quarterback as **Xavier Means** looks to fill the shoes of the graduated **Finley Polk**. **Qua Mobley**, a junior, is next in line as RB1 while **Kam Vance**, **David Flood**, **Jonathan Spurgeon** and **Payton Vining** are the leading receivers.

The defense must replace the front but senior spur **Tamarion Watkins**, a Texas A&M commit, will be the leader of the unit. Senior **Kameron McFadden** returns as a starting linebacker. **Josh Spurgeon** and **Jayden Baxter** are returners in the secondary.

Clover was 8-4 last season and head coach **Perry Woolbright** enters this season with 97 career wins as a head coach. Competition at quarterback between **Brody Woolbright** and **Aaron Shealey** carried into the summer. **Grady Stone** and **Jaytrom Croom** are the running backs while **Justin Hayward** and **Latrell Ellison** are listed as the top receivers.

Caron Pinti will start at tight end and **Heath Pinti** is at center. Starting

tackles should be **Alex Ellis** and **Khari Gray** while the guards are **Messiah Outing** and **Mehki James**.

On defense, starters up front will include **Jackson Hill**, **Damenion Talford** and **Anthony Ramirez**. The linebackers are **Caron Pinti**, **Jaylen Holmes**, **Omari Stroud** and **Jitoris Byrd**. Working the secondary are **Aaron Francis**, **Kalyb Starr**, **Branden Smith** and **Najeh Potts**.

Catawba Ridge looks to challenge for the region title and could be a team to watch in the Division II state playoffs. **Josh Dobson** is among the top athletes in

the state and will play factor in a variety of ways. Wide receiver **Darius Sutton** is another key offensive playmaker. **Mark Blakeney** returns as a running back.

Anchoring the defense are returning linebackers **Nolan Jones** and **Tyler Grandoff**, with **Connor McFadden** leading the defensive line play.

Former USC and Utah quarterback **Jake Bentley** is the new head coach at **Nation Ford**. He inherits a team that went 1-10 last season and lost most of its leading tacklers on defense.

Rock Hill transfer **Kason Canupp** could be a solid answer at quarterback. **Malachi Drayton** is the top returning rushers. The top receiver is **Jayden Scott**, who had more than 600 receiving yards last season. **Jamari Gore** is another key receiver.

The top returning tackler on defense is senior end **Mason Colunga**. **Justin Smiley** is back at linebacker with **Nigel Johnson** and **Logan Thomas** back in the secondary.

Leon Boulware is back home, taking over at his alma mater **Rock Hill**. If his team takes on his mentality, they are sure to be aggressive. Rock Hill went 4-2 in region play last season.

One of the top returning players is wide receiver **Connor Clawson**. **JoJo Brooks** is an explosive athlete and receivers **Kam Wilson** and **Jonah Torres** have experience.

Leading the defense will be **Joe Gaddy** up front, linebacker **Kaleb Wright**, and corner **Nigel Lightner**.

Indian Land may have the best player in the region in super athlete **Sequel Patterson**. The USC commit will be a factor as a runner, receiver, kick returner and defensive back. **Matt Lucia** is a promising sophomore quarterback. Leaders defensively will include linebacker **Jackson Connor**, defensive end **Michael Foster** and linebacker **CJ Petri**.

Fort Mill was 2-7 last season and returns more than a dozen starters. **Caleb Clark** is back along the offensive line while **Joseph Duey** is returning at tight end. Duey also plays linebacker, as does senior **Gray Patterson**. Patterson is committed to Charlotte.

Region 4-AAAAA Predicted Order of Finish
Dutch Fork
Irmo
River Bluff
White Knoll

Lexington
Chapin

Two of the teams in region four, Dutch Fork and Irmo, played for state titles last season. Dutch Fork capped an undefeated season with the Division I crown while Irmo lost a heart-breaker to Northwestern in the Division II finals.

Dutch Fork is again the favorite to win region four. Some coaches say the Silver Foxes are even stronger this season. Stepping in as a new starter at quarterback is **Jaxson Knotts**, the son of head coach **Tom Knotts**. The skill positions improved with the transfers of running back **Cole Martin** and receiver

Quarterbacks, continued from pg. 18

Austin Scott- Spartanburg – 11,915, 4 – **Everett Golson** – **Myrtle Beach** – 11634, 5 – **Mason Rudolph** – **Northwestern** – 10,986, 6 – **Chas Dodd** –

Byrnes – 10,640, 7 – **Willy Korn** – **Byrnes** – 10,626, 8 – **Noah Bell** – **Saluda** – 10,483, 9 – **Will Hunter** – **Lexington** – 10,322, and 10 – **Dillon Rivers** –

Chesterfield – 10,011.

Running Backs, continued from pg. 19

Mah’ky Green (5-9,170) and **Gray Collegiate’s Travon Williamson** (6-1,214). Williamson transferred

Offensive Line, continued from pg. 21

prove on though, but you can just tell by the way we play together and the way we have relationships on this team that we are going to be special.”

Coming in at No.55 is **Bryson Moore** (6-3, 305) of **Irmo**. He recently committed to **Charleston South-ern**.

“One thing about CSU is that it’s a smaller school, close-knit, and it felt like family when I went to visit,” Moore said. “It was amazing. The campus was nice, its great community, great people, and it’s faith-based, I’m a big Christian and a big believer in Jesus Christ so that was one of the big things for me.”

Helping Irmo’s line to get better after running-and-passing quarterback A.J. Brand has moved on to Virginia Tech has been Moore’s and the Yellow Jackets’ mission.

“I’ve been lifting weights and working hard on the field, working on my techniques with trainers and things like that, eating right and staying in condition,” he said. “We’re gonna be great. We’ve got a great offensive line, we’re only losing (wide receiver) **Donovan Murphy**, **AJ Brand** and (center) **Ryan Love** on offense, and we’re going to make up for losing those pieces. We’ve got great quarterbacks coming in, great receivers coming in, (wide receivers **Ethan Singletary**, **Maleek Miller**, guys like that.”

At 67th is **Dallas Williams** (6-4, 275) of **Greer**. He has an offer from **North Carolina Central** and interest from **North Greenville**, **Anderson**, and **Gardner-Webb**, among other schools.

Coming into this season the team looks to do better than its 7-5 mark.

“It’s been a lot of preparation, getting in shape, working out more and getting stronger,” Williams said about his offseason. “I had to step in for a senior who got injured last year and I ended up coming in at All Region (2-4A). I never thought I would be a leader, but now that I’m actually doing it is very fun.”

Beaufort’s Kenson Speaks (6-4, 295) is 76th. Speaks is getting interest from Virginia Tech, Charleston Southern, and other schools. While Beaufort went 2-9 last season, Speaks was a sophomore when the Eagles won the 3A state championship.

“Kenson is a great kid who has been a starter in our program for four years,” head coach **Charlie Lybrand** said. “He has been a great leader and mentor to younger players in our program. It has been really great to see just how far Kenson has come in his four years in our program. We expect big things from Kenson this year.”

Cody Peterson (6-5, 315) of **Ashley Ridge** is No.79 on the list. He has offers from Wingate and **Lenoir-Rhyne**. Peterson and the offensive line helped Ashley Ridge pile up 3,611 passing yards and 2,070 rushing yards and 70 total touchdowns in the Swamp Foxes’ 8-4 season that ended in the second round of the 5A Division I playoffs.

Northwestern’s Chris Coleman (6-3, 280) is 84th on the list. After helping the Trojans to a perfect 14-0 season and a 5A Division 2 championship, the senior announced his commitment to Charleston Southern in June.

Abbeville’s Kamyron Jones (6-2, 280) is at No.89. He’s gotten interest from Gardner-Webb but should generate more interest and offers soon.

“Regarding training and prepping for the season, I attended football camp, did lots of field work, attended summer practice, and completed lots of strength training,” Jones said. “As far as this year’s team goes, I’m very enthusiastic. Leading into this season, we have lots of work to do. But as a leader and senior, I’m working to have an open mind, getting to know the new guys, and ensuring I’m leading by example on and off the field.”

The Panthers are no strangers to the final game of

the season in any classification. With 13 state titles in the school’s history, including last year’s 1A state crown, Jones said Abbeville knows the formula.

“We have the potential to win a state title, but potential means nothing without passion, work, and effort,” he said.

Johnsonville’s Jason Brigham (6-0, 230) is at the 90th spot on the list. Brigham hasn’t had any offers yet but has had some interest from smaller schools, including Anderson University, North Carolina Central, the **University of Buffalo**, and **Grove City College** in Pennsylvania.

“Me personally, I’ve been lifting and practicing as much as I can in the afternoons and on the weekends, like power cleans and explosive lifts also footwork and having consistent snaps and low hips,” Brigham said. “Usually when I have free time, I like to watch film on collegiate offensive lines and higher-level guys that run similar schemes that we do in Johnsonville.”

This year Brigham, who has seen time on both sides of the football, will be seeing time exclusively as left tackle, something that has made Brigham work on his leadership skills.

“I know my coaches expect more out of me,” he said. “They seem to rely on me to make sure my offensive linemen know what they’re doing and what the assignments are. I’ve been as vocal as I can and I try to stay on top of my guys to make sure we’re doing the little things right. I’m honored to get the chance to lead my team and I’m glad I got guys looking up to me.”

Johnsonville, which finished 5-7, looks to make it back to the 1A state championship final. The Flashes lost to Christ Church in 2022 and 2023.

“I’ve been part of two lower state championship teams and I really think our 2025 team is coming together really well,” he said. “I’ve noticed since last year a lot of our young skilled players have really taken this offseason very seriously and I feel like our guys take pride in being in a winning culture and want to carry that legacy here at Johnsonville.”

QuaShaun Hampton (6-4, 290) of **Keenan** is at No.91. He has an offer from **Sussex Community College** in New Jersey, but he will also likely have more offers coming his way.

“A whole bunch of schools have been in talks and we’ve been communicating, like SC State, Wofford, and **Erskine** to name a few,” he said.

After a successful 7-5 year for the Raiders, Hampton said he spent a lot of time in the offseason getting ready for August 2025.

“I’ve done a lot in the offseason to get right, staying in the weight room, working out at home, hitting the field on the weekends, working out with my little brother and making each other better,” he said. “I’m just trying to get 1 percent better to prepare myself for the season and for the future.”

Keenan has had its struggles over the past decade, but last year was a season the Raiders could build on, Hampton said.

“Our team definitely is coming together,” he said. “We are a really young team with a lot of seniors leaving. We’re just getting a feel for the field and stuff but I really think we have the potential to do something big if we come together on one beat and one sound.”

Dutch Fork’s Jordan Roseborough (5-11, 241) is at No. 97. Roseborough hasn’t had interest in colleges of yet, but if you block for a team like the Silver Foxes, who have won eight state championships since 2012, interest and offers will not be far away.

Dutch Fork won its eighth crown with a win over **Summerville** in December, but has lost 30 or more seniors from that team, but Roseborough says there’s a lot of players who can step up and fill the gaps.

“We have a lot of talent on this team and I feel like

we can replace what we lost from last year,” Roseborough said. “I was asked to start as a sophomore and take on a big role and it helped me throughout the year, so now I know what to do”

On the Summerville side, **Christian Hewitt** (6-0, 300) is 107th. He has offers from **Newberry** and **Hampton-Sydney College** in Virginia, and is talking with **West Virginia State**, **Wingate**, **Anderson**, **S.C. State**, and other schools.

Hewitt was on the sidelines of the Dutch Fork-Summerville state championship game, sidelined with a week four injury.

“Ever since then I have been working, training, and rehabbing for this season,” Hewitt said. “My mental state has been good and I love the process and the work so just knowing that I sat on the sidelines last year and I couldn’t go out and play with the guys and seeing us in the championship and not winning that has fueled me to stay on the grind.”

The rest of the team has been on the grind as well, working on finishing out the season with a win.

“We have just been focusing on the small things and how much more we gotta work and grind to finish it off,” Hewitt said. “So, we got the talent and the potential we just gotta stick together and ride it out all the way to the finish line.”

Dover’s teammate, **C.J. Brooks** (6-4, 320) of Gaffney, is the state’s top junior offensive linemen, 10th on the list of top 25 juniors. Brooks has six offers thus far, including Coastal Carolina, Appalachian State, and **Florida A&M**.

Brooks confirms Dover’s insight on how the Indians are coming together as a team.

“We’re working out three days a week, lifting weights, a lot of conditioning,” Brooks said. “Everybody likes to compete, everybody’s working hard, everybody’s pushing each other to get better.”

Irmo’s **Nate Carson** (6-4, 271) is 15th on the list of top juniors. Carson, who with teammate Bryson Moore, helped the offensive line boost Irmo to a 12-2 season last year that ended with a last-seconds loss to Northwestern in the 5A Division 2 championship game. Carson has offers from South Carolina as well as Alabama, Florida, Florida State, and Charlotte.

Denmark-Olar’s Khamari Moody (6-4, 235) is at No.27. Moody has no offers as of yet but is busy getting ready for the coming season.

“I’ve been practicing and staying focused, putting my mindset right and working hard to stay healthy,” Moody said, noting his team’s jamboree matchup against **Cross** in the **Bamberg-Ehrhardt** Jamboree Aug. 15. “I think we have a phenomenal team. We’ve got some new guys and we’re about to go hard.”

Jeremiah Good of **Seneca** (6-1, 248) is at No. 31. Good had 46 pancake blocks and graded out at 86 percent in his sophomore year with the Bobcats, who went 8-3. Seneca rushed for 2,443 yards and 33 touchdowns and passed for 1,355 yards and 15 TDs.

Good, named to the 2-4A All Region team, went to camps at West Virginia, Coastal Carolina, and Gardner-Webb over the summer.

One sophomore, Dutch Fork’s **Brody Lorenzo** (6-3, 290) is high on the list of top sophomore football players in the state. Lorenzo has offers from N.C. State, Cincinnati, East Tennessee State, and Liberty, and will likely get more as the seasons go by. Lorenzo has no college pressure at this point—his focus is primarily bettering himself and his teammates as they work to make it back to the state title game.

“It’s a lot of pressure and we lost a lot of people but we’re going to be able to handle it,” Lorenzo said. “We replaced the holes very well. We’ve got a lot of leaders on our team.”

Class A, Continued from pg. 27

CARVERS BAY
The Bears went 4-7 a year ago and finished 4th in Region 6-A. Veteran head coach **Matthew Richard** (30-31) will be a Shrine Bowl assistant this season also. At the HSSR media day in late July Coach Richards brought 15 players. This team seems focused on improvement this season.
Senior leadership from SC commitment OL **Zyon Guiles** (6-5,290) who will also play in the DL. Guiles has a 345 bench and a 575 squat and you can read more about him in our OI feature elsewhere in this issue.

HANNAH PAMPLICO:
Trey Woodberry (46-47) begins his 10th season as a head football coach. Last year the Raiders went 9-3 and placed second in the region. The team graduated talented RB **Jamarcus Williams** and talented QB **Wade Poston**. This could be a rebuilding season when you lose two good ones like Williams and Poston. RB **Chris Eldridge** played a lot last year when Williams got hurt and her is the go-to RB this season. Former WR **De’Auje Bacchus** je steps up to play QB. FS **Clovell Woodberry** will be a leader at FS. **Khi Brown** and **Jonah Poston** will also have key roles on the team.
The Raiders will start the season against Heathwood Hall from Columbia on August, 22.

LAKE VIEW:
Daryl King (150-63) will field one of his youngest teams he has had at Lake View as he begins his 19th year as the head coach of the Wild Gators. Last year LV was 11-2 and they won the region with a perfect 6-0 record. The QB position will feature **Chase Price**, and he is a very good pitching prospect in baseball. Other key returners include OL **Farrison Seymore** along with RB **Kiwi Jackson**. Athlete **Landon King**, LB **Seth Deese**, DB **Jalen Clarke**, and DL **Tyree Fore**

AA, Continued from pg. 9

Woodland was No. 11 and is coming of a 7-4 season and has six starters returning on both sides of the football. That includes three All-State performers/
They are offensive tackle **Tyreon Summerson**, linebacker **Jaemin Pinkney** and DL **Dononvan Miles**.
Jervaze Salley returns at quarterback.

ANDREWS

Andrews has seven starters back on both sides of the football from a team that went 6-5.
One of those returning is RB **AJ Lee**, who is close to 3,000 career yards. Also back is defensive lineman **Chris Stewart**, a Western Michigan commit.

ACADEMIC MAGNET

Academic Magnet went 4-7 last season and 1-4 in region play. **Campbell Stoklosa** is back at QB. Junior LB **Caleb Parrish** is the leading returning tackler.

BURKE

Burke went 1-8 last season and was winless in five region contests.
Ka’Mari Taylor will be the quarterback and will play free safety on defense.

REGION 7

- 1. Manning
- 2. East Clarendon
- 3. Lake City
- 4. Mullins
- 5. Kingstree
- 6. Marion
- 7. Atlantic Collegiate



Carver’s Bay Bears

will work hard to keep the Wild Gator winning tradition alive. (Please feature story on the team elsewhere in this issue).
Lake View began the season on August, 21 against **Marion**.

JOHNSONVILLE:
After competing for two Class A state titles in recent years, the Johnsonville Flashes had a rare 5-7 losing season in '24. **Ken Cribb** begins his 24th season as a head football coach with a 169—98 career record.
The senior leadership will come from WR **Takhari Ross**, LT **Jason Brigham**, and RB **Jay McFadden** this season. The junior group will be led by QB **Larkin Powell** and RB **Zaghe Davis** along with DB **Jamere Ross**. (See feature story on the Johnsonville team elsewhere in this issue)

MANNING

The Monarchs lost their first game of the season and then reeled off 11 straight wins before falling to Barnwell in the lower state title game.
Manning, which was ranked fourth in the pre-season, returns four of five starters on the O line. **Lovell Stevenson** will take over at quarterback, but will have Jontavious Canty lining up at running back.
Canty is also a standout linebacker. However, he is only one of two returning starters defensively.

EAST CLARENDON

The Wolverines went 8-4 last season and reached the second round of the playoffs for the second straight year.
Takoda Cornelius is back after starting at QB the past two years. He will still see plenty of time taking snaps, but he’ll line up at WR some. **Blease Hardy** and **Gavin White** will see time behind center.
All of the offensive line returns with **Jayln Barron** leading the way.

LAKE CITY

The Panthers were 4-7 last season, but came up on the short end of several games. They have six starters back on offense, led by 3-year starting QB **Amari Hanna**. There are four returning starters on the O line. **RJ Matthews** will be a weapon at WR.
Senior linebackers **Shayon Shavers** and **Hunter Blanchard** will lead the defense.

MULLINS

The Auctioneers made a big jump in **Marc Lowery’s** second season, going rom winless to seven vic-

Johnsonville will open up the 2025 season against **Chesterfield**.

GREEN SEA FLOYDS:
The Trojans come into the season having won just four games in the past three seasons and team depth will continue to be an issue for head coach **Patrick Martin**. Numerous players will go both ways. They include FB/SS **Thomas Gunnells** who is scheduled to be the work horse running back on the team. Sophomore **Jack Shelley** is the QB. **Dylon White** (6-3,308) is a two-way performer at OL/DL. **Gabriel Peer** is an up-coming sophomore who will play at OLB/WR. **London McCellan** is a junior WR/DB.
GSF will start the 2025 season against **Loris**.

tories. However, they finished fifth in the region so the goal is to make a push.
KaNazzion Bethea returns for his third and final year at quarterback. Andre Littlejohn and **Nathan Peracki** are back at linebacker to lead the defense.

KINGSTREE

Brandon Cantrell is the Blazers’ new head coach. He takes over a team that went 5-7 and reached the second round of the playoffs.
He inherits an outstanding running back in senior **Tyleek Dukes**, who ran for 1,798 yards and 21 TDs. Sophomore **Makhi Shaw** returns at QB after starting as a freshman.
BJ Washington is back after coming up with 17 TFLs and nine sacks.

MARION

The Swamp Foxes are young – really young. They are starting just three seniors on offense and none on defense. There are only three juniors starting on defense.
The starting quarterback is freshman **Jayden Nowlin**. Two of the seniors will be on the O line in **Diego Herrera** and **Norvell Finklea**.

ATLANTIC COLLEGIATE

The Armada had a successful first season because it didn’t finish last in the region. ACA went 1-8, the victory coming over Marion.
Brennon Moore plays all over the field on both sides of the ball. He was the main QB, and he has one of his favorite targets back in sophomore **Tyler Yock**.

Stone Furrey, both from Chapin. **Brody Lorenzo** is the top returner on the offensive line.
The defense allowed about a touchdown per game last season and it might be better overall this fall. Roaming the secondary are **Mario Anderson** and **Tad Gibson**. Michigan commit **Julian Walker** and transfer **Jaden Weurth** anchor the front.

Irmo lost some key pieces from their 13-2 team but coach **Aaron Bland** has 15 returning starters. The biggest void is at quarterback and **Dre Dopson** is competing with transfer **Brittan Davis** for QB1 honors.
Amire White returns as the top running back with **Maleek Miller**, **Corey Miller**, **Ethan Singletary** and **Delrico Eady** forming a dangerous receiving corps.
Heading up the offensive line is returning senior **Bryson Moore** at tackle. **Nate Carson** and **Mason McGill** also will see time at tackle. Moore could also start at center.

Major Taylor heads up the defensive front, along with **Jaiden Bryant**, **Devaughn Sutter** and **Tyrone Jennings**. Projected starters at linebacker include **Brandon Goldsborough**, **Javone Hill** and **Makari Allen-Hendrix**. Working the back end are **Junior Grissett**, **Antwan Pierce**, **CJ Currence** and **Zion Gates**. **Tucker Williams** and **Will Kelly** will handle the kicking duties.

River Bluff has a new head coach as former Ridge View coach **Perry Parks** inherits a team that won 10 games last season. Parks is looking at **Brayden Moore** to take over at quarterback. **Landon Huggins** and **Parker Hudson** are two returning offensive linemen. **Hayden Myers** rushed for more than 1,300 yards last season and will be the RB1. **Darius Carter** and **Nick Washington** are top receivers.

Anchoring the defense are returning linemen **Clayton Sharpe**, **Preston Minor** and **Mason Stewart**. Defensive end **Justin Montalvo** also returns.

White Knoll should continue as a playoff team despite some key personnel losses. The Timberwolves were 8-6 last season. Gone is productive leader **Landon Sharpe** at quarterback. Next up is **Jhais McKiever**. **Tiyon Fanning** returns at running back and athlete **Caleb Geromini** will be key factor.

Linebacker **Josue Esiki** had more than 90 tackles last season with **Jeremy Cokley** also returning at linebacker. **Markeese Winn** and **James Smith** return as starters in the secondary.

Former Saluda head coach **Stewart Young** is the new head man at **Lexington**, looking to improve on a 5-6 record.
Leon Taylor and **Shannon Lyles** are a good starting point at running back. Projected to start at quarterback will be **Avery Cagle**, with **Nigel Lewis** returning as the top receiver.

The defense has potential with returning linebackers **Keegan Coleman** and **Cam Morris** leading the charge. **Isaiah Saxon** returns on the defensive line and **Lawson Ott** is back in the secondary.

Chapin is having to replace three key offensive playmakers, one who graduated and two that transferred to Dutch Fork. But the Eagles should be more than solid defensively with returning linebackers **Palmer Flake**, **Parker Collins** and **Caleb Davis**.

Peyton Quintin returns in the secondary. **Luke Cromer** is moving from defense to running back while **Caden Muskus** and **Mason Hettinger** anchor the offensive line.

Region 5-AAAAA predicted Order of Finish
Sumter
Ridge View
West Florence
Westwood
Lugoff-Elgin
Blythewood
Spring Valley

Region five would appear to be a three-team race with **Sumter**, **Ridge View** and **West Florence** taking the lead. Sumter is the top dog until some team wrestles the title away.

Sumter went 12-1 last season, losing to Summerville in the state playoffs. Coach Mark Barnes has a

solid cast returning, starting with junior quarterback **Franklin Richardson**, who accounted for 1,209 yards passing and 949 yards rushing.
Sumter loves to impose their will in the running game and senior **Cayon Jordan** will step up as the lead back. Top receivers include **Chase Solomon**, **Jamier Bay** and **Jacori Jackson**, along with tight end **Joseph Chapman**.

Along the offensive front will be one senior, tackle **Zyquaz Kelly**. Other projected starters include sophomore I’Sean Macer, and juniors **Cooper Zeigler**, **Cooper Geddings** and **Brian Johnson**.

Senior **Bryce Allen** is a top returner in the secondary, along with senior **Tymarius Thompson**. Seniors **Cam Bradley** and **Elijah Brunson** return along the defensive front. Linebacker **Jamarcus McCutcheon** is the lone returning linebacker.

Ridge View coach Derek Howard has 15 returning starters from an eight-win team. Junior **Tre Howard** is returning at quarterback, with **Spencer Fabian** and **Aidan Keetle** handling the run game. Receivers will include **Omari Johnson**, **Khristian Jackson** and **Jourdin Mack**.

The offensive line is a veteran group with seniors **Savion Taylor-Sanders**, **Josh Braveboy** and **Joseph Brayboy** showing the way.

Seniors **Blair Allen** and **Drew Madison** will start on the defensive line. A strong group of linebackers is led by seniors **Jaiden Brown**, **Davon Toney** and **D’Juan Franklin**. The secondary projects four starting seniors – **Jordyn Best**, **Quincy Grant**, **DaSean Rush** and **Kingston Lucas**.

Chad Wilkes is the new head coach at **West Florence**.The Knights went 8-4 last season. Wilkes would like to see more balance offensively and has had success in previous stops with the passing game.

Projected to start at quarterback is **Avery Weaver**. Anchors up front include **Tayden Singletary** and **Jamie Williamson**. Leaders on defense include linebackers **Romello Patterson** and **Ishmael Dixon**. **Clayton Folse** returns in the secondary.

Jeremiah Whitmore, **Zion Oliver**, **Donte Davis** and **Darryl Jones** are key defensive returners for **Westwood**. On offense, look for production from quarterback **Carrington Carter**, running back **Angelo Rios** and receiver **Myles Grant**.

Lugoff-Elgin has a new head coach but **Jarvis Littlejohn** was the defensive coordinator and his hire as head coach

made for an easy transition.
Heading into the season, **Aiden Fitzgerald** and **Zach Williams** were competing for the QB1 title. Fitzgerald was the starter last year, throwing for more than 1,200 yards. **Eric Richardson** is a key returner at receiver and **Kelan Hammond** is the top returner up front.

Defensively, leaders will be linebackers **Fernando Samuel** and **Preston Rhodes**, and defensive back **Corey Murphy**.

Blythewood is replacing key personnel but could challenge for a top three finish, Running back **Landyn Strong** is a key offensive player and **James Veasey** is a new quarterback. **Amari Fisher** will contribute in multiple ways and **Chance Johnson** returns at receiver.
Linebacker **Dillon Hutcherson** and tackle **Jonas Willis** will be among the defensive leaders.

Spring Valley is coming off an 0-11 season and has struggled for wins for a few years. The lineup will consist of mostly juniors and seniors but there is a depth concern. A few players will go both ways.

Senior **Dylan Redden** is projected as the starting quarterback. Juniors **Zion Bennett** and **Levon Smith** are leaders at running back. The top receivers will be **Marcel Goodwin** and **Ethan Portee-Broadwater**. Seniors along the offensive line include **Shymeik Reid**, **Ivan Clarke** and **Tyler Dukes**.

Goodwin will play in the secondary, as will Portee-Broadwater. Senior **Sawyer Sheffield** returns at linebacker and seniors **Bryson Hugee** and **Demarion Green** are back on the defensive line.

See AAAAA, pg. 16

2024 Final Region Standings					
REGION 1-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
T L HANNA	6-1	9-3	483	325	
J L MANN	6-1	9-3	439	194	
GREENWOOD	6-1	9-3	341	235	
HILLCREST	4-3	8-4	359	274	
WOODMONT	2-5	3-8	260	355	
GREENVILLE	2-5	2-9	270	408	
MAULDIN	2-5	2-9	162	369	
EASLEY	0-7	1-9	202	417	
REGION 2-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
SPARTANBURG	6-1	10-3	430	192	
GAFFNEY	5-1	10-2	377	225	
DORMAN	4-2	6-4	198	198	
JAMES F. BYRNES	3-2	4-6	219	205	
BOILING SPRING	3-3	7-4	360	163	
RIVERSIDE	2-4	6-5	330	322	
EASTSIDE	1-5	4-6	162	226	
WADE HAMPTON	0-7	0-10	75	360	
REGION 3-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
NORTHWESTERN	6-0	14-0	690	241	
CLOVER	4-2	8-4	363	300	
CATAWBA RIDGE	4-2	8-4	341	280	
ROCK HILL	4-2	5-6	286	385	
INDIANLAND	2-4	6-6	229	305	
NATION FORD	1-5	2-9	246	462	
FORT MILL	0-6	1-8	151	258	
REGION 4-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
DUTCH FORK	5-0	13-0	509	94	
IRMO	4-1	12-2	525	248	
RIVER BLUFF	3-2	10-3	372	286	
CHAPIN	1-4	6-6	360	431	
LEXINGTON	1-4	5-6	174	246	
WHITE KNOLL	1-4	8-6	436	299	
REGION 5-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
SUMTER	6-0	12-1	587	248	
RIDGE VIEW	5-1	8-5	378	314	
WEST FLORENCE	4-2	8-4	332	260	
WESTWOOD	3-3	6-6	211	242	
BLYTHEWOOD	2-4	6-5	265	198	
LUGOFF-ELGIN	1-5	4-7	253	339	
SPRING VALLEY	0-5	0-10	108	452	
REGION 6-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
CAROLINA FOREST	5-0	6-4-1	380	291	
MYRTLE BEACH	4-1	6-5	294	255	
N. MYRTLE BEACH	3-2	4-8	255	317	
SOCASSEE	2-3	4-7	174	246	
CONWAY	1-4	2-8	152	268	
ST. JAMES	0-5	0-10	176	440	
REGION 7-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
BERKELEY	3-2	6-6	332	200	
GOOSE CREEK	3-2	5-6	233	203	
STRATFORD	3-2	5-6	277	295	
CANE BAY	3-2	3-8	199	324	
WANDO	2-3	5-6	210	222	
LUCY BECKHAM	1-4	4-7	264	272	
REGION 8-AAAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF	
SUMMERVILLE	5-0	13-1	595	285	
ASHLEY RIDGE	3-2	8-4	508	387	
JAMES ISLAND	3-2	9-4	276	137	
FORT DORCHESTER	2-3	6-6	283	349	
WEST ASHLEY	2-3	4-7	242	264	
R B STALL	0-5	0-9	27	470	

Class AAAA Feature

AAAA has depth throughout with quality teams in 2025

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Sumter – **South Florence High School** has established itself as the best football program in AAAA over the past few years. After all, the Bruins have won two of the past three state championships and missed making it three straight and consecutive 15-0 seasons by just three points. All that being said, the degree of separation between South Florence and the other top teams in the classification is small. **Westside**, which beat the Bruins 34-32 to claim the 2023 championship, just missed winning two straight championships by falling 42-41 to the Bruins last year.

SFHS may be the defending state champion, but it isn't the defending Region 5 champion. That honor belongs to **Hartsville**, which beat the Bruins convincingly during the regular season only to fall to them in the third round of the state playoffs.

The team SFH beat in the lower state championship game was **North Augusta**, and that was only by a 27-20 count.

Let's take a look at each of the teams in the six regions and try to figure out who will be who when the playoffs come around.

REGION 1

- Westside
- Wren
- Emerald
- Fountain Inn
- Laurens
- Southside

WESTSIDE

The Rams, who were ranked third in the *High School Sports Report* AAAA preseason poll, will be having to move forward without **Cutter Woods** as their quarterback for the first time in three years. However, that doesn't mean there won't be a Woods behind center. Cutter, who is now at **South Carolina**, is being succeeded by little brother Bear Cutter.

Bear will still have key playmakers **Zyon Paul** and **Kaylan Powell** around him for distribution.

WREN

The Golden Hurricanes were ranked 10th in the preseason poll, but is having to replace the quarterback and running back from last year's dynamic offense. They had a 3-way battle going on for the quarterback job while **Jojo Mosley** will be the lead ball carrier.

What Wren does have back, however, is four offensive linemen. Back on defense are corner back **Jacob Lewis**, safety **Nick Owens** and line-backer **Adin Hickerson**.

FOUNTAIN INN

The Fury went 6-5 in just their third season of existence, finishing fourth in the region. They return seven starters on defense, including linebackers **Chase Lundy** and **EJ Lundy**. On offense, 1,000-yard rusher **Bo-jack Johnson** returns at running back. Junior **Sam Holliday** is back at quarterback.

EMERALD

Emerald will be looking to take another big step forward after improving to 5-6 last season after going 1-10 in 2023.

The Vikings have sophomore **Beau Hite** back at quarterback with **Chris Dean** coming out of the backfield and **Camelle Hill** and **Colton Moreno** lining up at wide receiver.

Emerald returns its entire linebacker unit, led by **Chris Foster**, who finished with 156 tackles.

LAURENS

Laurens will be trying to take a big step forward this year after consecutive 9-loss seasons. The Raiders will have a freshman at quarterback in **Logan Bragg**. Leading rusher **Neno Fernandez** will be back.

Laurens will be looking to shore up its defense after allowing an average of 42.0 points per game.

SOUTHSIDE

Ater going 0-10 last season, Southside will be in its first season under the leadership of **William "AJ" Mills**. The Tigers will be looking to make drastic improvements on both sides of the football ater allowing 45 points per game while scoring just 13 a game.

Brayson Sullivan and **Ashton Pearson** are battling for the quarterback job.

REGION II

- Daniel
- Seneca
- Greer
- Blue Ridge
- Pickens
- Berea
- Travelers Rest

DANIEL

The Lions are ranked sixth in the preseason poll, but will be moving forward without **Jeff Fruster** as the head coach. Fruster, who led Daniel to three AAA state titles, has been replaced by **Chris Stone**, who was the head coach at Walhalla.

The Lions will return 10 starters from last season's 11-2 squad. The quarterback will be sophomore **Jace Grass**, who played for **Pendleton** last season.

SENECA

Seneca is ranked 11th and returns 16 starters, eight on both sides of the football. The Bobcats have **Gavin Thomas** back for his third year as the starting quarterback to go along with 1,200-yard rusher **Amari Verner**.

Noah Hamm is one of the leading returners on defense for Seneca, which went 8-3. He had seven interceptions.

GREER

Greer will be looking to get off to a faster starter than last year. The Yellow Jackets lost their first three games before rebounding to finish second in the region and reaching the second round of the playoffs.

Greer is ranked 12th in the poll. It returns 10 starters but will be breaking in a new quarterback in sophomore **Dawson Fowler**. He will have wide receiver **Tucker Hudson**, **AJ Jackson** and **Quantez Miller** returning.

BLUE RIDGE

After winning just one game in 2023, Blue Ridge won four last season and reached the state playoffs. The Tigers hope to take another big step forward under 3-year starting quarterback **Gavin Forrester**.

Blue Ridge returns seven starters on defense.

PICKENS

The Blue Flames won five games last season. However, they lost 20 seniors rom that squad.

On the bright side, quarterback **Brooks Dow** returns for his second year as a starter.

BEREA

The Bulldogs will have to remember how to live life without 4-year starter Amazay Robinson at quarterback. Either **Johnny Mitchell** or **Jayden Scates** will be the quarterback, and Berea will be operating out of the Wing-T after running the spread.

TRAVELERS REST

Travelers Rest went just 1-8 last season, losing starting quarterback **Colby Epps** in the third game. Epps returns this season.

Xavier Hagerman returns at linebacker to lead the defense.

REGION 3

- South Pointe
- A.C. Flora
- Camden
- Lancaster
- Richland Northeast
- Dreher
- York

SOUTH POINTE

The Stallions are a preseason No. 2 pick and that comes despite the loss of 2,600-yard rusher **Mason Pickett-Hicks**. However, they do return senior quarterback **Cameron McMillan**, who tossed 31 TD passes against just four interceptions.

South Pointe, which played for the upper state title, has **South Carolina** commitment **J'Zavien Currence** back in the secondary along with heavily recruited junior transfer **Kaiden Watkins**.

A.C. FLORA

Senior **Roper Wentzky** is back for his third year starting at quarterback for the Falcons, who were the preseason No. 8. He threw for 2,684 yards and 28 touchdowns.

Flora also has Wentzky's favorite target back in senior **Kendall Byrd**. He had 83 catches for 1,104 yards and 10 touchdowns.

CAMDEN

The ninth-ranked Bulldogs will have junior **Greyson Rimpf**, the son of head coach **Brian Rimpf**, back in his first full year as the starting quarterback. **Tylin Drakeford** will return at wide receiver after coming up with 56 catches for 938 yards and 11 TDs.

Camden was 9-4 last season and reached the third round of the playoffs after starting 4-3. It returns 12 starters, including all of the offensive backfield and four seniors on the defensive line.

LANCASTER

The Bruins went 4-7 last year and were close to being much better. They lost 1-score contests to both A.C. Flora and Camden. Lancaster also reached the state playoffs.

Lancaster will be trying to get the ball into the hands of **Anthony Williams** as much as possible. He splits time between quarterback and wide receiver.

RICHLAND NORTHEAST

For the first time in four years, Richland Northeast will not have **Will Wilson** taking snaps at quarterback. He is now at North Carolina State.

See AA, pg. 5

AAAAA, continued from pg. 16

due to SCHSL rules violations but the Swamp Foxes return plenty of talent. **Ashley Haskins** will serve as the interim head coach and veteran coach **Bobby Marion** will assume offensive play-calling duties.

The Swamp Foxes return the top quarterback in the league in senior **Trevor Kalisz**. Kalisz has thrown for more than 6,000 yards and 61 touchdowns in the last two seasons. **Jagger Spivey** returns as the top receiver (688 yards) and **Cody Peterson** will be a fourth-year starter along the offensive line.

Ryan Campbell, one of the area's top running backs, transferred from Fort Dorchester and will be a huge addition to the offense.

The defense suffered some key losses to graduation but will return tackle **Malachi Mitchell** and sophomore linebacker **MJ Respass**. Transfer **JT King** will make an impact at defensive end.

Hit hard by the transfer portal, the **Fort Dorchester** Patriots will

be in a rebuilding stage this fall as Lorenzano begins his second season as head coach.

However, the roster is not devoid of overall talent and the Patriots should be competitive as the build together. Among the top returners are linebackers **Savon Garrett** and **Miguel Peterson**, along with defensive backs **Chaz Mitchell** and **Jeff Jefferson**. **Thomas Wamer** is the top returner along the defensive line.

Transfer **Thomas Adamsky** will likely begin the season as the starting quarterback with **Mykell Warthen** expected to contribute as a running back and slot receiver. **Zyion Rouse** is the top returning starter along the offensive line. Top receivers will include **Derrick Simpson** and **Laurez Matthews**.

West Ashley's **Rashad Graham** is a head coach for the first time but has extensive



Summerville's
Jaiden Kelly-Murray



James Island's
Connor Dantzler



May River's
Andrew Johnson

AAAAA, Continued from pg. 5

The defense returns practically its entire unit led by co-leading tacklers **Ophir Hill** and **Daniel Gee**.

LAKEWOOD

Lakewood is in its third season under head coach **Willie Offord**. The Gators went 2-9 last season.

Brian Brooks will bounce around the offense, including quarterback. **Kaiden Brown** will likely see a lot of time at quarterback. The offensive line is experienced with **Calvin Wells**, **Keytrelle Griffin**, **Connor Lee** and **Charlton McLeod** returning.

WILSON

Wilson went just 1-9 and is being led by former **Sumter** assistant **Brian Wilson** this season.

Tristen Howard will be the quarterback while senior **Myquan McWhite** will be a key performer at running back. Senior defensive back **Aiden Mack** will lead the defense.

REGION 6

- Bishop England
- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- May River
- Beaufort
- Colleton County

BISHOP ENGLAND

AAA, Continued from pg. 27

Jordan Avinger (6-2,230) who teams up with senior **Derrick Thomas** to lead the ground game. Avinger has firm offers from Arkansas, ECU, and South Florida. **Hammond** transfer **Daylin Haltiwanger** (6-4,220) is a big target for returning QB **Brendan Peoples**, a sophomore. **Desi Miller** is the top returning WR but Hammond transfer **Daylin Haltiwanger** will be a key addition on both sides of the ball. The line will likely start just one senior, guard **Deshawn Vick** (6-1,305).

On defense, DL **Jayden Lambright** and **Terry Johnson** are returners up front. Avinger returns at linebacker, joined by returner **Chris Glover** and **Monte Sistrunk**. **Jayden Dash** and **Jordan Logan** start in the secondary.

O-W will begin the 2025 season on August, 22 against the **Anderson Cavaliers**.

HANAHAN:

Hanahan head coach **Milan Turner** begins his third season with the Hawks who have won 13 games in Turner's first two seasons. Coach Turner is hoping

The Battlin' Bishops hope to build on last year's surprising 9-3 season in its first year under head coach Logan Hall.

Quinn Mahoney returns at quarterback. He is committed to Mahoney was a threat with his passing and running ability as he collected 2,950 yards in total offense and accounted for 30 touchdowns.

The top returners on defense include linebacker **Hunter Alex** and lineman **Matthew Ponkow**.

Alex was in on 113 tackles and recorded 11.5 tackles for a loss. Ponkow had a remarkable sophomore season last year with 98 tackles. He logged 23 tackles for a loss, including 11 sacks.

BLUFFTON

Bluffton was ranked seventh in the preseason poll after going 6-5 last season. **North Carolina** commit **Carnell Warren** is back at wide receiver and will have quarterback **Aedan McCarthy** throwing to him.

HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Hilton Head was ranked 13th after going 9-3 last season despite starting 10 sophomores. The Seahawks allowed just 14.5 points per game and were led by senior linebacker **Will Jimenez**.

year three will be the best season yet. Sophomore quarterback **Tripp Gallus** was the starter for the last half of '24 and he has a lot of natural talent. Gallus is also a top baseball prospect. The Hawks lost their leading receiver but **Bo Brabham** and **Quamell Grant** are ready for their strep-up roles.

Sophomore **Elijah Mitchell** will be a leader in the offensive front. **Kamani Raymond** is also an experienced OL. **Brandyn Maduro** and **Josh Amara** will be a leader at linebacker and tight end.

Hanahan will start the 2025 season against **Philip Simmons** on August, 29.

NORTH CHARLESTON:

Adrain Grady took over the **North Charleston** program late in the summer of 2024 and he led the **Cougars to a respectable 4-6 season under the circumstances**.

Some key players returning this season include: Senior **D'Andra Thompson** who will start at at quarterback along with senior **Lorenzo Kitchings** a returning WR starter who will flip to the secondary.

coaching experience as an assistant at North Myrtle Beach and Boiling Springs.

The new coach will have a large group of new varsity starters but expects to a team that improves as they play more.

Junior **Bristof Biegenzahn** (6-4, 255) is a senior returning at tight end and defensive end. Other key defensive leaders will include linebacker **Spencer Rocker**, lineman **Dorian Bond**, and safety **Brady Whetzel**.

Graduation left a void at quarterback, leaving Graham with a spirited competition between **Gibbs Isom** and **Chase Townes**. **D'Anthony Coleman** and **Anthony Ramperson** will factor as a running back on offense, with **Josh Bradley** and

Cooper Welch working at receiver. Sophomore **Sha'quan Mulligan** will be among the leaders on the offensive front. Returning starter **Matt Atkinson** will miss the early part of the season with an injury.

AAAAA, Continued from pg. 5

MAY RIVER

May River was ranked 15th but has just four starters back on offense and three on defense from a 9-3 team. The Sharks return tailback **Andrew Johnson** and halfback **Sean Mitchell** on offense. The defense is led by senior end **Zavier Polite**.

BEAUFORT

The Eagles had their first losing season since 2019, going just 2-9. However, they return a load of experience with 25 seniors.

That being said, the offense is inexperienced. The defense is led by junior linebacker **Colton Freeman**, and senior linebacker **James Thomas**.

COLLETON COUNTY

Adam Kinloch returns for his third season as head coach of the Cougars. They will be looking for improvement after going 1-9 and not winning a region contest.

Colleton County will be looking to get the football into the hands of wide receiver **Keandre Allen** as much as possible.

Anthony Simmons is a key returner in the OL/DL. Two other key defenders will be LB **Jay Fleming** and DB **Tion Blakeney**. **Noth Charleston** will begin the season against .

BATTERY CREEK:

Ed Susi's Dolphins won three wins in '24, an improvement from 0-10 in Susi's first season. Those wins gave the program 32 wins since 2012, the last winning season.

One year later the Dolphins should be more competitive in '25. Linebacker **Cody Smith**, a senior, will lead the D,L along with end **Michael Cohen** and lineman **James Snead**.

Senior **Chase Olsen** returns as the starting QB. **Ty Simmons** should be a key WR.r.

Battery Creek will start the 2025 season against **Hilton Head Christian**.

Class A, Continued from pg. 11
Senior leadership will come from Top 100 RB/CB **Marcus Cann** (6-2,295), along with OLB **Jalen McGraw** (6-2,210) and OLB **Darius Walker** (5-11,205). Top juniors include WR **Anthony Williams** (5-11,175), QB **Brian McMillian** (6-2, 185), and WR **Jason Youmans** (6-1,180). Among sophomores, RG Aaden McCormick (6-1,255) and RT Saveon Bamberg (5-11,295) are key players. Top performers up from the jayvee include: MLB Rakeem Walker (6-2,195), LT Pierre Fuller (6-3,275) and DE Keegan Daff (6-0,245). Top transfers include: **Jordan Bovain** and **Chris Washington**.
The Raiders will start the season against Edisto. (See feature story on B-E elsewhere in this issue)

DENMARK OLAR:
William Rayson's troops finished third in the region last year and 4-6 over-all, so this team is looking to move up the pecking order for sure in '25. The team will count on senior leadership from DL **Nick Sapp** (6-0,300), RG **Rahjaner Singleton** (6-2,288) and DB **Geontae Staley** (6-0,163). RT **Mari Moody** (6-4,230) is considered the team's top junior. The top soph's include Ath. **Nyheem Brimfield** (6-4, 230) and RB **Trevine Felder** (5-5,150). The top player up from jayvee is DB **Lamar Griggs**.

Denmark-Olar brought 11 players to the annual *HSSR* media day in late July. Staley is a returning all-region player and Felder has a goal of 1,000 rushing yards this season. Brimfield looks like a D-1 prospect with 4.5 speed, a 265 bench and a squat of 505. He has been invited to games at Clemson and USC this fall. Sapp reports he has a 220 bench and a 525 squat.
Denmark will open up the 2025 season against Class A rival **Wagner-Salley**.
(See feature story on Denmark-Olar elsewhere in this issue)

RIDGELAND:
Reginald Alexander is the new head football coach at Ridgeland High School. Last year the team finished 5-5 to finish in second place in the region behind Bamberg-Ehrhardt. Some of the players working hard to keep the success going in 2025 include: OL/DL **Adam Rivers** (6-3,335), OL/DL **Ivan Brown** (6-3,260), OL/DL, **Jayeon Howard** (6-2,240), along with DL/T **Deonte West** (6-3, 215). The QB is soph **Tarshaun Smith** and **Devin Fields** is listed as an athlete. A senior leader is DE/HB **Denardo Henry** (5-9,210). Ridgeland began the season on August, 22 against **Eau Claire**.

HARDEEVILLE:
Arthur Gardner is in his first year as the head football coach at Hardeeville and the Hurricanes went 2-8 a year ago. They are led on both sides of the football by TE/DE **Marvin Clarke** (6-2, 205) and he is a pass rushing machine. Other players working hard to help the team improve include: QB **Emillano Santiago** (5-11,185), WR/CB **Camari Brown** (5-11, 150), and K/P **Efain Tinoco**.
Hardeeville began the 2025 season on August, 22 with a game against **Bethune Bowman**.

ALLENDALE-FAIRFAX:
Travis Lewis takes over the Tigers program after the team went 0-9 in '24 and they only produced 18 points all season. That should certainly change in '25 with RB **Trequan Jenkins** back along with FB **Cranerius Nickens** (6-1,230). Jenkins joins fellow seniors LB **Luther Smoaks**, and WR **Tyquavion Tilley** as leaders on the team. Nickens is the top junior on the team. WR **Damien Creech** is the top returning sophomore.
A-F will start the season against highly regarded **HKT** on August, 22.

Region 5-A Predicted Order of Finish:
1. Cross
2. Baptist Hill
3. Branchville
3. Baptist Hill

4. Bethune Bowman
6 Military Magnet

CROSS:
This writer could throw a rock from his house to **Shaun Wright's** house in Moncks Corner, so the *HSSR* is in frequent direct communication with the head coach of the team that challenged **Abbeville** for the Class A state title a year ago. There is a feature story on the Trojans elsewhere in this issue so we will not get too carried away with space being limited in this issue.

We love TE prospect CADEN RAMSEY! We love the way he catches passes (44-749-13 TD's) and we really love the way he intercepts passes as a FS (14 in '24 to lead the state). Ramsey, (6-5,205) is committing to a major college on September, 8th and he is down to a final list of **SC, ECU, Va. Tech,** and **Syracuse**.
Cross has welcomed 14 starters back off a team that went 12-3 in '24 wen they outscored teams 584-147.
Junior QB **Tyler Harris** returns along with RB **Mah'Ky Green** who rushed for 749 yards in '24. Three OL return also: RG **Michael Bennett** (6-0,234), LG **Dakari President** (6-3, 250) and RT **Jailyn Broughton**. On defense, **Ramsey** is joined by key returners DE **Kerji Polite** (6-1,205) along with Bennett who flips to nose. Broughton flips to DE and senior OLB **William Grant** is back along with junior LB **Khalil Levine** (5-10, 205).

BAPTIST HILL:
Marion Brown (108-94) begins his 24th season as the coach of the Bobcats. Last year B-H finished 7-4 and third in Region 5-A.
Numerous key players return to the team. The top prospect on the team is junior RB/QB **KI'Lyn Gordon** (6-1, 185) listed as an athlete and he will play WR on offense and FS on defense. The top senior prospect on the team is WR **Martrell Wright** (6-4,180) who is getting serious interest from **The Citadel & Elon** among others. **Kevin Smalls** (6-2, 227) returns to lead the linebacking group and he also starts at RT on offense. Junior QB **Braylin Franklin** is also back. Senior RG Marquis Frasier (6-4,337) provides depth in the OL also.
Baptist Hill will begin the 2025 season on August 22 at home against **Cleardot Academy** out of Columbia.

BRANCHVILLE:
The Jackets were 8-3 a year ago under veteran head coach **Sandy Dukes**. Although the team suffered heavy graduation losses a lot of young talent still abounds in the program. Two key seniors give great support in the OL in **Miguel Chay** (5-9,230) and **Dar-gan Cooper**. Junior **Luke Shaw** is a candidate to take over at quarterback while senior **Johnathan Delk** returns in the defensive secondary and he also plays some TE. Depth could also come from junior DT/G **Khasean Saldano** (6-0,310) and junior FB/OLB **Caleb Smith** (5-11, 165).
Branchville will begin the 2025 season at Whit-mire.

BAPTIST HILL:
Marion Brown (108-94) begins his 24th season as the coach of the Bobcats. Last year B-H finished 7-4 and third in Region 5-A.
Numerous key players return to the team. The top prospect on the team is junior RB/QB **KI'Lyn Gordon** (6-1, 185) listed as an athlete and he will play WR on offense and FS on defense. The top senior prospect on the team is WR **Martrell Wright** (6-4,180) who is getting serious interest from **The Citadel & Elon** among others. **Kevin Smalls** (6-2, 227) returns to lead the linebacking group and he also starts at RT on offense. Junior QB **Braylin Franklin** is also back. Senior RG Marquis Frasier (6-4,337) provides depth in the OL also.
Baptist Hill will begin the 2025 season on August 22 at home against **Cleardot Academy** out of Columbia.

SCOTT'S BRANCH:
Former star **Manning** high player **Patrick Fleming** begins his second season at Scott's Branch after his team went 4-7 in '24 and finished 4th in the region a year ago. Eight players from Scott's Branch attended the *HSSR's* annual media day at USC in late July. A core group of senior leaders return led by QB **Javien Conyers** (6-1, 185), WR **Christian Green** who had 9 TD catches with four picks as a DB last season, along with RT **Tyquan Williams** (5-11,270) and LB **Naziah Richardson** (5-7,175) also returns.

Among the top juniors are WR **Nyren Bowman** (6-1,190) who earned all-state honors in '24 with 100 tackles as an OLB and he had 417 reception yards and 11 TD's as a WR. Other juniors include WR **Quinton Jackson**, an all-region performer who had 375 yards in receptions last year along with TE **Danny Ragin** (6-2,245). Top soph back include DB **Fra'Jon Bennett** (6-2, 165) and LG **Sa'nye Hilton** (5-10,250).
"Coming into the season our biggest goal is to improve our football I-Q," said Coach Fleming.
Scott's Branch will start the 2025 season at **East Clarendon**.

BETHUNE BOWMAN:
Head coach **Rolando Shuler** is working hard to improve Bethune Bowman's 2-9 record in '24. The defense will be led by senior DB **Kevin Zeigler**. WR **Maurice Johnson** (6-0,185) is the top junior on the team. Soph QB **Jordan Bell** (6-2,285) returns to help direct the offense. The OL will be a strength of the team with the return of senior LT **Justin Holmes** (6-4,260) and senior LG **Hayden Berry** (6-2,300)
Bethune-Bowman will begin the 2025 season at **Hardeeville..**

MILITARY MAGNET:
Derrell Pringle's Military Magnet team are focused om improving their 2-7 record of the '24 season. Team leaders are led by OL Maurice Ray and Preston Gallman. Jamar Alston returns at linebacker and Jayden Hunter will factor at defensive end and tight end. Jaden Evans may end up at quarterback and he also plays linebacker.

Region 6-A Predicted Order Of Finish:
Latta
Lake View
Carvers Bay
Johnsonville
Hannah Pamplico
Green Sea Floyds

LATTA:
Latta finished in third place in Region 6-A last season with a 4-2 record but their over-all 5-6 record was not very pleasing to head coach **Brandon Iseman** (54-50) and the Vikings appeared a step quicker, and a lot stronger in their recent play in the Dillon County Jam-boree of Champions.
The Vikings lost to **Baptist Hill** (16-0) in the first round of the play-off's in '24 and you sense this team has been hard at work seeking redemption this season.
The top two returning seniors for the Vikings are RB/LB **Xy Bethea (6-1,205)** and RB **Fischer Richardson** (5-11,160). Bethea had around 80 tackles and 11 TFL in '24. Richardson had 55 carries for around 300 rushing yards in '24. Last year's starting QB **Jayden Alford** (6-1, 160) will start the season as a WR/DB but he could still see action under center when needed. Freshman **Luke Huggins** is the newcomer QB.
Latta has three big OL up-front in junior LT **Logan Byrd** (6-2, 240), junior RT **Javonte Kollock** (6-0,250) and senior **Zack Page** (6-2,310). Page will flip to the DL. LB **Gavin Austin** is back after recording 60 tackles and 7 TFL in '24.
Latta will start the season against **East Columbus, NC**.



Gray Collegiate War Eagles

However, the cupboard isn't bare for the Cavaliers. Senior **Kamarion Willingham** and sophomore **Isaac Austin** were battling for the QB job, and whoever wins it will have plenty of receiving options along with most of the offensive line.

DREHER

The Blue Devils are coming off of a 3-7 season that came up just a few points short of a .500 record. Dreher will have **Walker Rowe** and **Chris Baker** both seeing time at quarterback. They were splitting time last year before Baker was lost for the year in the early going with an injury.
Dreher has a massive offensive lineman to run behind in 6-foot-5-inch, 325-pound senior **Chanston Evans**.

YORK

York went just 2-8 last season, missing out on the state playoffs. That's something that doesn't sit well with veteran head coach **Dean Boyd**.
The Cougars return **Tyson Freeman** at quarterback.

REGION 4

1. North Augusta
2. Gilbert
3. Gray Collegiate
4. Midland Valley
5. Brookland-Cayce
6. South Aiken
7. Airport
8. Aiken

NORTH AUGUSTA

The Yellow Jackets were ranked fifth and had 1,800-yard rusher **Michael Dow** among many key returning players from last year's 12-2 squad. **Colin Tillman** and **AJ Hillary** were vying for the quarterback job.

GILBERT

Gilbert was ranked 14th. The Indians return just three starters on offense but have eight back on defense. That includes senior defensive backs **Wynn Meetze, RJ Kearse** and **Demarion Brown** and senior linebacker **Gray Gunter**.

GRAY COLLEGIATE

Gray Collegiate will be trying to rebound from a season that ended with it forfeiting all of its victories for the use of an ineligible student-athlete and the suspension of first year head coach **DeAngelo Bryant** for recruiting violations.
The War Eagles will be led defensively by linebacker **Michael Boulware**.
MIDLAND VALLEY
The Mustangs had all of its wins from a year ago come in region play, which was good for third place.

Brent Dorn returns for his first full season as head coach, having served in an interim capacity last year. Also back is junior quarterback **Xavier Geter**.

BROOKLAND-CAYCE

Former Camden offensive coordinator **Louis Clyburn** is now in charge of the Bearcats, inheriting a 4-7 team. He has **Andrew Frick** at quarterback. Running the offense will be former USC assistant coach **GA Mangus**.

SOUTH AIKEN

The Thoroughbreds are coming off of a solid 6-5 season, but they are having to replace a slew of outstanding seniors. That list includes 2,400-yard rusher **Jevon Edwards** and quarterback **Tucker Bryan**.
Junior WR **Kyson Mcleod** is back after coming up with 42 catches for 580 yards and seven TDs.

AIRPORT

The Eagles will be in their first season under head coach **Chris Napier** after going 2-9 last season. Junior **Talon Harlin** is the quarterback.

AIKEN

The Fighting Green Hornets will be trying to win a game on the field this season for the first time since 2022. Last season's triumph came via Gray Collegiate's forfeit.
Steve Hibbitts is in his first season as head coach and inherits a lot of returnees on both sides of the football. **Tanner Padgett** returns at quarterback.

REGION 5

1. South Florence
2. Hartsville
3. Crestwood
4. Darlington
5. Lower Richland
6. Lakewood
7. Wilson

SOUTH FLORENCE

The Bruins have gone 41-4 the past three seasons and are in position for another strong season. **Messiah Jackson** returns at quarterback ater passing for 2,080 yards and 30 TDs last season.
Linebacker **Terry Gordon** returns after coming up with 87 tackles, including 12 tackles for loss. **Fredrick Cooper** is back to lead the secondary.

HARTSVILLE

Hartsville has six starters returning on offense and just our on defense from the region title team. **Kylif Miller** and **Tristan Spann** will be focal points on offense while **Chris Price, Rod Cranford** and **Ziyon Mason** will lead the way on defense.

2024 Final Region Standings

REGION 1-AAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
WESTSIDE	5-0	13-1	675	241
WREN	4-1	8-3	473	210
EMERALD	3-2	5-6	302	308
FOUNTAIN INN	2-4	6-5	342	304
LAURENS	1-4	1-9	113	320
SOUTHSIDE	0-5	0-10	132	445

REGION 2-AAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
DANIEL	6-0	11-2	624	252
GREER	5-1	7-5	338	298
SENECA	4-2	8-3	441	155
PICKENS	3-3	5-6	303	362
BLUE RIDGE	2-4	5-6	296	403
BEREA	1-5	3-7	117	393
TRAVELERS REST	0-6	1-8	88	338

REGION 3-AAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
SOUTH POINTE	6-0	11-3	660	187
A C FLORA	4-2	8-4	362	352
CAMDEN	4-2	9-4	330	328
RICHLAND NORTHEAST	2-4	6-6	330	345
LANCASTER	2-4	4-7	251	300
DREHER	2-4	3-7	236	356
YORK	1-5	2-8	169	255

REGION 4-AAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
NORTH AUGUSTA	7-0	12-2	521	208
GILBERT	5-2	8-5	340	371
MIDLAND VALLEY	5-2	5-6	293	292
SOUTH AIKEN	4-3	6-5	280	354
BROOKLAND-CAYCE	4-3	4-7	308	428
AIRPORT	2-5	2-9	137	426
AIKEN	1-6	1-9	94	455
GRAY COLLEGIATE	0-7	0-10	326	157

REGION 5-AAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
HARTSVILLE	6-0	10-2-1	566	269
SOUTH FLORENCE	5-1	12-3	613	365
CRESTWOOD	3-3	6-5	257	231
DARLINGTON	3-3	6-6	254	374
LOWER RICHLAND	3-3	5-6	301	287
LAKEWOOD	1-5	3-8	118	442
WILSON	0-6	1-9	119	325

REGION 6-AAAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
BISHOP ENGLAND	4-1	9-3	337	213
HILTON HEAD	4-1	9-3	399	174
MAY RIVER	3-2	8-3	354	209
BLUFFTON	3-2	6-4	335	299
BEAUFORT	1-4	2-9	223	333
COLLETON COUNTY	0-5	1-9	139	359

CRESTWOOD

Crestwood went 5-6 last season after having to replace a load of experience. The Knights will be young again but talented with only 13 seniors on the roster.
Sophomore **Jayden Martin** returns after moving around the offense last season between quarterback and wide receiver. Freshman **Brayden Boults** will make his debut and already has some Football Bowl Subdivision offers after summer amps.
The defense is experienced and is led by defensive back **Da'shan Scriven**, who had five picks last season.

DARLINGTON

The Falcons return a combined 14 starters from last year's 6-win team that reached the second round of the state playoffs. Nine of those starters are back on defense and are led by **Oreion Small** and **Adarius Martin**.
Quarterback **Jaylen Augustus** is back on offense.

LOWER RICHLAND

The Diamond Hornets won five games last year and have a senior-laden team this year. They return all five starters on the offensive line in **Chama Sabb, Jeremiah Goodwin, Adrain Davis, Tyler Robinson** and **Zayair James**.

See AAAA, pg. 29

See Class A, pg. 30

Class AAA Feature

AAA football should prove to be very competitive this fall

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Moncks Corner—There were only five teams in Class AAA last year that finished the '24 season with double digit wins and each of them have a chance to compete for a state championship this season.

The *HSSR* gives the pre-season number one nod to tradition rich Dillon (10-3 last season) and the Wildcats are fielding their best over-all football team since the last time they won a state title back in 2017. The Wildcats have great skilled players and a set of line-backers who could play on any team in the state. Our next four teams are number two **Mountain View Prep**, third ranked **Oceanside Collegiate**, followed by **Loris** and **BHP** to round out the top five. Mountain View Prep lost star RB **Jaylen McGill** who reclassified back to the 2025 class and he took advantage of a rich NIL deal, and he is now at **North Carolina**.

Woodruff will begin the season at number six with **Newberry**, **Powdersville**, **Christ Church** and **Orangeburg-Wilkinson** rounding out the AAA top 10 in that order.

Region 1 AAA Predicted Order Of Finish:
BHP
Crescent
Walhalla
Pendleton
West Oak
BHP:

It will be very difficult for the Bears (13-2 last season) to replace all-world RB **Maurice Henderson**, who is now at **Clemson**. It might be a while before someone of his running ability graces the campus of BHP again. However, the cupboard is not bare. Five all-region performers return on offense alone. Three-year all-region QB starter **Noah Thomas** (5-11,165) is back along with senior all-region RB **MJ Earle** (5-9,165) All-region WR **Tajeh Watson-Martin** (5-10,170) is also back. The top OL is all region stand-out **Kaylin Dixon** (5-11, 250) who will become a four-year starter this season. The LG is an all-region performer **Keagann Mosher** (6-0,260) who will also be starting for his 4th consecutive year. TE **Brody Riddle** (5-11,180) is back as a second-year starter.

On defense the Bears are not bare either. The defensive front is as imposing as ever led by four-year starter, all-region **Kylan Dixon** (6-0, 290) along with DL and three-year starters **Ty Rainey**, and all region DE. **Kamarion Glenn** is a three- starter who earned all-region also. All-region LB **Jakyri Anderson** (6-1,185) is back as a three-year starter. Watson will flip to DB and DB **KJ Miles** will start for the second year.

The two top sophomores on the team are TE/QB **Nick Sargent** and DE **Charlie Haynie**.

BHP head coach **Russell Blackston** comes into the season with a 134-44 record.

BHP will begin the 2025 season at **Broome**.

CRESCENT:
Coach **Sheldon Evans** (34-39) is in his eighth season and coming off a successful '24 season with a record of 7-5, with a 3-1 second place in the region behind BHP. This season the team will be led by **Mason Evans** (QB), Top 100 prospect **Amiri Acker** (WR/DB), **Nyterrious Geer Harrison** (WR/DB), **Kevin Hatten** (RB/LB), **PJ Devoe** (RB/WR), **Hunter Dale** (WR/CB), and **Jesse Howard** (DL) are all back. With a large graduating class last year, there are many new

faces behind the face masks, and that means players looking for their shot at a break-out season and reaching the playoffs again.

Crescent will begin the '25 season with a game at **Saluda**.

WALHALLA:
Head Walhalla coach **Blake Dyar** begins his first season with a team that posted a 6-6 record in '24 with a playoff appearance. Key returners include **Dylan Cobb** (QB/PK), **Essien Nathan** (RB/DB), **Darian Simpkins** (WR/DB), and **Romeo Mendez** (LB). The Razorbacks begin the season at **Landrum** on August 22.

PENDLETON:
Pendleton head coach **Grayson Howell** (28-37) starts his 7th season as a head coach looking to improve on the 2024 record of 4-6, after the team went 9-3 the year before. The two veterans of the team who hope to go out winners are senior DB **Dax Allen** (5-11, 185) and DE/OLB **Trent Garner** (6-3,205) who will be three-year starters. Garner had 13.8 tackles per game with 8, and 8 sacks last season.

Bray Spear ('26, 5-11, 175) returns at RB after averaging 64 yards a game last year with 10 TD's. RB **DaShaun Jenkins** ('26, 5-9, 190) and OL **Gaines Buchanan** ('26, 6-1, 270) are key returners also. Junior **Matthew Chapman** returns as a K/P and he scored 14 points last season.

Pendleton kicks off the regular season against **Chesnee** on August,23.

WEST OAK:
Expect West Oak to be a vastly improved team this season. Head coach **Glen D. Padgett** (174-123) has a strong senior group returning. A pair of all-region senior linebackers return in **John Price** (6-0,215) and **Gage Ballard** (6-1,220). Soph **Jake Williams** (5-10,180) is an all-region WR back also. Senior RB **James Coltrane** is back along with top OL **Mason Haley** (6-5, 290). Junior QB **Harry Burgess** (6-6,200) is also back. Top soph **Carter Fountais** will provide depth also.

West Oak will begin the season against the **Greenville Hurricanes** on August, 22.

Region 2 AAA Predicted Order Of Finish:
Powdersville
Christ Church
St. Josephs
Palmetto
Southside Christian
Carolina

POWDERSVILLE:
Robert Mustar (83-65) is the only head football coach **Powdersville** has ever had so the vast majority of his players have known his system some they were back on feeder teams. The Patriots have a core group of senior leaders that could give the team double wins this season and a deep play-off run. It all starts with senior QB **Keagan Reid** and he is honored to have senior receivers **Desmond Hunter** and **Bennett Brooks** back as top targets.

Hunter flips to DB where he joins DB **Tavious Williams** on the back end. Among junior leaders, WR/DB **Xavier Huggins**, WR/DB **Nasir Waldrop**, DL **Jayden McGrier**, and LB **Jayden Wertz** all return with experience.

CHRIST CHURCH:

Moving up to AAA from Class A last season was a bit of a learning curve for the Cavaliers as they finished 6-5 over-all, after being a dominant force in the Class A ranks. Veteran head coach **Quin Hatfield** (48-14) has a team loaded with playmakers. Senior WR **Jude Hall** (6-4,205) is committed to **Memphis** and DB **Ant Atkins** (6-2,190) is pledged to **Navy**. Senior LG **Brody Barnett** (6-3,270) has offers from **Davidson**, **The Citadel**, and **North Greenville**, and soph RB **Michael Martin** (5-10,185) already has offers from Syracuse, Wake Forest and Rhode Island among others.

The junior group is led by WR **Hayes Lyman** (5-10,170) along with QB **Jud Windham** (6-4,210). Martin and **Hampton Shields** are the top sophomores on the team.

Christ Church will begin the season competing against SCISA power **Hammond**.

ST. JOSEPH'S Catholic:
Eric Nash went 5-6 in his first year as the head coach at St. Joseph's Catholic. Some of their players hoping to increase their win total in 2025 include: Junior RB/OLB **Mack Rambo** (5-11,195), junior QB **Jack Stewart** (6-1,178), senior WR/SB (6-0,170) **Paul Newman**. **Jensen Granger** (6-0,200) is a DE/TE candidate with potential.

St Joseph's Catholic will host **Cardinal Newman** on August, 22 to begin the season.

PALMETTO:
Ryan Norton (8-15) begins his third season as the head coach at Palmetto. Last year the team finished 5-7 and finished 4th in the region. The offense will be led by QB **Kaleb Ricketts** and transfer RB **Preston Wilder** who will get a lot of carries for the Mustangs. **Boone Phillips** will be a defensive leader at LB and DB **TJ Jenkins** is the leader in the secondary. Palmetto will begin the season on August, 22 against **Wren**.

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN:
Jonathan Gess (187-49) is the new head coach at Southside Christian and the Sabre's had a learning adjustment moving up to Class AAA from Class A a year ago. They were 2-8 last season.

Coach Gess does have a team comprised of numerous experienced seniors, plus 12 juniors, 8 sophomores, and 4 freshmen, and all of them are looking for a break out season to improve upon last season. Returning seniors include QB **Jack Criswell** (6-5, 195), RB **Ethan Rhodes** (5-8,160), and WR **Keldin Wrona** (6-1,170).

Southside Christian begins the season at home against **Abbeville** on August 22.

CAROLINA:
Carolina was 1-9 last year but head coach **Chris Glover** is hoping a core group of talented seniors can help push his team up the football food chain. Those seniors include: QB **Jordyn Rice** (6-3,195), RG **Jeremiah Wells** (6-0,330) and DB **D.J. Brown** (5-10,160). The top juniors include: WR **Kyleat Belcher**, RT **Caleb Martin** (6-3, 250), and LT **Jeremiah Mangle** (6-3,280). The team will build depth around sophomores **Bryson McMoore**, **Caleb Gamble**, and **JT Chapman Willis**.

Carolina will begin the season on August, 29 against **Eastside**.

Region 3-AAA Predicted Order Of Finish.
Mountain View Prep
Woodruff
Chapman
Union County
Broome

See **Class A**, pg. 7

AAA, Continued from pg. 7

KEENAN:
Raider head coach **Jarrett Neely** saw his team make great strides in '24 with an 8-5 record. The team's top senior prospects are TE/DL **Anthony King** (6-6,215) and LT **Quashawn Hampton**. Other top seniors back include: DL **Tyrik Davenport-Smith** (6-2,185) , and DB **Xzavier Collins** (6-0,165).

RB **Hunter O'Neal** and DB **Jaemon Benson** head up the junior group. A key player up from the jayvee will be center **Jmauri Smith**.

Keenan will begin the season at **Dreher**.

SILVER BLUFF:
In **Matt Haye's** his first season as the head coach of the Bulldogs the team went 2-9 so the main goal coming into the '25 season is to beef up the defensive front. With only **Keyaideen Williams** back in the DL that might be a challenge. The team's top senior leaders are TE/H-back **Zean Dicks** and center **Gage Kirkbride**.

Top juniors are RB **Dre Brown**, DL **Dezmere Jackson**, and RB **Dorian Jones**. A top sophomore is DB **Lance Hieke**. The top player up from the jayvee is DL **Trevone Parker**.

Coach Hayes feels like the strength of the team is the OL coming into the season. Joining Kirkbride up-front are all seniors: LT **Tariq Williams**, RT **Adrain Gray**, LG **Ashton Edgerley**, and RG **Cam Green**.

Silver Bluff will begin the season hosting **South Aiken**.

Region 5-AAA Predicted Order Of Finish:
Dillon
Loris
Marlboro County
Aynor
Waccamaw
Georgetown

DILLON:
It is the goal of any team, at any level of football, to have a quality QB who has both talent and leadership skills, and such a prospect has put both his feet firmly on the ground at Dillon High.

Freshman quarterback **Khayel Samfong-Talia** (6-2, 208) completed three TD passes in the recent Dillon County Jamboree, giving testament that his status as a Next Level Under Armour All-American is justified and verified. "Khayel" arrives just in time to help make big play senior WR, and UNC commitment **Zay Robertson** a stats leader this season in pass receptions in SC. The duo hooked up for two TD receptions against **Darlington** in the jamboree the Wildcats won 21-14.

Dillon Head coach **Kelvin Roller**: "Zay is so explosive at the wide receiver position and North Carolina is getting an outstanding player in him," said Coach Roller. "He was the difference in this game for us tonight. He was the best player out there on the field for sure."

"I thought our excellent linebacker **Daniel Capehart** also did a good job running the ball tonight, and he gives us more size in the back field, and he is a very hard physical runner," said Coach Roller. "He can do both and he's in great shape also."

Coach Roller is also keen on his

freshman quarterback. "He was a little nervous at first under the Big lights, on the varsity for his first time, but he recovered and played very well and we have seen what he can do and he is going to be a great player for us," said Coach Roller. Samfong-Talia is already getting recruiting interest from **Georgia**, **Florida**, **South Carolina**, **Clemson** and **BYU** among others.

Other than Robertson, Dillon's top seniors include LB/RB **Daniel Capehart** (6-1,195), LB Keryien Brown (5-11, 190), OL/DL Kiele Pompey (6-0,270), RB/DB Domanick Felton (5-9,170) and WR/DB Geo Warren (6-0,175).

The team's top three juniors include DB/WR Kelvion Manning (6-3, 190), TE/LB Keshawn Ray (6-0,200) and DB Rontae McClam. Another top freshman is WR **Nibras Harrison**.

"We have a lot of good players but I do not want to get carried away talking about them until we get the season underway and see what they do once the season starts," said Coach Roller.

(Please see feature story on Dillon elsewhere in this issue).

Dillon will begin the season with a road trip to **Scotland County** on August, 22.

LORIS:
Last season the shot heard around the world was Loris beating **Dillon**, 30-27 at home, and that win led **Loris** to win the region title. Loris had their great season end with a 42-7 loss to eventual state champion **Oceanside Collegiate** in the third round of the play-offs. Coach **Greg Mance** is coming off a successful '24 season that saw the Lions finish 11-2. Loris returns 14 starters this season. The player that makes things happen is QB "**Moon**" **Gerald** who passed for 1,557 yards and 19 TD's. Gerald is a dual threat who also rushed for 400 yards.

Other key returners include, talented juniors WR/CB **Jacobiean Lewis** (6-2, 175), DE **Damarea Thurmond** (6-3, 300), HB/OLB/DE **Landon Connor** (6-0, 225). Loris likely has the most depth at RB as any team in the state. **Duece Stephens** had 900 yards & 16 TD's a year ago **Khalid Sherman** and **Roderick Purcha** each had over 550 yards also and the trio is back this season.

Logan Coleman (6-3,280) is a leader in the OL along with all-stater **Damarea Thurmond** (6-3, 300). **Jamarius Wilson** (6-3, 260) is a force in either line also.

Loris begins the season at **Green Sea Floyds** on August 22.

MARLBORO COUNTY:

Coach Cory Johnson is aiming for the playoffs to make up ground for the 2024 season that ended due to a forfeiture season, over a player eligibility issue. The Bulldogs have talent aplenty with 9 returning seniors, and 18 juniors providing the experience to have a shot at winning a region title. Johnson was highly successful coach previously at Clinton, NC where he would a state title.

Some of the players who will be key in the team's success this season include: Soph QB **Tre Blakeney**, junior DE prospect **Kaiden Walton** (6-2,215), and junior nose guard **Patrick Williams** (6-3, 280). (Please see story on Marl-



Dillon Wildcats

boro County football elsewhere in this issue.)

Marlboro County will start the season against **Lake Marion** on August 22.

AYNOR:
When three basketball players join the Aynor football team as wide receivers you have to figure head coach **Jason Allen** is tweaking the single wing "smash face" mantra and converting more to a flex bone. **Ian Kwoolin**, **Lucas Kemp**, and **Jamarion Mitchell** might not have made the basketball coach at Aynor happy but football fans will be cheering them on for sure.

Alex Lewis, who has a strong passing arm, will take over the QB duties while former QB **Luke McCracken** will move to RB.

Aynor was 6-5 last season and in a region that has opponents like Dillon, Loris and Marlboro County sometimes making your offense harder to defend is a good idea. Connor Rabon is back as a quality OL/DL and Blaise Hucks will be both an "A" back on offense and a FS on defense.

Aynor begins the season on August, 22 against **Aiken**.

WACCAMAW:
Coach **Amondre Johnson** took his team to a 6-5 season with a 3-2 run in the play offs for 2024. This year, the team is looking for more with a solid return class of Seniors that include: The Grate twins **Adrian Grate** (6-0, 195) RB/SS, **Andre Grate** (6-0, 190) QB/RB, plus **Bryce Holloway** (5-9,205) FB, and **RJ Rogers** (5-9,160) RB/MLB. Waccamaw began the on August 22 against **Carvers Bay**.

GEORGETOWN:
Tommy Adams went 3-7 in his first year with the Bulldogs in '24. Senior leadership will come from RB **Trenten Parker**, WR **Savion McNeil**, LT **Tevies Burraghs**, DL **D'Ante Washington**, LG **Nico O'Hara**, and DL **Antonio Deas**. The two junior leaders are DB **Jayden Hooks** and DB **Nashaun Kinder**. **Mike Johnson III** will be a starting soph QB and other sophomores include DL **Damajah Smith**, DB **Kendal Boyd**, and WR **Trent Singleton**.

Georgetown will begin the season hosting **Kingstree** on August, 22.

Region 6-AAA Predicted Order Of Finish
Oceanside Collegiate
Orangeburg-Wilkinson
Hanahan
Battery Creek
North Charleston

OCEANSIDE COLLEGIATE:
Oceanside rallied behind interim head coach **John Patterson** in '24, compiling and 11-3 record and winning the AAA state title, after head coach **Chad Wilkes** resigned three days after an opening season loss to **Irmo**. Patterson did not seek the head job and after the season defensive coordinator **Brent LaPrad** was elevated to the head coach.

The Landsharks could be just as strong in '25. Returning for his third varsity season is junior QB **Aiden Manavian**, who threw for over 3,400 yards last season. Manavian has been the quarterback on consecutive state title teams.

OCA returns explosive WR **Terance Johnson**, who had 700 receiving yards. Johnson will also see time at RB. James O'Connor, also returns at RB and he gained 600 yards a year ago.

Transfers have help fill the void at WR with **Anthony Williams** (Fort Dorchester), **Ethan Ranew** (West Ashley) and **Cooper Webb** (Philip Simmons) joining the program.

Senior Wofford pledge **Mike Jones**, anchors the OL as a fourth-year starter. **Lamarion Thompson** brings experience as a transfer from Fort Dorchester.

Jones, senior **Sawyer Arnold**, an App State pledge, and junior **Jaxson Bean** will lead the DL **Michael Strickler** is the lone returning DB starter. **Jackson Summey** gives the Landsharks a major threat in the kicking game.

The Landsharks will begin the season on August, 22 against **Irmo**.

ORANGEBURG WILKINSON:
Chris Carter's O-W Bruins went 8-4 and finished second in the region. And this season could be even better.

One of the top returners is athlete

See **AAA**, pg. 29

2025 SCISA Football Schedules

	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN (0-0)	10/24	AT BETHESDA ACADEMY	8/15	AT SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	10/17	JOHN PAUL II
DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	10/31	DILLON CHRISTIAN	8/22	TBA	10/24	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY
8/22	AT DILLON CHRISTIAN			8/29	DILLON CHRISTIAN	10/31	BEAUFORT ACADEMY
8/29	AT THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY	DATE	ST JOHNS CHRISTIAN (0-0)	9/5	TBA		
9/5	HEATHWOOD HALL	8/15	AT PINWOOD PREP	9/12	BEAUFORT ACADEMY	SCISA 8-MAN REGION ONE	
9/12	PEE DEE ACADEMY	8/22	COLLETON PREP	9/19	AT THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY	CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (0-0)	
9/19	WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY	8/29	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY	9/26	AT PEE DEE ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
9/26	AT WILSON HALL	9/5	FAITH CHRISTIAN	10/10	DORCHESTER ACADEMY	8/15	TBA
10/3	TBA	9/12	CAROLINA ACADEMY	10/17	AT COLLETON PREP ACADEMY	8/22	TBA
10/10	AT CAMDEN MILITARY	9/19	AT PEE DEE ACADEMY	10/24	TBA	8/29	AT CATHEDRAL
10/17	TBA	9/26	JOHN PAUL II	10/31	CAROLINA ACADEMY	9/5	LAURENS ACADEMY
10/24	AT NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	10/3	DILLON CHRISTIAN			9/12	AT PROVIDENCE
10/31	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	10/10	TBA			9/19	NEWBERRY ACADEMY
		10/17	AT HILTON HEAD PREP	DATE	DORCHESTER ACADEMY (0-0)	9/26	RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
		10/24	TBA	8/22	ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	10/3	W.W. KING ACADEMY
		10/31	BETHESDA ACADEMY	8/29	AT FAITH CHRISTIAN	10/10	AT LAURENS ACADEMY
				9/5	TBA	10/17	TBA
DATE	NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN (0-0)			9/12	PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	10/24	CAROLINA WILDCATS
8/15	AT GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN	SCISA REGION 2-AA		9/19	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY	10/31	AT NEWBERRY ACADEMY
8/22	CALHOUN ACADEMY			9/26	CAROLINA ACADEMY		
8/29	WILSON HALL	DATE	CALHOUN ACADEMY (0-0)	10/3	AT LEE ACADEMY	DATE	LAURENS ACADEMY (0-0)
9/12	AT ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	8/22	OPPONENTSCORE	10/10	CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	8/15	TBA
9/19	SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	8/29	AT NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	10/17	TBA	8/22	NEWBERRY ACADEMY
9/26	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE	9/5	AT GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN	10/24	AT COLLETON PREP	8/29	AT WARDLAW ACADEMY
10/3	AT PROVIDENCE HOME	9/12	THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY	10/31	WILLIMSBURG ACADEMY	9/5	AT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
10/10	ORANGEBURG PREP	9/19	COLLETON PREP ACADEMY			9/12	RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
10/17	TBA	9/26	ANDREW JACKSON ACAD			9/19	AT W.W. KING ACADEMY
10/24	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	10/3	AT ORANGEBURG PREP	DATE	WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY (0-0)	9/26	AT NEWBERRY ACADEMY
10/31	AT CAMDEN MILITARY	10/10	AT FAITH CHRISTIAN	8/22	THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY	10/3	WARDLAW ACADEMY
		10/17	CAROLINA ACADEMY	8/29	PEE DEE ACADEMY	10/10	WARDLAW ACADEMY
DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	10/24	AT PATRICK HENRY ACAD	9/12	AT CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	10/17	CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
8/22	PEE DEE ACADEMY	10/31	AT SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	9/19	THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	10/24	TBA
8/29	AT BEN LIPPEN		CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	9/26	AT FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	10/31	AT RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
9/5	AT PINWOOD PREP			9/12	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY		W.W. KING ACADEMY
9/12	AT FIRST BAPTIST		CLARENDON HALL (0-0)	9/26	TBA		
9/19	DILLON CHRISTIAN	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	10/3	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY		NEWBERRY ACADEMY (0-0)
9/26	NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	8/22	SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	10/10	LEE ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
10/3	CAMDEN MILITARY	8/29	AT PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	10/17	TBA	8/22	AT LAURENS ACADEMY
10/10	AT WILSON HALL	9/5	WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY	10/24	FAITH CHRISTIAN	8/29	RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
10/17	TBA	9/12	ORANGEBURG PREP	10/31	AT DORCHESTER ACADEMY	9/5	WARDLAW ACADEMY
10/24	LAURENCE MANNING	9/19	AT COLLETON PREP			9/12	W.W. KING ACADEMY
10/31	AT FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	9/26	AT ANDREW JACKSON ACAD	SCISA REGION 2-A		9/19	AT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
		10/10	THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY			9/26	LAURENS ACADEMY
		10/17	AT DORCHESTER ACADEMY	DATE	ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY (0-0)	10/3	AT RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
DATE	OPPONENTSCORE (0-0)	10/24	TBA	8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	10/10	AT WARDLAW ACADEMY
8/22	AT ORANGEBURG PREP	10/31	GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN	8/22	FAITH CHRISTIAN	10/17	TBA
8/29	AT NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN		AT CALHOUN ACADEMY	8/29	AT DORCHESTER ACADEMY	10/24	AT W.W. KING ACADEMY
9/5	BEN LIPPEN			8/29	ORANGEBURG PREP	10/31	CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
9/12	LAURENCE MANNING		GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN (0-0)	9/5	AT COLLETON PREP ACADEMY		
9/19	AT CAMDEN MILITARY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	9/12	NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN		RICHARD WINN ACADEMY (0-0)
9/26	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	8/15	NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	9/19	AT CALHOUN ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
10/3	PINWOOD PREP	8/22	AT CALHOUN FALLS	9/26	CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	8/22	CARY CHRISTIAN
10/10	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	8/29	CALHOUN ACADEMY	10/3	TBA	8/29	AT NEWBERRY ACADEMY
10/17	TBA	9/5	AT EAU CLAIRE	10/10	AT THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	9/5	W.W. KING ACADEMY
10/24	AT THOMAS SUMTER ACAD	9/12	WHITMIRE	10/17	TBA	9/12	AT LAURENS ACADEMY
10/31	AT FIRST BAPTIST	9/19	AT ORANGEBURG PREP	10/24	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY	9/19	WARDLAW ACADEMY
		9/26	WEST-OAK	10/31	PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	9/26	AT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
		10/3	TBA			10/3	NEWBERRY ACADEMY
DATE	CAMDEN MILITARY (0-0)	10/10	AT THOMAS SUMTER ACAD	BEAUFORT ACADEMY (0-0)		10/10	AT W.W. KING ACADEMY
8/29	OPPONENTSCORE	10/17	TBA	OPPONENTSCORE		10/24	LAURENS ACADEMY
9/5	TBA	10/24	AT CLARENDON HALL	8/15	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/31	AT WARDLAW ACADEMY
9/12	AT SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	10/31	SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	8/22	AT HILTON HEAD PREP		
9/19	PINWOOD PREP			8/29	ST JOHNS CHRISTIAN		WARDLAW ACADEMY (0-0)
9/26	WILSON HALL		ORANGEBURG PREP (0-0)	9/5	AT PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
10/3	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	9/12	AT LEE ACADEMY	8/22	AT W.W. KING ACADEMY
10/10	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	8/22	WILSON HALL ACADEMY	9/19	DORCHESTER ACADEMY	8/29	LAURENS ACADEMY
10/17	TBA	8/29	AT ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	9/26	AT COLLETON PREP	9/5	NEWBERRY ACADEMY
10/24	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	9/5	AT THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	10/3	BETHESDA ACADEMY	9/12	TBA
10/31	NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	9/12	AT CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	10/10	FAITH CHRISTIAN	9/19	AT RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
		9/19	GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN	10/17	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	9/26	W.W. KING ACADEMY
		9/26	CALHOUN ACADEMY	10/24	ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	10/3	AT LAURENS ACADEMY
		10/3	SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	10/31	AT THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	10/10	AT NEWBERRY ACADEMY
		10/10	AT NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN			10/17	TBA
DATE	BETHESDA ACADEMY (0-0)	10/17	TBA	COLLETON PREP (0-0)		10/24	TBA
8/22	THOMAS HEYWARD ACAD	10/24	AT PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	10/31	RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
8/29	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	10/31	THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY	8/15	AT JOHN PAUL II		
9/5	AT JOHN PAUL II			8/22	at ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN		W.W. KING ACADEMY (0-0)
9/12	AT HILTON HEAD PREP		SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN (0-0)	8/29	AT THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
9/19	PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	9/5	ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	8/22	WARDLAW ACADEMY
9/26	TBA	8/15	LEE ACADEMY	9/12	AT CALHOUN ACADEMY	8/29	ORANGEBURG CHRISTIAN
10/3	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY	8/22	AT CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	9/19	AT CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	9/5	AT RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
10/10	AT DILLON CHRISTIAN	8/29	AT WHITMIRE	9/26	BEAUFORT ACADEMY	9/12	AT NEWBERRY ACADEMY
10/17	TBA	9/5	CAMDEN MILITARY	10/3	TBA	9/19	LAURENS ACADEMY
10/24	PEE DEE ACADEMY	9/12	THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY	10/10	PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	9/26	AT WARDLAW ACADEMY
10/31	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN	9/19	AT NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	10/17	LEE ACADEMY	10/3	AT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
		9/26	TBA	10/24	DORCHESTER ACADEMY	10/10	RICHARD WINN ACADEMY
		10/3	AT ORANGEBURG PREP	10/31	AT FAITH CHRISTIAN	10/17	TBA
DATE	DILLON CHRISTIAN (0-0)	10/10	TOWN COUNTY, GA			10/24	NEWBERRY ACADEMY
8/22	OPPONENTSCORE	10/17	TBA	FAITH CHRISTIAN (0-0)		10/31	AT LAURENS ACADEMY
8/29	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	10/24	CALHOUN ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE		
9/5	AT LEE ACADEMY	10/31	AT GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN	8/15	ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	SCISA 8-MAN REGION TWO	
9/12	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY			8/22	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY		
9/19	TBA		THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY (0-0)	8/29	DORCHESTER ACADEMY		CATHEDRAL ACADEMY (0-0)
9/26	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	9/5	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
10/3	HILTON HEAD PREP	8/15	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY	9/12	TBA	8/15	TBA
10/10	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN	8/22	AT WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY	9/19	AT THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	8/22	AT HOLLY HILL ACADEMY
10/17	BETHESDA ACADEMY	8/29	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	9/26	AT PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	8/29	CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
10/24	TBA	9/5	AT CALHOUN ACADEMY	10/3	CALHOUN ACADEMY	9/5	AT CROSS SCHOOLS
10/31	AT PEE DEE ACADEMY	9/12	AT SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN	10/10	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY	9/12	CONWAY CHRISTIAN
		9/19	LEE ACADEMY	10/24	AT WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY	9/19	AT KINGS ACADEMY
		9/26	THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	10/31	COLLETON PREP ACADEMY	9/26	HOLLY HILL ACADEMY
DATE	HILTON HEAD PREP (0-0)	10/3	AT CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY			10/3	JEFFERSON DAVIS ACADEMY
8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	10/10	GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN			10/10	CROSS SCHOOLS
8/22	BEAUFORT ACADEMY	10/17	TBA	DATE	PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY (0-0)	10/17	TBA
8/29	AT ST. ANDREWS ACADEMY	10/24	WILSON HALL	8/22	ACADEMIC MAGNET	10/24	AT CONWAY CHRISTIAN
9/5	TBA	10/31	AT ORANGEBURG PREP	9/5	CLARENDON HALL ACADEMY	10/31	KING'S ACADEMY
9/12	BETHESDA ACADEMY			9/12	BEAUFORT ACADEMY		
9/19	TBA	SCISA REGION 1-A		9/19	AT DORCHESTER ACADEMY		
9/26	AT DILLON CHRISTIAN			9/19	AT BETHESDA ACADEMY		CROSS SCHOOLS (0-0)
10/3	PEE DEE ACADEMY		CAROLINA ACADEMY (0-0)	9/26	FAITH CHRISTIAN	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
10/10	AT JOHN PAUL II	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	10/3	THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	8/15	AT KING'S ACADEMY
10/17	ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN	8/15	THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY	10/10	AT COLLETON PREP ACADEMY	8/22	AT JEFFERSON DAVIS ACADEMY
10/24	TBA	8/22	FAITH CHRISTIAN	10/17	CALHOUN ACADEMY	8/29	TBA
10/31	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	8/29	TBA	10/24	ORANGEBURG PREP	9/5	CATHEDRAL ACADEMY
		9/5	DILLON CHRISTIAN	10/31	AT ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	9/12	HOLLY HILL ACADEMY
		9/12	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN			9/19	AT PALMETTO CHRISTIAN
DATE	PEE DEE ACADEMY (0-0)	9/19	TBA	DATE	THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY (0-0)	9/26	JEFFERSON DAVIS ACADEMY
8/22	OPPONENTSCORE	9/26	AT DORCHESTER ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	10/3	KING'S ACADEMY
8/29	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE	10/3	WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY	8/22	AT BETHESDA ACADEMY	10/10	AT CATHEDRAL ACADEMY
9/5	TBA	10/10	AT CALHOUN ACADEMY	8/29	COLLETON PREP ACADEMY	10/17	TBA
9/12	AT FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	10/17	TBA	9/5	ORANGEBURG PREP	10/24	AT HOLLY HILL ACADEMY
9/19	ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN	10/24	THOMAS HEYWARD ACADEMY	9/12	AT WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY	10/31	PALMETTO CHRISTIAN
9/26	LEE ACADEMY	10/31	AT LEE ACADEMY	9/19	FAITH CHRISTIAN		
10/3	AT HILTON HEAD PREP			9/26	AT THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY		HOLLY HILL ACADEMY (0-0)
10/10	TBA		LEE ACADEMY (0-0)	10/3	AT PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE
10/17	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENTSCORE	10/10	ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY	8/22	CATHEDRAL ACADEMY

Class AA Feature

Long time powers back on top in AA football for 2025

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Eitor
Sumter – The 2024 football season in the AA classification was one that saw some traditional powers make deep pushes in the playoffs. No one did it be5ter than **Clinton High School**, which won the state championship by beating **Barnwell** 35-6.

Batesburg-Leesville was undefeated before losing to Clinton in the third round of the state playoffs. **Manning** had its best season in over a decade while reaching the lower state championship game, and **Central** made a good run in the playoffs.

Let’s take a look at each of the seven regions and who we think has the best chance to play for a state title in December.

REGION 1

1. Clinton
2. Chesnee
3. Liberty
4. Landrum
5. Blacksburg

CLINTON

The Red Devils use their dominating flexbone offense to control games and win the program’s ninth state title but first since 2009. However, they will be breaking in a lot of new players this season.

Sophomore **Easton Powell** will take over at quarterback. **Darren Hester**, **Jaden Potter** and **Trenair Collins** will be the running backs. **Brayden Fuller** returns at right tackle.

Each of those will be starting on defense as well. Clinton was ranked second in the *High School Sports Report* AA preseason poll.

CHESNEE

The Eagles are coming off a 6-6 season and were ranked 14th./ They will be rotating at quarterback with **Keedyn Platt** and **Evan Lawter**. One of their goals will be getting the ball in the hands of **Braylon Blanton**.

Platt and Blanton will start in the secondary with linebacker **Carson Gossett** being a key cog as well.

LIBERTY

The Red Devils will be replacing standout quarterback **Logan Smith** with senior **Caleb Pilgrim**. **Jamijae Karim** is returning after running for over 1,000 yards, and Pilgrim will have **Kendall Jackson** and **Chris Stable** as his top targets.

Zach Welborn is a standout at defensive end.

LANDRUM

Mike Reid takes over a team that went 5-5. He has **Ty Foster** back at quarterback along with **AJ Lindsey** at running back. **Cooper Tidwell** and **Braylon Revis** will be the receivers.

BLACKSBURG

The Wildcats lost a lot on offense after going 2-8 last season. **Treyvon Clark** will be the new quarterback with **Gage Lee** the top

running back.

Ryley Burton will be a key performer at line-backer, and **Lane Rising** will be a starter on both sides of the line.

REGION II

1. Batesburg-Leesville
2. Saluda
3. Strom Thurmond
4. Ninety Six
5. Pelion
6. American Leadership

BATESURG-LEESVILLE

Not only are the Panthers the pick to win the region, but they were the No. 1 team in the preseason poll.

B-L returns six starters on offense, including star running back Amadre Wooden and speedy wide receiver **KD Whitt**. There are seven back on defense, the top ones being defensive lineman Travis Gates and LB **Tyler Wootton**.

SALUDA

Greg Woerner takes over a 9-2 team from **Stewart Young**, who took the job at **Lexington**. The Tigers look to be strong again, ranked No. 7 in the preseason.

Saluda returns four of four starters on the offensive line led by center **Sid Shaw**. **Brayden Williams** will be the quarterback with **Tristan Daniels** at running back and **CJ Springs** a key receiving target.

Springs will also be a key contributor in the second at cornerback.

STROM THURMOND

The 12h-ranked Rebels have six starters back on offense from a 6-4 team, including quarterback **Bri’Shaun Lee**.

Seven starters are back on defense led by DB **Kaleb Simpkins**, who has an offer from **Wake Forest** as well as three **Ivy League** schools.

NINETY SIX

Ninety Six will be looking to improve upon a 3-8 season. They have quarterback **Jacob Evans** along

with targerts such as **Kobi Quarles**, **Carter Davis** and tight end Parker Sutley.

DL Nathan McCary and LB **Gabe Hackett** will be key performers.

PELION

Cory Helms takes over a program that went 2-9 last season. He will have junior **Alan Moore** back at QB while **Tre Jackson** and **Brady Cottingham** will be getting carries.

Cottingham will also start on the D line alongside **Ben Stabler**, who will also start on the OL

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

ALA is in its second year of existence and it received no favors being placed in such a deep region.

The goal this season is to win a game after going 0-9 last year.

Brice Cook will be the quarterback with **Leonard Pressley** as his top target. ALA will have a slew of players going on both sides.

REGION 3

1. Fairfield Central
2. Chester
3. Mid-Carolina
4. Columbia
5. Eau Claire

FAIRFIELD CENTRAL

Fairfield Central was ranked third. The Griffins played for the upper state title, losing to Clinton.

They will have to replace some key performers, mainly 2,000-yard rusher **Tydarion Grier**. They do have **Kaden Diggs** back at quarterback. LBs **Breone Whitaker** and **Dre Walker** both recorded over 100 tackles.

CHESTER

The Cyclones had a down year for them, going 5-6. However, they are always competitive under head coach **Victor Floyd** and were ranked 13th.

Hudhaifah Taylor is back after running for just under 1,000 yards. Junior **Caleb Feaster** will again be a key contributor in the running game. Junior **Omari Pendergrass** caught six TD passes.

MID-CAROLINA

The Rebels went 5-6 last season with a very young team. They return eight starters on offense and seven on defense.

Davis Ruff is back at quarterback. **Ryker Woolstenhulme** and **Wyatt Mazza** will be at RB. There are our starters back on the O line.

COLUMBIA

The Capitals went 5-6 last season, the first time it had wn that many games since 2011.

Darius Cunningham will be the quarterback with **Tyquan Sanders** back at RB. Leading tackler and linebacker **Rondrecus Peterson** returns as well.

EAU CLAIRE

The Shamrocks went just 2-9 last year, but it was a successful season. The program picked up its first victory since 2019.

Smith Bryant is back at quarterback with **Joshua Smith** and **JahCory Sumter** expected to get the football a lot.

The defense will be led by 6-foot-5-inch edge rusher **Kevin Williams**.

REGION 4

1. Central
2. Cheraw
3. Andrew Jackson
4. Chesterfield
5. North Central
6. Buford

CENTRAL

The Eagles had **Pageland** rocking last year, going 10-3 and reaching the third round of the playoffs.

Kickers / Punters / Specialists Feature

Spartanburg’s Love headlines top specialists in SC

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Moncks Corner - Go to any football practice and look around. You will likely find the offenses and defenses getting their work done. Look away from those groups, sometimes on a totally different field, and you will find the kickers and punters.

As practice nears an ending, the coaches ask the kickers to join them and tells them if they make a 40-yard field goal, the rest of the team escapes 100-yard sprints. No pressure, just the entire team counting on you.

But, to be a successful specialist, you need nerves of steel and you want that type of pressure. The pressure is certainly increased in live games that are decided by a kick of some kind. Nobody really knows your name until you miss a 40-yard field goal, or shank and extra point or punt.

The roles of specialists have evolved over time. Not that long ago, a lineman or quarterback was the placekicker or punter. Some teams didn’t even attempt kicks because old school coaches didn’t want to waste the practice time.

Nowadays, there are true specialists, guys who spend as much time on their craft as any quarterback or receiver.

South Carolina has its share of quality kickers and punters. Though few will actually earn a scholarship to use their craft on the college level, there will be a handful that earn a next-level opportunity as preferred walk-ons. Some may never kick or punt after high school, just as it is with every other position on the field.

As has been the case for the last several years, the Palmetto State has quite a few quality Friday night performers who use their feet to help their teams win. Some have stronger legs for better distance while others are known for accuracy or the ability to pin teams deep on their own end.

In recent years, the Lowcountry has been home to some of the top specialists in the state. The top

performer in the 2025 class is from the Upstate in the person of **Spartanburg High’s Will Love**.

Love has impressed college coaches at all levels but ended his recruitment during the spring with a verbal commitment to **Virginia Tech**. He is the only kicker in the state with a power 4 offer as the season begins.

Spartanburg head coach **Mark Hodge** has complete and total faith in his strong-legged kicker. Handling pressure is one of his strengths.

“Nerves of steel,” Hodge said. “I have no reservations asking him to kick a long field goal or a field goal with the game on the line. He loves the pressure. I might be biased but I believe he is the best in the state.”

Love made nine-of-15 field goal attempts last season with a long of 51 yards. He missed one extra point in 26 attempts. Love has made 18 field goals over the previous three seasons. His kickoffs routinely end up inside the five-yard line or the end zone.

Mountain View Prep’s Henry Phillips made 10 field goals and 58 extra points last season. He and Love are generally considered the top two place-kickers on the state and Phillips is only junior.

Other top kickers in the Upper State include **Brock Franklin** of **Laurens**, **Curt Horton** of **Andrew Jackson**, and **Mitchell Bobbitt** of **Blue Ridge**.

One of the top returning kickers in the Lowcountry is **CJ Falotico** of **Phillip Simmons**. Last season Falotico averaged 54.4 yards per kickoff and nearly 34 yards per punt. He also converted six-of-eight field goal attempts with a long of 57 yards.

Like most serious kickers, Falotico attends highly credible kicking camps and competitions and has fared well on a national scale.

“We’ve been fortunate with special teams over the last few years and CJ ranks right up there with the best,” said Philip Simmons coach Eric Bendig.

Cane Bay junior **Aiden Thorn** also competes at



Northwood’s Cole McLeod **Denmark-Olar’s Josh Tackett**

a high level, kicking a 60-yard field goal and a 57-yard punt over the summer.

“His kickoffs are so valuable and the ball really travels when he gets hold of one good,” Cane Bay coach Russell Zehr said. “I don’t hesitate to try a field goal anytime we’re inside the 40.”

James Island sophomore **Isaac Lorentz** is next in a recent string of top kickers. He has 50-yard range on field goals.

Wando freshman **Cameron Moody** is a young talent to watch grow and **Berkeley** junior **Ryland Curwen** is potentially the best in school history.

Other top performers to watch this fall include **Jackson Summey** (**Oceanside Collegiate**), **Elliott Parrot** (**Strafford**), **Hunter Thiem** (**Porter-Gaud**) and **Sully Damron** (**Lucy Beckham**).

Most of the placekickers also handle punting duties for their respective teams. Some of the best punters in the state include **Ashton Davis** of **Blythewood** and **Ethan Mick** of **South Pointe**.

2025 SCISA Football Schedules

SCISA CLASS 4-A									
DATE	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN (0-0)	DATE	HAMMOND (0-0)	8/22	PINEWOOD PREP	8/15	AT PORTER-GAUD	8/22	BATTERY CREEK
8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/22	OPPONENTSCORE	8/29	AT FIRST BAPTIST	8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/22	AT BETHESDA ACADEMY
8/22	GREENVILLE HURRICANES	8/29	AT CHRIST CHURCH	9/5	AT LAURENCE MANNING	8/29	AT BETHESDA ACADEMY	9/5	TBA
8/22	AT JOHN MILLEDGE,GA	9/5	PINEWOOD PREP	9/12	TBA	9/5	TBA	9/12	JOHN PAUL II
8/29	AT BULLOCH ACADEMY,GA	9/12	AT PORTER-GAUD	9/19	BEN LIPPEN	9/12	HAMMOND	9/19	AT PINEWOOD PREP
9/12	PORTER-GAUD	9/19	HEATHWOOD HALL	10/3	CARDINAL NEWMAN	9/26	AT HAMMOND	10/3	TBA
9/19	LAURENCE MANNING	9/26	AT HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	10/10	at Porter-Gaud	10/10	FIRST BAPTIST	10/17	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY
9/26	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/3	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/17	TBA	10/17	AT JOHN PAUL II	10/24	AT HILTON HEAD PREP
10/3	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	10/10	AT LAURENCE MANNING	10/24	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	10/31	HEATHWOOD HALL	10/31	JOHN PAUL II (0-0)
10/10	HAMMOND	10/17	TBA	10/31	BEN LIPPEN	8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/15	COLLETON PREP ACADEMY
10/17	TBA	10/24	CARDINAL NEWMAN	8/22	OPPONENTSCORE	8/22	AT SAVANNAH COUNTRY DAY	8/22	AT LAURENCE MANNING
10/24	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/31	HEATHWOOD HALL (0-0)	8/29	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	8/29	AT SAVANNAH COUNTRY DAY	8/29	AT BATTERY CREEK
10/31	AT BEN LIPPEN	8/22	OPPONENTSCORE	9/5	AT LAURENCE MANNING	9/5	HAMMOND	9/5	BETHESDA ACADEMY
DATE	BEN LIPPEN (0-0)	DATE	HANNAH-PAMPLICO	9/12	AT FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	9/12	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	9/12	AT HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN
8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/22	AT FIRST BAPTIST	9/19	AT HAMMOND	9/26	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	9/19	TBA
8/22	TBA	9/5	LAURENCE MANNING	9/19	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/3	AT BEN LIPPEN	9/26	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN
8/29	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	9/12	AT HAMMOND	10/6	PORTER-GAUD	10/10	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/3	FIRST BAPTIST
9/5	AT WILSON HALL	9/19	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/17	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	10/17	TBA	10/10	HILTON HEAD PREP
9/12	CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/3	PORTER-GAUD	10/24	AT BEN LIPPEN	10/24	CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/17	TBA
9/19	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/10	AT LAURENCE MANNING	10/31	TBA	10/31	AT LAURENCE MANNING	10/24	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN
9/26	AT LAURENCE MANNING	10/17	HEATHWOOD HALL	10/24	CAMDEN MILITARY	10/31	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/31	AT PINEWOOD PREP
10/3	PORTER-GAUD	10/31	TBA	8/22	LAURENCE MANNING (0-0)	DATE	FIRST BAPTIST (0-0)	DATE	PINEWOOD PREP (0-0)
10/10	HEATHWOOD HALL	8/22	AT HAMMOND	8/29	JOHN PAUL II	8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/15	OPPONENTSCORE
10/17	TBA	9/5	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	9/12	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	8/22	BEN LIPPEN	8/22	ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN
10/24	AT HAMMOND	9/19	CARDINAL NEWMAN (0-0)	9/19	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	8/29	AT PORTER-GAUD	8/22	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY
10/31	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	9/26	OPPONENTSCORE	9/26	AT WILSON HALL	9/5	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	9/5	AT HAMMOND
DATE	CARDINAL NEWMAN (0-0)	DATE	JOHN PAUL II	10/3	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	9/12	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	9/19	TRINITY COLLEGIATE
8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/22	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	10/10	BEN LIPPEN	9/26	AT BAPTIST HILL	9/26	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN
8/22	AT CANNON SCHOOL,NC	9/5	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/17	HAMMOND	10/3	AT JOHN PAUL II	10/3	AT WILSON HALL
8/29	ST. JOSEPH	9/12	AT WILSON HALL	10/24	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/10	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	10/10	TBA
9/5	DREHER	9/19	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	10/17	BEN LIPPEN	10/17	TBA	10/17	TBA
9/12	AT CHRIST SCHOOL, NC	9/26	BEN LIPPEN	10/24	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE	10/24	PINEWOOD PREP	10/24	AT FIRST BAPTIST
9/19	AT BEN LIPPEN	10/3	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/31	PORTER-GAUD	10/31	WILSON HALL	10/31	JOHN PAUL II
9/26	HEATHWOOD HALL	10/10	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	DATE	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY (0-0)	DATE	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN (0-0)	DATE	SCISA REGION 2-AA
9/26	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	10/17	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/15	OPPONENTSCORE	8/15	See SCISA Schedules, pg. 26
10/3	LAURENCE MANNING	10/24	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE	8/22	STRONG ROCK	8/22	OPPONENTSCORE	8/22	
10/10	TBA	10/31	PORTER-GAUD						
10/17	TBA								
10/24	AT PORTER-GAUD								
10/31	AT HAMMOND								



Some of the state's top defensive backs

Defensive backs pool is overflowing with talent this year

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Sumter – The state of **South Carolina** has a rich history of producing some outstanding defensive backs from its high school ranks on to the collegiate level. It doesn’t appear that tradition will be changing over the next few years.

The top eight defensive backs ranked in the *High School Sports Report Top 100* for the Class of 2026 have made commitments to Power 4 Conference schools. Not only is the top player in the 2027 class a defensive back but he is the No. 1 recruit in the country, according to some recruiting sites. The state’s top recruit for 2028 is a defensive back as well and is holding seven **Football Bowl Subdivision** offers prior to the start of his sophomore season.

The top-ranked defensive back for the 2026 class is **South Pointe** safety **J’Zavien Currence**. The 6-foot-3-inch, 205-pounder is committed to **South Carolina**. He has offers from practically all of the Power 4 schools.

“Currence is one of the hardest-working football players I’ve ever been around,” said South Pointe head coach **Bobby Collins**. “He’s versatile, playing multiple positions — free safety, corner(back), strong safety, quarterback and wide receiver. He’s not only talented but also a true leader on our football team.

“I believe he’s going to be an NFL (**National Football League**) football player in the next few years. I’m grateful to have coached him for the past four years and excited to watch his career continue at the University of South Carolina.”

Like Currence, **York County** is the home of the 2027 top defensive back in Catawba Ridge’s Joshua **Dobson**. He too has an offer from practically all of the Power 4 schools.

“Josh is a tremendous athlete and even better young man,” said Copperheads head coach **Zac Lendyak**. “His effort and attitude shine above everything else.”

You have to go a little farther west across the northern part of the state to find the No. 1 defensive back in 2028. He is **Gaffney’s Zion Dawkins**. He has offers from **Atlantic Coast Conference** schools **Boston College**, **Georgia Tech**, **Syracuse** and **Virginia Tech** as well as FBS schools **South Florida** and **Appalachian State**.

D-Line, continued from pg. 22

some center for us,” Blackston said. “He’s a pleasant kid to coach and fun to be around. I’m glad he plays for me and not against me.”

Boiling Springs’ Dennis Glenn (6-2, 290) is 19th on the list and looks to have a breakout junior and senior year. Glenn had 28 tackles, a sack, and 14 hurries in the Bulldogs’ 7-5 season. He has offers from N.C. State, Virginia Tech, **Boston College**, Appalachian State, **Memphis**, Charlotte, and Liberty, among others.

DT Triston Diggs (6-2, 220) and **DE JaQuan Hannah** (6-2, 200) of **Carvers Bay** are two juniors who are poised for big seasons along the Bears’ defensive line.

Diggs’ first offer, from The Citadel, came recently, and he has interest from South Carolina state and some

other schools.

“I’ve been practicing very hard in the weight room this summer,” Diggs said. “I’ve been working very hard at getting my weight up as much as possible and going to a lot of camps as well. I’ve been trying to be a better leader on the team as well.”

Last year’s 4-7 effort made it clear to the young team that they needed to put in more work in getting ready for 2025.

“We were a very young team last year, we weren’t as conscious of what we were doing on the field, we weren’t as smart,” he said. “But this year is going to be a lot different.”

Hannah, who made visits to **The Citadel** and **South**

field and has gotten stronger in the weight room. We are excited to see his performance this season.”

Jayden Boyd is No. 23 in the 2026 class and will be playing for **Westwood** this season after transferring from-. He is committed to **Duke**.

“Jayden has come in and done a good job trying to pick up the scheme,” said first-year Westwood head coach **Stephen Burris**. “He’s three months behind so he’s got a lot of catching up to do. But he’s obviously a very talented player, and we’re looking forward to see how he fits into what we do and how we can utilize his talent.”

Triston Lewis of **Greenwood** is ranked 27th and is committed to South Carolina, while **Ridge View’s Jordyn Best** is 34th and committed to **North Carolina State**.

Strom Thurmond’s Kaleb Simpkins is ranked 45th and has a Power 4 offer from **Wake Forest**. He also has three Ivy League offers in **Princeton**, **Yale** and **Dartmouth**.

“Kaleb is a 4-year starter,” said Strom Thurmond head coach **Andrew Webb**. “He has a ton of experience. He is extremely smart and understands the game well. He is strong and can play every position in the secondary.”

Simpkins said he utilizes all of that experience when he’s on the field.

“The main part is having confidence in the craft and think you’re the best on the field,” Simpkins said. “Having confidence in yourself that you’re working the craft enough is important. You’ve got to be prepared, know what’s coming.”

Junior **Kaiden Watkins** is ranked 12th in the 2027 class. He transferred to South Pointe after playing for city rival **Rock Hill** last season. He has 15 FBS offers to date, including Power 4 schools **Auburn**, **Penn State**, **Georgia Tech**, **Syracuse** and West Virginia.

Gaffney’s **Kareem Shaw** is ranked 27th for the 2027 class. Littlejohn said Shaw is ultra talented.

“Karem will probably be a tailback before it is all said and done,” Littlejohn said. “We have a lot of talent at that position this year and Kareem is too talented of an athlete not to be on the field. He has excelled at DB so far this year. We look forward to having him on the team for the next two years.”

Carolina, added that he and Diggs have been working individually and with the team.

“We’ve been doing a lot of training and getting strong in the weight room, and not only that I’ve been working on my craft and getting ready for this year,” Hannah said. “The whole team’s back so this year I feel very confident on what we’re going to do.”

Hartsville junior JaQuan Samuel (6-2, 275) was an offensive lineman last year, but this year he will be on the opposite side of the football.

“Jaquan is a first-year stater with a lot of potential,” said head coach **Jeff Calabrese**.



Central Eagles

They return nine starters on offense and seven on defense. That includes junior QB **Dwayne Louallen** and running backs Ashten Wilson and **Aiden Short. Taveon Moore** is a standout both in the secondary and as a receiver for the No. 6 Eagles.

TFLS.

REGION 5

1. Hampton County
2. Barnwell
3. Whale Branch
4. Edisto
5. Lake Marion

Hampton County

The Hurricanes were ranked eighth in the preseason poll. They went 8-3 last year after losing 18 starters from the previous season. They return most of their starters on both sides of the football.

Tarell Grant will take over at quarterback while 1,000-yard rusher **Jaylen Singletary** will line up beside him. He will have five returning starters opening holes.

Singletary is also a standout at CB. Junior MLB **Javn Risher** had 12 TFLs.

BARNWELL

The Warhorses lost lots of talent from last year’s team that played for the state title. However, there are plenty of pieces returning.

That starts with four offensive linemen led by Jackson Bedingfield. They will be leading the way for **Nehemiah Brown**, who is also a standout DB. Top defensive performers returning are LB Henri Creech and DB **Damahjal Devoe**.

WHALE BRANCH

Willie White is the new head coach, taking over for **Jerry Hatcher** after a 4-6 season.

Senior **Jernion Bowers** returns after leading in both passing and rushing. Defensive lineman **Tony Broxton Jr.** is back after recording 12 TFLS and three quarterback sacks.

EDISTO

Edisto went 3-7 last season and 1-3 in the region. They will have **Jason Worthington** at QB with **Makey Salley** a top target.

LAKE MARION

The Gators are coming off a 3-5 season in which they went 0-4 in region play.

They have good size on the offensive line in **Caden Keller** (6-0, 254) and **Charles Smith** (6-4, 240).

REGION 6

1. Philip Simmons
2. Timberland
3. Woodland



Lake Marion Gators

2024 Final Region Standings

REGION 1-AA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
CLINTON	4-0	12-2	562	266
CHESNEE	3-1	6-6	305	355
LIBERTY	2-2	5-5	332	296
LANDRUM	1-3	5-5	339	242
BLACKSBURG	0-4	3-7	287	343

REGION 2-AA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
BATESBURG-LEESVILLE	5-0	12-1	492	126
SALUDA	4-1	9-2	318	118
STROM THURMOND	3-2	6-4	297	96
NINETY-SIX	2-3	3-8	271	293
PELION	1-4	2-9	129	407
AMERICAN LEADERSHIP	0-5	0-9	33	400

REGION 3-AA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
FAIRFIELD CENTRAL	4-0	12-2	587	199
CHESTER	3-1	5-6	334	211
MID-CAROLINA	2-2	5-6	205	266
COLUMBIA	1-3	5-6	154	249
EAU CLAIRE	0-4	1-9	93	355

REGION 4-AA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
CHERAW	5-0	9-4	340	208
CENTRAL	4-1	10-3	380	213
ANDREW JACKSON	3-2	4-8	242	314
CHESTERFIELD	1-4	6-5	303	365
NORTH CENTRAL	1-4	3-8	213	344
BUFORD	1-4	2-8	157	305

REGION 5-AA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
BARNWELL	4-0	13-2	427	180
HAMPTON COUNTY	3-1	8-3	354	208
WHALE BRANCH	2-2	4-6	149	265
EDISTO	1-3	3-7	154	293
LAKE MARION	0-4	2-6	121	221

REGION 6-AA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
PHILIP SIMMONS	5-0	10-3	426	240
TIMBERLAND	4-1	8-4	311	178
WOODLAND	3-2	7-4	314	186
ANDREWS	2-3	6-5	304	209
ACADEMIC MAGNET	1-4	4-7	149	347
BURKE	0-5	1-8	84	256

REGION 7-AA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
MANNING	6-0	11-2	406	183
EAST CLARENDON	4-2	8-4	321	208
KINGSTREE	4-2	5-7	298	278
MULLINS	3-3	7-4	238	248
LAKE CITY	3-3	3-7	233	193
ATLANTIC COLLEGIATE	1-5	2-7	75	335
MARION	0-6	1-9	72	364

4. Andrews

5. Academic Magnet
6. Burke

PHILIP SIMMONS

Philip Simmons went 10-3 last season, reaching the third round of the playoffs. The fifth-ranked Iron Horses have seven starters back on both sides of the ball.

Maurico Curry and **Hayes Goddard** have battled for the quarterback job. **Yosi Mallett** and **Jaydon Camp** will anchor the offensive line.

The defense is led by linebacker brothers **Brody Tonon** and **Trevor Tonon** with brother **Chase Tonon** in the secondary.

TIMBERLAND

The Wolves have a lot of talent returning from a squad that won 8-4. They are ranked 10th.

Desmond Green, who has committed to **Florida**, leads an experienced O line. Senior **Malyk Goodman** returns at QB.

DB **Carter Hawkins** was one of the top tacklers on the team in 2024 and led in interceptions.

WOODLAND

Class A Feature

Everybody chasing Abbeville once again in Class A

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher

Moncks Corner—Around this time a year ago, the *HSSR* began the regular season *with Abbeville* and **Cross** ranked one-two in our Class A ranking the week before the 2024 season began.

Four months later, these two teams met for the Class A state championship at South Carolina State University. Abbeville advanced to the finals with a 42-18 win over **Trent Usher’s Lewisville** Lions while Cross defeated **Lake View**, 36-7 to punch their ticket to the gold medal round. In the finals Abbeville’s potent ground attack earned a 58-20 win over the Trojans. It was the Panthers 9th state football title in 15 seasons under the outstanding coaching of **Jamie Nickles**, a proud graduate of Abbeville High where he learned to compete as an honor graduate of the late **Dennis Botts** coaching academy in the early 1990’s.

One year later Abbeville will enter the 2025 season ranked number one once again. The next four Class A teams from two to five include second ranked **Lewisville**, with **Cross**, **Bamberg-Ehrhardt**, and **Latta** rounding out the top five respectively. **Johnsonville**, under the tutelage of **Ken Cribb** holds down the number six spot coming into the season, followed by **Lake View**, **HKT**, **Lamar**, and **Blackville-Hilda** round out the top 10.

Region 1-A Predicted Order Of Finish:

- 1. Abbeville
 - 2. Dixie
 - 3. Whitmire
 - 4. Ware Shoals
 - 5. McCormick
 - 6. Calhoun Falls
- ABBEVILLE:**

In Abbeville, the Panthers rarely rebuild; they reload, and keep pounding you. Last year they defeated teams 703-216 in compiling 13 wins. On offense the “A” bone produced 4,915 yards of rushing offense and 79 touchdowns.

Abbeville was a senior laden team a year ago. They were led by **South Carolina** signee **Demarcus Leach**. In the championship game against Cross, he rushed for 118 yards on 11 carries and two touchdowns. Leach also returned an interception 81 yards on a pick six during the game.

The key to Abbeville’s success this season will be finding a replacement for Leach at quarterback. Despite heavy graduation losses a core group of experienced seniors are back to provide leadership.

Senior RB **Darius Riley** is back after rushing for 750 yards and 12 touchdowns a year ago. The brother senior duo of **Jaden Baylor** at WR and **Jaylen Baylor** at FS/WR return and these are two impact players. Jaden will convert over to the QB position this season. **Kamyon Jones** (6-3,275) also returns to provide leadership in the offensive line at left guard.

On defense, Kendall **Cole** will be counted on to step up as a senior on the defensive front along with **Xzavier Walton** (6-0,290) wo returns at NG/DT. (Please see in-depth feature story on Abbeville football elsewhere in this issue).

DIXIE:

The Hornets were a vastly improved team in 2024 under head coach **Mark Sorrow** when they improved to an 8-3 season.

The team’s potential for success in 2025 will focus on the play of quarterback **Dallas Dotson** and the play of returning RB **Brandon Nance** who rushed for over 1,100 yards as a junior last season.

Dixie will begin the season with an away game at **RSM** on August, 22.

WHITMIRE:

Head coach **Andrew Campbell** saw his Wolver-

ines struggle to an 3-8 record a year ago but help may be on the way for improvement.

A core group of experienced seniors return. They include center **Jaden Clark**, RT **Dalton Williams**, TE **Crue Keller**, and DB **Brian Steele**. Top juniors include: RG **Gabe Martin**, DL **Zakaedon Ruff**, QB

Kaden Malpass, FB **De’Angelo Ruff**, and TE **Landon Wolf**.

Top newcomers include LT **Fred-die Higgins** and LG **Jordan Ammons**.

Whitmire began the 2025 season by hosting **Branchville** from the low country.

WARE SHOALS:

Christopher Dodson begins his fourth season as the head coach at **Ware Shoals** and his team improved to 4-5 in the 2024 season.

The team should have more over-all depth in the 2025 season improving their participation numbers from 23 to around 34 players this season, including 14 linemen.

Senior QB **Jayden Johnson** returns and he has a chance to become the school’s all-time top passer with a strong finish to his career. His top three receiving targets return in WR **Tyrell Cunningham**, WR Ry’**Keem Robinson**, and **WR Brayden McDonald**. The defense will be led by the return of LB **Elijah Brown**.

Ware Shoals will begin the 2025 season hosting **Blacksburg** from Cherokee County.

MCCORMICK:

Leroy Collier begins his third season as the head coach of the Chiefs and with the return of seven starters on offense, and six starters on defense, the team is seeking vast improvement on their 2-9 record of last season.

“We have a solid group of returning linemen which should help us establish a solid running game,” said Coach Collier. “We must be more consistent and intentional in our blocking assignments.”

The senior leaders back are RB **Quantrell Hearst** and QB **Toquan Thompson**. Hearst rushed for 986 yards and scored 11 TD’s last season.

The top junior on the team returns in RT **Jayden Nelson-McGrier**. The top soph is talented LB **Zyan Chamberlain**. The top newcomer up from the jayvee team is LB **Markal Bost**. Other returning OL starters include **Zechariah Chiles**, **Ty Clark**, **Tahahji Kinard** and center **Mahel Allman**.

On defense **Michael Durant**, **Tarius Tate**, and **Jermaine Polly** return in the DL. Chamberlain returns at LB. The returning DB’s are **Treyvon Fuller** and **Hearst** flips from offense to DB.

McCormick will begin the season at **Strom Thurmond** on August, 22.

CALHOUN FALLS CHARTER:

After finishing with a 2-9 record in 2024 Calhoun Falls head coach **Zak Theus** is hoping senior leadership can help the team elevate the program in 2025.

The play of senior trio of OL **Quay Turman** (6-3,280), WR **Derek Jackson** (6-1,180), and LT **Chase Schmidt** is key to the team’s seeking improvement this year. Junior LG **CJ Turman** is also back also with top sophomores RB **Braylon Patterson** (6-0,180) along with QB **Preston Thomas-Small**s. The top player up from the jayvee is **Kazhian Gray**. Senior DL **Cam Bryant** (6-0,270) brings experience to the defensive front.

Calhoun Falls will begin the season against **Greenwood Christian** on August, 22.

Region 2-A Prediction Order Of Finish:

Lewisville
Lamar
Lee Central
McBee
CA Johnson
Great Falls

LEWISVILLE:

Lewisville went 12-2 and won a region title under first year head coach **Trent Usher** who stepped up to the head job after serving as the Lion’s defensive coordinator the year before.

The Lions only play three regular season home games in 2025 but once the play-offs start the bracket favors them plying at home if they can keep winning.

Coach Usher and his staff need to find replacements for graduated play makers like receiver **De’Adrian Robinson** and QB/DB **Zach Rogers** along with OL **Ethan Shipman**.

The team will find help with the return of talented RB **Mikel Hutchinson** who missed most of last season with an injury. **Jordan Strong** stepped up and carried a lot

of the running load last season and he and Hutchinson should make a strong 1-2 punch.

Matt Cousar is stepping up to play QB and his top target will be senior prospect **Jacorreun Howze** (5-10,170) who has good speed and great hands. Soph DL **Zackary Gillerese** will be a force in the defensive line.

Look for Lewisville to win their region and make a deep run in the play-offs once again.

LAMAR:

Coach **Tyler Boyd** is back home to his roots at Lamar High having compiling a 22-3 record at **Williamsburg Academy**. He takes over a team that went 9-4 in 2024.

Top Returners include, QB **Zori Pierce**, RT **De-Vaughn Locust**, RB **Nygel Eaddy**, top junior RB **DQ Green**, DB **Kamiil McCoy**, LG **Roy Vest**, LT **Mes-siah Simes**, TE/LB **Lamont Williams**, RB/LB **Jaquez Dargan**, LB **Kenile Johnson**, and WR **Jaylen Morris**. **Robert Cooper** is a freshman who will share time with **Alvin Jenkins** in the DL.

Lamae begins the 2025 season on Aug. 22 at **Darlington**.

LEE CENTRAL:

Justin Danner will be starting year 14 as the head coach at Lee **Central** and the Stallions hope to build on their 7-5 record of last season.

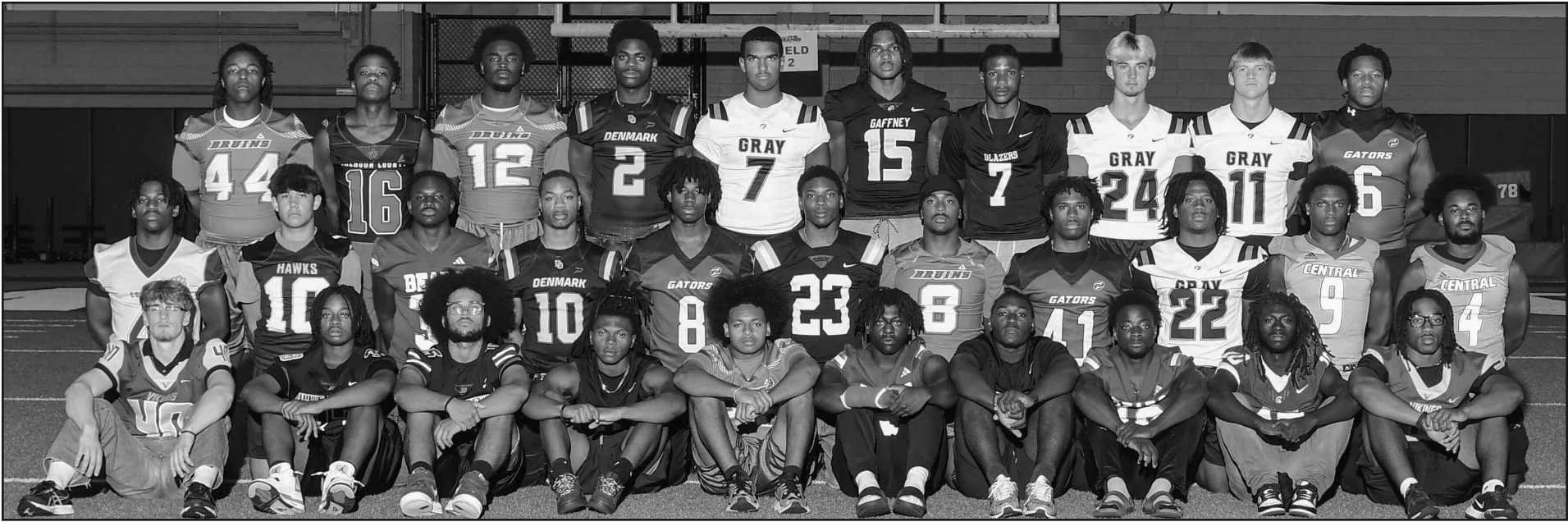
The team’s hopes for continued success are built around the return of a core group of seniors led by RB **Shadrach Williams**, LG **Savion Williams**, LB **Ezekial Black**, WR **Javon Jenkins** and DB **Xavier Reed**. Top key returning juniors are LT **Antonio Jenkins** and RB **Nycer Henry**. The team is comprised of three talented sophomores in the return of QB **Tyquaze Adams**, DB **Jalen Williams** and RT **Jacob Montgomery**.

Lee Central will begin the 20205 seasons with a game against **Timberland High**.

MCBEE:

Head Panthers coach **Andy Karcher** begins his third season and he is 11-11 to date. The Panthers are coming off a tough 2024 season with a 4-6 record. Top returners this season include, RB/DB **DJ Harper**, **Class A**, pg. 13

Linebackers Feature



Some of the state’s top linebackers going into the 2025 season

2026 linebackers group led by Gray Collegiate’s Boulware

By Dennis Brunson

hssr.com Associate Editor

Sumter – There is no doubt he has the pedigree. His namesake father played four seasons in the **National Football League**, while his uncle was a 4-time All-Pro selection in his 9-year NFL career and he was part of one of the greatest defenses in the history of the league in the Super Bowl-winning 2000 **Baltimore Ravens**.

He has the physical attributes – 6-foot-2-inches and 220 pounds – playing middle linebacker for **Gray Collegiate Academy**. What he doesn’t have right now is the looks from college scouts He hopes they are to come with a great senior season.

He is **Michael Boulware Jr.**, whose dad and uncle **Peter Boulware** were both standout collegiate players at **Florida State**.

“I feel like I’ve gotten a lot better compared to last season,” said Boulware, who is the top ranked linebacker in state for the 2026 recruiting class, according to *High School Sports Report* and the No. 13 overall prospect. “I know I’ve still got a long way to go, but I take it one step at a time and hopefully get one percent better every day.”

Following in the footsteps of his father and uncle hasn’t fazed Boulware. Instead, he embraces it.

“It’s not a burden, it’s really a blessing to me,” Boulware said. “He (Michael Sr.) set a high standard He’s my expectation of what needs to be done It should be done very high, so that way I’m not downplaying myself. If he says I’m doing right, then I’m doing right.”

Boulware obviously has interest in Florida State along with hometown school **South Carolina**. However, no offers have come his way from anyone as of yet. He isn’t concerning himself with that; instead, his concern will be over making himself a better player.

“If the Lord doesn’t want me to do something then he won’t let it happen,” Boulware said. “I’m a master of controlling the controllables. If there is something I can do to get better, I will get that done. Outside of that, I can’t control those things, I don’t worry about it. If there is something I can do, I will do it.”

Gray Collegiate head coach **De’Angelo Bryant**, who played at **Wake Forest**, says this about his senior leader. “Michael is a team leader with great cognitive ability and he possesses a great work ethic,” said Coach Bryant. “He was both an all-state and all-region selection as a junior when he had 119 tackles in the 10 games we played. As a sophomore Michaelk had 133 tackles and he has a very high motor.

“There is no doubt in my mind that he will earn a major college football scholarship before his senior season ends,” said Coach Bryant. “South Carolina keeps reminding him that he is on their radar and **Virginia Tech** keeps in touch all the time. He is going to make his senior season his best year yet.”

Orangeburg-Wilkinson’s Jordan Avinger is the No. 2 linebacker and is ranked 35th overall. The 6-2, 225-pouner is committed to **Arkansas**, which is his only **Power 4 Conference** offer.

Avinger is in his first season at AAA **Orangeburg-Wilkinson** after playing at Class A **Bethune-Bowman**, another **Orangeburg County** school. He believes he is ready for the step up in classification.

“I’ve been putting in a lot of work in the offseason, putting in extra work in the weight room,” Avinger said. “I’m giving my all in the weight room and on the field.”

Avinger has a slew of other **Football Bowl Sub-division** offers, including **East Carolina**, **Appalachian State**, **Florida International**, **South Florida**, **Liberty** and **James Madison**.

Avinger believes he brings a lot to the table in all aspects of being a football player.

What makes me a good linebacker, it’s my knowledge,” he said. “I’m smart, I’m a great vocal leader, I know everyone’s assignmentt on the field. I know everyone else’s assignment so it makes it easier.”

Gaffney’s Zyion Ratchford is just behind Avinger in the overall rankings at No. 37. The 6-4, 200-pounder is committed to East Carolina.

First-year Gaffney head coach **Donnie Littlejohn** said Ratchford has really improved himself over the summer.

“Zyion worked really hard on his quickness and his agility over the summer,” Littlejohn said. “It was an emphasis. His length, including wingspan, makes it hard for offensive players to get away from him. He has done a great job of learning the ins and outs of the defense. He has become a coach on the field.”

“I’ve been working to get faster, stronger,” Ratchford said. “I’m getting better at seeing the game, processing the game better. I’ve gotten really used to it.”

Ratchford also has FBS offers from **Coastal Carolina**, **South Florida**, **Appalachian State** and **Charlotte**.

He led the Indians in tackles and tackles for loss last season with 68 and 18, respectively. He also had four quarterback sacks.

Ratchford’s junior teammate, **Kendarius Bailey**, is No. 9 in the 2027 class.

“Kendarius plays extremely big on Friday nights,” Littlejohn said of the 6-0, 215-pounder. “He is a huge part of the defense and can change the game at any moment. He has a great motor and does not shy away from contact. He actually loves it.”

South Florence’s Terry Gordon is ranked 43rd while **Romello Patterson** of city rival **West Florence** is ranked 44th. Gordon had 87 tackles and 13 tackles for loss as a key figure in the defense that helped the Bruins to their second AAAA state championship in three years. He has no FBS offers at this time.

Patterson has committed to Coastal Carolina and also has FBS offers from **Western Kentucky** and **Alabama-Birmingham**.

Right behind him at No. 46 is **Reid McCollum**, a 6-4, 215-pound middle linebacker from **Hilton Head Christian Academy**. McCollum, who also serves as the Eagles’ quarterback, is committed to the **U.S. Naval Academy**.

“Reid is aggressive, quick; he’s perfect for the U.S. Navy,” said HHCA head coach **Ron Peduzzi**. “Damn the torpedoes! Attack mode all the time.”

Dillon has a pair of strong linebackers back in **Daniel Capehart** and **Keriyon Brown**. Capehart, ranked 50th, measures 6-0 and 200-pounds while No. 58 Brown is 5-11, 210.

“Both are explosive and both have a unique ability to diagnose plays that help them defensively,” said Dillon head coach **Kelvin Roller**. “They are both physical players that love contact. They are both two of the best in the state by far.”

Brown led Dillon with 158 total tackles last season, including 9 TFL and three sacks. Capehart had 120 tackles last season. His older brother plays at **Clemson**. Capehart will also be used a lot at running back at Dillon this year.

Gray Patterson, a 6-3, 210-pounder from **Fort Mill**, is committed to Charlotte. He is ranked 62nd. **Brysen Ginn** of **South Pointe** is No. 63. He had 87 tackles last season for the Stallions, who played in the AAAA upper state title game. He holds FBS offers from Charlotte and **Marshall**.

“A 3-year starter for South Pointe High School, Brysen is known as the hardest-working player on the team and a true leader on and off the field,” said South Pointe head coach **Bobby Collins**. “As a team captain, he sets the standard for effort and dedication. “We’re excited to see what he accomplishes this season.”

Other ranked linebackers are **Summerville’s JT Williams** at No. 70, and **Lucas Tankersley** of **Travelers Rest** at No. 100.

HSSR Football Media Day

July 23

University of South Carolina Indoor Facility



Central Eagles



Carvers Bay Bears



Batesburg-Leesville Panthers



Greer Yellow Jackets



Gaffney Indians



Blackville-Hilda Hawks

RB/LB Harlan McLaurin, OL/DL Brayden Pacheco, TE/DE Hayden Griggs, and WR/DB JJ Melton. McBee begins the season on Aug. 22 against Cheraw.

CA JOHNSON:

CA Johnson finished 2-9 last season and new head coach Rodney Barr (48-62) was brought in to get the ship pointed in the right direction.

The team will be built around the senior experience of center Jerimiah Johnson and veteran DB King Smith-Bryant. Junior RB Jerimiah Knightner will provide depth in the back field along with junior OL Tymere Evans. Junior Terrell Golson is a hard-nosed RB Stacey Isaac will be a young sophomore QB who will need to mature early into the position.

CA Johnson will start the season against Columbia High. .

GREAT FALLS:

Coach: Syvelle Newton enters his 2nd year at Great Falls and the former Gamecock QB/Athlete experienced a 2-8 year in his rookie season. Some of the players' Coach Newton will count on to find more wins include: DE/DT Jayden Howze, MLB/G Qamarion Hill (5-8, 210), along with WR Jaxson Brantley and WR Austin McManus. Nesir Stevens will play both ways at MLB/RB and Kyle Sparks will be a CB/WR.

Great Falls start the season at North Central August 22.

Region 3-A Predicted Order Of Finish:

- HKT
- Blackville-Hilda
- Calhoun County
- Ridge-Spring Monetta
- Williston-Elko
- Wagener-Salley

HKT:

Jermaine Derricott's HKT football team has compiled a 19-4 record over the past two seasons and you just have a feeling the program is ready to take that next big step as the 2025 season begins.

Key returning senior players for HKT include RB/OLB Darian Stroman and OL/DT Pierre Fogle (6-4, 295). The junior class has a lot of depth led by OL/DT De'Nyrrion Cave, RB Trenton Summers, DE Taizon Sprinkle. Summers (6-1,175) has college interest.

Soph Jaleel Way provides great depth at the TE/OLB positions.

HKT will begin the 2025 season on the road at Allendale-Fairfax.

BLACKVILLE HILDA:

After the Hawks went 9-3 in the 2024 season

head coach Jeremy Saitz is focused on winning a region title and making a deep run in the playoffs.

"We are a very athletic team with a much larger offensive line this season," said Coach Saitz. "Our back field has several skill players that give us multiple weapons on offense. We do lack numbers and depth at several positions and that could give us some challenges."

The team has a solid core group of talented seniors back. Senior LT Jayden Dash (6-1,280) is an all-state candidate and speedy WR Messiah McFadden ran a 11.08 100 meters this past track season. Ricky Richburg is back at WR and Tony Bryant is back to lead the linebacking group.

The team's top juniors include RB Kaiden Aiken along with RB Kaiden Davis. Sophomores Kaleb Brooks (DB), QB Trevor Kinard, and WR Bralen Coleman (6-4, 170) will provide depth to the team.

The Hawks will start the 2025 season on Thursday August, 21st against county rival Barnwell.

CALHOUN COUNTY:

Calhoun County finished 3-8 last year and as head coach Wayne Farmer (160—143) enters his 28th year in coaching you just know he hopes for improvement with his team that includes son Wayne Farmer, Jr., a WR for the Saints. Seven players from CC attended the HSSR annual media day at USC in late July. Farmer had 300 yards in receptions in '24.

The other players from CC at media day included: Senior OL/DT Jamani Canty (6-2,260), junior LT/DT Markest Davenport (6-3,330), senior WR/CB Shaun Rivers (5-10,160) with four picks last season, soph LB/RB Peyton Kinley (5-11,185) who had 70 tackles with 6 TFL in '24, soph QB/FS Darren Ben (5-11,170) who passed for 1,000 yards and rushed for 300 in '24, along with junior DE/WR Eddie Coleman (6-1,185). Also attending were soph RB/FS/KR Rashawn Aiken (5-10,171) along with senior WR/SS Ke'mari Martin (5-11,175).

RIDGE SPRING MONETTA:

Head RSM coach Jay Brannon starts his third season with the team. In '24 RSM posted a record of 6-6 and they are looking for an even better season in 2025. Some key returning players are Jaiden Holloway QB/RB/WR, Jabarius Brunson LB, and D'toris Lott LB.

RSM begins the season on August 22 against Dixie.

WILLISTON-ELKO:

Head coach Kenny Lipsey looks for improvement after the 2024 record of 4-7. They are confident in key returning players: RB Corey Newman, Darrell Newman, Kelsey Knowles, WR Demorey Davenport, CB Kameron Brown, and LB Kadin Wright.

The Blue Devils open the season at Pelion on

2024 Final Region Standings

REGION 1-A	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
ABBEVILLE	5-0	13-1	703	216
DIXIE	3-2	8-3	325	248
WARE SHOALS	3-2	4-6	266	394
WHITMIRE	2-3	3-8	219	349
MCCORMICK	2-3	2-9	128	442
CALHOUN FALLS	0-5	2-9	138	491

REGION 2-A	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
LEWISVILLE	5-0	12-2	510	157
LAMAR	4-1	9-4	493	202
LEE CENTRAL	3-2	7-5	298	268
MCBEE	2-3	5-6	243	306
C A JOHNSON	1-4	2-9	154	356
GREAT FALLS	0-5	2-8	88	393

REGION 3-A	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
HUNTER-KINARD-TYLER	4-0	10-2	431	175
BLACKVILLE-HILDA	4-1	9-3	339	221
CALHOUN ACADEMY	3-2	3-8	139	268
RIDGE SPRING-MONETTA	2-3	6-6	182	293
WILLISTON-ELKO	1-4	4-7	181	277
WAGENER-SALLEY	0-4	2-7	104	259

REGION 4-A	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
BAMBERG-EHRHARDT	4-0	9-3	473	168
RIDGELAND	2-1	5-5	108	232
DENMARK-OLAR	2-2	4-7	221	231
HARDEEVILLE	1-2	2-8	129	323
ALLENDALE-FAIRFAX	0-4	0-9	18	238

REGION 5-A	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
CROSS	6-0	12-3	584	147
BRANCHVILLE	5-1	9-2	411	214
BAPTIST HILL	4-2	7-4	274	213
SCOTTS BRANCH	3-3	4-7	276	299
BETHUNE-BOWMAN	2-4	2-9	94	457
MILITARY MAGNET	1-5	1-8	138	286
ST. JOHNS	0-6	0-10	20	513

REGION 6-A	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
LAKE VIEW	6-0	11-2	440	166
HANNAH-PAMPLICO	5-1	9-3	380	183
LATTA	4-2	5-6	293	176
CARVERS BAY	3-3	4-7	267	258
JOHNSONVILLE	2-4	4-8	218	330
GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	1-5	1-10	139	463
HEMINGWAY	0-6	0-10	18	479

Thursday, August 21.

WAGENER-SALLEY:

Head coach Blaze Gillespie is in his 2nd year with Wagener-Salley. In '24 his team was 2-7 and building towards improvement. Several key returners are seniors: QB Rayvon Chandler and WR Quintin Sims Jr., DE Rayfield Bell Jr., DL Isaiah Garvin, and DL Timmothy Bell.

They open the season at Denmark-Olar on August 22.

Region 4-A Predicted Order of Finish:

- Bamberg-Ehrhardt
- Denmark-Olar
- Ridgeland
- Hardeeville
- Allendale Fairfax

BAMBERG EHRHARDT:

The Raiders went 10-3 in 2024 losing out to Lake View in the third round of the play-offs. Head coach Corey Crosby (41-11) has seven starters back on offense and 8 starters back on defense. He put a double ** by seven returning players indicating they had all-state potential. There are certainly high expectations for this team in Raider country for the '25 season.

HSSR Football Media Day

July 23 University of South Carolina Indoor Facility



Denmark-Olar Vikings



Kingstree Blazers



Edisto Cougars



Dreher Blue Devils



Orangeburg-Wilkinson Bruins

Offensive Line Feature



Some of the state's best talent is in the offensive lineman group

Class of '26 boasts three offensive linemen in HSSR Top 10

By WORTHY EVANS
Special Writer
Columbia—Among the **High School Sports Report's** Top 100 senior football players across the state are many talented offensive linemen, including three players ranked among the top 10 in the 2026 class.

One of those linemen tops the list of all position players—**Timberland's Desmond Green** (6 feet, 5 inches, 340 pounds). Green committed to play for **Florida** in June, choosing the Gators over **South Carolina**, **Oklahoma**, **Georgia**, and **Virginia Tech**.
"I just fell in love with everything down there in Gainesville," Green told the *High School Sports Report* in June. "Their tradition, culture and the environment along with the people at Florida impressed me very much. I just fell in love with everything I experienced on my visits to Florida."

Besides being a top lineman who led the offense to 1,180 passing yards and 1,467 rushing yards in the Wolves' 8-4 season, Green has a 4.4 grade-point average.

"He is a film junkie and that is what any coach wants in a player," said Coach **Greg Wright**. "From my time playing at a high level I can tell you that he embodies everything it takes to be successful at the highest level of football."

Carvers Bay's Zyon Guiles (6-4, 295) is at the No.5 spot. The South Carolina commit said playing for the Gamecocks came down to state representation.
"It was hard, but you can't beat playing for your home state," Guiles said. "**Tennessee, Florida**, and **Georgia** were in the running, and also **Clemson**, but at the end of the day I prayed, talked to my family, and USC was the best for me."

For the fall Guiles is focused on giving the Bears, 4-7 last year, a much better season finish.
"Just making sure I'm there for my team, showing up and being that role model for the younger guys," he said about his main job, on and off the field, for Carvers Bay. "So that when they come back (this year) and do better than how we do the season before. We did alright, we could've done better. We've been fixing our mistakes, so I think we'll have a break-out year this year."

South Pointe's Anthony Baxter (6-3, 335) is also a **South Carolina** Commit and is No.10 on the *HSSR* list. Besides the Gamecocks, Baxter had offers from **Appalachian State**, **Charlotte**, **Cincinnati**, and **Duke**.

"USC coach **Shane Beamer** came to the school, and was talking to me every time I went down there (to Columbia)," Baxter said. "I felt like it was the best place to be."

Last year the Stallions reached the AAAA upper state final, falling at **Westside**.

"This year, preparation has been great. Everybody's pushing each other in practice," Baxter said. "I just got to get my body right and learn different stuff so that when I get there (to USC) it won't be anything new to me. I'm just excited to be going there."

Baxter already has deep and broad experience as a lineman as a four-year starter for the Stallions, who won the 4A state championship in 2021, the year before Baxter came to South Pointe.

"I think he's a Sunday player, with leadership skills and his all-season workouts are the most impressive I've seen as a coach," said head coach **Bobby Collins**. "I'm really impressed by him and excited for what he's going to do at South Carolina. I think he's the No.1 offensive lineman in the state, and Coach Beamer is excited to have him. I'm excited for his senior year where he can showcase his talent as we go for a state title."

Gaffney's Scotland Dover (6-3, 305) comes in at No. 15. An **Appalachian State** commit, Dover said the Mountaineers offered a family environment in a great location.

"What sold me was the place. Just being in Boone, of all places I've been, it's one of the best places I've been to, and the new coach that got there (**Dowell Loggains**, hired in December 2024), he and his staff showed that they care about everybody. I talked to coach Mo (offensive line coach **Allen Mogridge**) every day this week."

Dover said a lot of work he's put in since the end of last season is focused not only making the Indians (10-2, reaching the third round of the 5A Division I playoffs) into a stronger team, but also in getting ready for the next level.

"I've been pushing myself and working hard. I want to be able to lead by example," he said. "I've been helping the team fix things from last year, and showing the younger guys what the seniors do. I know what it's like being an underclassman looking to seniors, and I've got to show them how we should be so they'll pick up on it."

Dover added, "We're from spring ball to now. We've grown so much as a team and we've learned that we can't play without each other. Everybody's an important part of the team. To reach our goals we've got to do it together."

Malcolm Gaston (6-5, 330) of **North Augusta** is 17th on the list. He has offers from **Virginia Tech**, **Florida**, and **Georgia**, among others, and said that he will announce his commitment very soon.

In the meantime, Gaston said he's focused on keeping the Yellow Jackets on track after North Augusta (12-2) reached the AAAA lower state championship game last year.

"It's really just been high intensity, doing a lot of running and trying to make sure going into the season that I'm not out of shape by the fourth quarter," Gaston said. "The school emphasizes the run this year. We are a team that can run or pass and we can be dominant in both, but really, it's leadership. We have some shoes to fill since we came up short last year."

North Augusta fell 27-20 to **South Florence** in the lower state championship game, and lost some seniors, but the team remains young and hungry. The Yellow Jackets passed for 2,349 yards and rushed for 3,105 last year thanks to Gaston and the offensive line.

"We feel amazing," Gaston said of his team. "We also try to include outside activities with the offensive line and our quarterbacks included. We want to be a brotherhood. We're a team that hopefully will win it all this year, but first we're a family team and we stand beside each other."

At 25th is **Clinton's Tre Aiken** (6-4, 265). A **North Carolina State** commit, he chose the Wolfpack over offers from **Georgia Tech**, **Appalachian State**, **Coastal Carolina**, and **Duke**.

"Every single time I've been there, it's been on," Aiken said. "People brought me in the locker room and really brought me in. I'm very close to a lot of the players, and it's just somewhere I feel like I can go and develop as a man and play at the same time."

Aiken helped the Red Devils to a 12-2 record and the team's first state championship in 15 years last year.

Caden Muskus (6-5, 280) of Chapin is at No. 32 and is another Appalachian State commit. The tackle had offers from **Charleston Southern**, **Coastal Carolina**, **Gardner-Webb**, and **Liberty**.

"It came down to not one thing, but it was also the coaching staff," Muskus said. "Coach Loggains and the O-line coach (Mogridge) made it feel like home, but they were the cherry on top. I liked a lot of things about the school."

With his commitment to the Mountaineers settled, Muskus can focus on being a team leader and getting the job done at Chapin.

"Caden is a great player for us and was voted one of our captains this year," second-year Chapin head coach **Ryan Cole** said. "He has a great work ethic and started playing lacrosse as well as football. He's one of the leaders in football."

Muskus picked up on being a leader last year.
"On the field I've noticed a lot of people looking up to me and I have to be that role model," he said. "I'm the one along with some of our other great players. We're the seniors and we've been here for a while."

As for Chapin improving on its 6-6 season last year, Muskus says the team is responding.

"I see a strong team. We're hungry, we really are," he said. "We had our first scrimmage and were excited to get on the field and hit someone. We're smash-mouth, we're gritty, and we'll do what it takes to win."

Garrison Vaughan (6-4, 251) of **Laurens Academy** is 52nd. Vaughan has offers from **The Citadel**, **Denison University** in Ohio, and **Presbyterian College**. After helping the Crusaders to the SCISA 8-man football championship game, Vaughan attended camps at **Mercer**, **Catawba**, **The Citadel** and **Wofford**.

"I also spent a lot of time by myself this summer, working on my craft and also a lot of time working in the weight room with the guys," he said. Adding that while Laurens lost to **Richard Winn** in the final game, the team has a strong shot to make a return trip. "I feel like we have a really good shot to make a run at the state championship. We have a lot of things to im-

See Offensive Line, pg. 31

Wide Receivers / Tight Ends Feature



Some of the state's best talent is in the wide receivers group in 2025

Dillon's Robertson uses camp to earn UNC scholarship

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Moncks Corner – Meeting famous people can be somewhat intimidating for the average person. Imagine the opportunity to sit down and “shoot the bull” with a famous athlete, or coach.

Now imagine that famous coach offers you a chance to play for him. That can be overwhelming and gratifying at the same time.

Dillon High wide receiver **Zay Robertson** (6-1, 165, 4.4) had such an encounter earlier this summer. Robertson, considered among the best rising senior pass-catchers in the state, was receiving minimal interest from several college football programs. He took an opportunity to showcase his skills at a football camp hosted by the **University of North Carolina**.

Robertson's main goal was to impress coaches and receive more college interest. By the end of the day, Robertson was sitting in the office of new Tar Heel head coach **Bill Belichick**, yes, the same guy that led the **New England Patriots** to six Super Bowl championships.

Robertson started his camp impressively enough to warrant an invitation to the second-half of the camp. After catching two passes in the morning session of the camp, an eye witness at the camp, said Coach Belichick could be heard telling assistant coaches to make sure Robertson was in the elite camp scheduled for the afternoon. That session was reserved for the most impressive performers of the first-half of the camp. Getting to stay after lunch, and perform meant increased scholarship opportunities.

Robertson was able to match and improve on his morning camp and was invited to Belichick's office for a one-on-one meeting. Robertson left Chapel Hill with a scholarship offer. Some observers at the camp said that Robertson reminded Coach Belichick of former **Blackville-Hilda** and **Marshall** star **Troy Brown** who went on to become the all-time leading receiver in New England Patriots history.

“They said they liked my speed and my release, but mostly they said they loved my work ethic, how I was always first in line for every drill,” Robertson said. “I don’t think I was even on their board until they saw me workout. When they told me that coach Belichick wanted to talk to me in his office, I felt pretty good about getting an offer.”

Robertson showed maturity by not jumping to a commitment that day. He took about two weeks to think about his future. He had also gained interest

from East Carolina, Navy and Coastal Carolina, among others.

Robertson admits to being a little in awe of sitting down with a coaching legend. Now he gets to play for that same coach.

“I mean, it’s Bill Belichick,” he said. “He knows what it takes to get into the league and stay there. I know I will learn so much about football while I’m there.”

Last season, Robertson caught 59 passes for 880 yards and nine touchdowns. He will hope for better numbers this season and wants to leave Dillon as one of the all-time greats.

“I’ve always wanted to be great at everything I do,” he said. “I want to set a good example for the younger guys just like some of the older guys did for me when I was coming up.”

Robertson is ranked as the No.1 receiver prospect in the 2025 class by the High School Sports Report. The No. 2 ranking goes to **Bluffton’s Carnell Warren**, who also is committed to North Carolina. The 6-4, 195-pound Warren grabbed 59 passes for 846 yards and 14 touchdowns in 2024

Indian Land’s Sequel Patterson (6-0, 165) is an early commit to South Carolina and is one of the state’s most versatile athletes. Patterson has played quarterback, receiver, running back and defensive back for Indian Land. He had 758 receiving yards and 441 rushing yards last season. He is projected to be a receiver at USC.

Jude Hall (6-3, 185) of **Christ Church** also has ended his recruitment, accepting an offer from **Memphis**. He caught 59 passes for 795 yards last season.

Wake Forest has secured the commitment of **Riverside** athlete **Somad Eaddy** (6-0, 165) and he could play receiver or defensive back in college.

Crescent’s Amiri Acker (6-2, 185) has committed to Liberty after averaging 21 yards per catch last season.

Woodland’s Jaemin Pinckney, a **South Florida** commit, is an intriguing prospect at 6-5, 215 pounds. Some project him as a receiver or tight end while others feel he may end up as a defensive end.

“The South Florida coaches told me that they evaluated a lot of outside linebackers in the state of South Carolina, and by far, Jaemin was the most talented player at the position they saw in the state,” said Woodland head coach **Eddie Ford**. “Jaemin is so athletic, and he has great length with excellent lateral movement a linebacker needs.

“He has been a starter in our program since mid-

way through his freshman season,” said Coach Ford. “He is still growing into his body. He has a very high football I-Q. He is projected to be 6-6 and 240 pounds before he finishes his college career.”

Northwestern speedster **Kameron Vance** caught 72 passes for 1,126 yards and 16 touchdowns last season. Vance (5-8, 170) has committed to Lafayette.

In the junior class, the top receiver prospect is **Summerville’s Jaiden Kelly-Murray** (5-11, 175). Murray caught 72 passes for 1,200 yards and 14 touchdowns as a sophomore. Florida offered him late in the summer.

Other top receivers in the 2026 class include **Chanin Harris** of **Byrnes**, **Amare Patterson** of **Bluffton**, **Khristian Jackson** of **Ridge View**, **Maleek Miller** of **Irmo**, and **Dai’Shon Watkins-Hymes** of **Dorman**.

Tight Ends
The 2025 class of tight ends is quite strong with several top prospects having already made commitments. Tight ends are versatile performers these days. Some line up along the line of scrimmage and specialize in blocking while others are more H-backs that can line up in the backfield or at a receiver position.

Cross High’s Caden Ramsey is a 6-5, 200-pound safety and receiver but his scholarship offers are as a tight end. He has offers from South Carolina, Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech and Coastal Carolina.

“Most of the schools are talking tight end, more of an H-back,” Ramsey said. “I’ve never played tight end but I am willing to learn. For me, it’s all about getting on the field and contributing. I m keeping an open mind and just want to be comfortable wherever I go.”

Ramsey says he will likely commit early into the season after a few visits.

South Carolina already has a tight end committed. **Newberry’s Jamel Howze** (6-3, 215) gave his pledge early on.

Tilden Riley of **Orangeburg Prep** (6-5, 205) has committed to **Vanderbilt**, choosing the Commodores over Duke and Virginia Tech.

Walker Kelly of **T.L. Hanna** is 6-5, 220 pounds and is committed to Wofford while **Anthony Atkins** of **Christ Church** is committed to Navy as an athlete.

West Ashley’s Bristol Biegenzahn is 6-5, 220-pounds and plays tight end and defensive end. He is committed to **Elon**.

Defensive Line Feature



Some of the best 2025 Defensive Linemen in SC

Slight down year for defensive linemen in SC

By WORTHY EVANS
Special Writer

Columbia—There are few defensive linemen populating the **High School Sports Report’s** Top 100 Seniors in South Carolina this season, but the ones who made it are sure to be high prizes at the college level.

Topping the list of senior defensive linemen is the lean and mean **Dutch Fork** defensive end **Julian Walker**. The 6-feet, 6 inch, 250-pounder committed to **Michigan** in June and is No.14 on the list of the Top 100 seniors.

Walker, a rangy 4-star prospect who can line up as an outside linebacker when needed, had 50 total tackles, 19 for loss, 11 sacks, and a fumble recovery last year as the Silver Foxes secured their first 5A Division I championship, third straight state title in a row, and eighth state crown since 2012.

Going into this season, Walker said the formula for himself and for his teammates is simple, hard work and the drive to perfection.

“I’ve been working on my pass rush, staying consistent throughout the time of my pass rushes, not taking any plays off, stuff like that,” he said, adding that he’s doing what everyone else is doing as a team. “You could see it on our team. We’re trying to stay dominant, offense and defense. There’s a couple of things we could work on, but we’ll get that in the bag. We definitely looking for a four-peat. We’re staying consistent and trusting the process.”

Walker, the son of USC assistant and former Wisconsin running back Jamil Walker, chose Michigan over South Carolina, North Carolina, N.C. State, Auburn, and 13 other schools. The elder Walker told a Michigan fan site that “Julian has his own things that he’s chasing. He’s been with me every step of the way, and now he’s making his way.”

Gaffney defensive tackle **Kelton Smith** (6-5, 290) is an **East Carolina** commit and at No.24. Smith played eight-man football at Oakbrook Prep in Spartanburg his junior year before transferring to the Indians. He’s looking to help the Indians (10-2 in 2024) go deep into the postseason this fall.

“I’ve been doing a lot of training really, preparing mentally, staying mentally strong,” Smith said, adding that East Carolina impressed him immediately. “Really, the college coaches were amazing. It was real fun. I had a real good time with them.”

Bluffton defensive lineman **Chris Doyle** (6-1, 290) is an **Appalachian State** commit and No.33 on the list. Doyle had 67 total tackles, 18 for loss, five sacks and 26 hurries for the Bobcats last season.

Named 4A All-State and First Team All-Region 6-4A, Doyle chose Appalachian State over offers from **The Citadel** and **Georgia Southern**.

Ashley Ridge defensive end **J.T. King** (6-4, 240) is 40th on the list. King had 43 tackles, 20 for loss, 7 sacks, 3 forced fumbles, 4 passes defended, and one blocked field goal for the Swamp Foxes last year. He has offers from **UNC-Charlotte**, **Anderson**, and **McPherson**, and has generated interest from **South Carolina**, **Coastal Carolina**, **South Carolina State**, **North Carolina A&T**, **Wofford**, and **Liberty**. He plans to announce a commitment Sept. 6.

“To get ready for my senior season I have been training, lifting, and stretching every day,” he said. “I feel I have grown a lot this summer due to the motivation from my family, community, and my team.”

Ashley Ridge finished 8-4 and reached the second

round of the 5A Division I playoffs. This fall King said the team is poised for another strong season.

“I know we have a great team this year. Our offense is very explosive and versatile, Our defense is very aggressive and competitive, and we have outstanding coaches on both sides of the ball,” King said. “But the biggest thing we have is communication and a strong bond. I know if anything happens my brothers have my back on and off the field. I love this team and I truly feel this team is state bound.”

Edge rusher **Sawyer Arnold** (6-4, 220) of 3A state champion **Oceanside Collegiate** is another Appalachian State commit and is at No.43.

“App State felt like home the moment I got there,” he said. “The town, game day atmosphere and the overall vibe they had was electric.”

With his commitment in place, Arnold has worked with the rest of the team to reach the state title game again.

“Our team has put in hard work all summer in the weight room and on the field,” Arnold said. “No other team in South Carolina has put in the work we did all summer physically and mentally. We are ready to shock the state and have another great season. Go Sharks!”

Chester defensive end **Terry Radford** (6-1, 230) is at No.54. Radford had 116 tackles, 26 for loss, 16 sacks and 18 hurries for the 5-6 Cyclones last year. He has offers from Concord University in West Virginia and Wofford.

Nick Sapp (6-0, 300) of Denmark-Olar is at No. 86. Sapp said he’s had a good offseason in preparing to be a senior leader in the trenches.

“I think we’re going to do good this year,” he said noting his team’s 4-7 mark in 2024. “We’ve got better talent this year than we have in the past. I’ve been to a lot of camps and prepping myself and getting better. We’re looking good, I feel like we can do better physically.”

He said he hasn’t heard from colleges at this point, but added that he’s interested in “staying close to home.” **Sumter’s David Rogers** (6-2, 280) is 91st on the list. Also, a top wrestler in the heavyweight class, Rogers had 13 tackles, two for loss, and a sack in eight games at **Lakewood** last year before transferring to Sumter.

Jaylon Davis (6-0, 290) of Union County is 101st. Davis had 58 tackles, 9 for loss, and 7 ½ sacks last season.

Hartsville’s Chris Price (6-3, 275) is not listed among the Top 100 Seniors but is itching for the season to start so he can show that he should have been. Price has offers from Newberry, South Carolina State, N.C. Central, N.C A&T, **Elon** and **Clark Atlanta**. “Chris has been a three-year starter and works extremely hard,” Red Foxes head coach **Jeff Calabrese** said. “He’s a great teammate, an honor-roll student, a well-rounded athlete. Last year he was All Conference, and with his hard work and effort this year he’s really going to make a difference.”

Price said to be the leader that Coach Calabrese and the team wants and expects him to be, he has to be in shape. He and the team know that to do better than last year’s 10-2-1 record, Region 5-4A championship, and third round visit in the playoffs, conditioning is key.

“That’s the biggest thing when you play four downs and four quarters, I can’t be a leader if I’m not in condition,” Price said. “Every day after practice we run extra sprints on our own. I think we’re going to do good. Our D-line is good. We’re definitely ready to come out and go hard.”

Another honorable mention is Andrew’s edge rusher **Chris Stewart** (6-3, 230). Stewart has offers from **Western Michigan**, **Campbell**, **Elon**, **Gardner-Webb**, **Mercer**, and The Citadel, among others.

“Getting ready for this year I went to a lot of football camps to get myself locked in and learning from different college coaches on my technique,” Stewart said.

Last year Andrews finished 6-5 overall and 2-3 in Region 6-2A. Stewart knows his team needs to improve on last year and he’s seeing it.

“We did decent, but this year we’ve got a good team and we should be able to make a deeper run,” Stewart said. “It feels good being able to lead at my position. I was once in that position of following the older guys, and now I’m in that position, inspiring other people and making them feel better.”

Among the top 25 juniors, **South Pointe’s Seth Tillman** (6-3, 260) is sixth. Tillman has offers from South Carolina, **Arkansas**, **Clemson**, **Georgia Tech**, and **Kentucky**.

“He’s a great defensive lineman and he comes from a great family,” head coach **Bobby Collins** said. “He’s a great young man. He’s not finished growing. Both he and (teammate and offensive lineman and USC commit) **Anthony Baxter** are Sunday players.”

To get there one day, Tillman knows he’s got to put in the work now. He had 76 tackles, 25 for loss, and 15 ½ sacks in last season’s 11-3 effort and he knows he needs to improve on that.

“First and foremost, I have to stay humble,” he said. “I’ve got to get my body right, and I’ve been working extra hard and I’ve got to make sure my grades stay right and listen to my coaches.”

Jaden Wueth (6-3, 270) of Dutch Fork is 16th on the list. Wueth transferred to Dutch Fork from **Aquinas**, Ga., where he compiled a team-high 147 tackles, 38 for loss, and 13 sacks.

In coming to South Carolina, Wueth said he knew he wanted to go to a winning team, and the Silver Foxes stood out. He added that he didn’t know much about head coach **Tom Knotts’** program—other than the eight state championships it won since 2012.

“I know they’re missing some guys and I’m there to help them out, Wueth said. “Guys like (DE) **Josh Smith** where I can fill some gaps. (Teammate) **Julian (Walker)**—50 tackles, 19 for loss,11 sacks) is on the other side so we should be pretty dominant.”

Wueth already has an offer from South Carolina, and Clemson and Georgia Tech have shown interest in him.

Emerald’s Marquise Anderson (5-9, 210) is 25th. Anderson had 95 tackles, 15 for loss, two sacks and 13 hurries, good for earning a spot on the Region 1-4A All-Region Team.

“Marquise Anderson is an undersized, quick and aggressive problem for offensive linemen,” head coach **Tad DuBose** said. “He had a great sophomore year and we are expecting another great season. Marquise had a great off season improving his speed and agility.”

Kamarion Glenn of **Belton-Honea Path** (5-10, 300) is 30th. Glenn had 29 tackles, two for loss, four sacks and nine hurries as the Bears (13-2) reached the 3A state championship game last season.

Head coach **Russell Blackston** said the junior 3-year starter for BHP is a great asset to the team and will only get better in his junior and senior years.

“He starts as a defensive tackle but he also plays

SCISA Football Feature

2025 marks beginning of SCISA’s 55th football season

By: GERALD DOOLITTLE
GOOSE CREEK, SC- On August 15, 2025 the **South Carolina Independent Schools Association** opened its 55th football season. **Jefferson Davis Academy, Roy Hudgens Academy and Country Day** got SCISA football started in 1970. Now, in 2025 there are 49 schools playing in **Classes 4A, 3A,2A, 1A and 8-Man**.

As we go into the 2025 season will **Hammond (4A), Pinewood Prep (3A), Pee Dee Academy (2A), Thomas Heyward Academy (1A) and Richard Winn Academy (8-Man)** defend their 2024 titles.

Will Porter-Gaud (4A), Wilson Hall (3A), Bethesda Academy (2A), Williamsburg Academy (1A) and Laurens Academy (8-Man) make it back to the finals.

Hammond (13-0) coached by **Jon Wheeler** will be going for their 9th straight title and 22nd in program history. The **Skyhawks** will be led by six seniors and an army of juniors.

The **Porter-Gaud Cyclones (11-2)** coached by **Matt Neighbors** should again be in the 4A battle for a title. The Cyclones will have a strong senior leadership in **Benjamin Tolly, Scott Tibbals, West Freeman, Trenton Kirk, Jackson Shealy, Kayden Pryor, Henley Mathews, Pierce Lewis, Haze Marchant and Hugh Mathews**.

The **Northwood Academy Chargers (10-3)** coached by **Johnny Waters** will be led by **M J Davis (sr)** from the quarterback slot. Last season he completed 13 or 20 passes for 258 yards and rushed for 138 yards for 3 tds. He also had 196 receiving yards.

Aydan Hogan (sr) will again be the top receiver. Last season he had 43 receptions for 649 yards scoring 4 tds.

The **Chargers** rushing game will be led by **Kaven Ford (sr)** who rushed for 1096 yards and 17 touchdowns last season. **Michael Polite (sr)** rushed for 175 yards last season.

The **Ben Lippen Falcons (4-6)** coached by **Ben-nett Weigle** will be anchored by his 14 seniors with hopes of a title run. One of those seniors **Drake Porter** will be an impact defensive player. Last season he had 141 tackles. The offensive impact player will be junior **Michael Traynum** who last season rushed for 225 yards and had 124 receiving yards.

Augusta Christian (4-7), Laurence Manning (3-8), Heathwood Hall (2-8) and Cardinal Newman (2-9) are hoping for breakout season to climb the competitive ladder.

The **Pinewood Prep Panthers (10-2)** coached by **Devonte Holloman** hopes to defend their Region 1-AAA and State Titles. The Panthers offense will be led by **Will Watson (sr)**. Last season he completed 12 passes for 242 yards 2 tds and rushed for 207 yards 2 tds.

Grayson Salego (jr) will be an impact running back. Last season he had 139 yards for 2 tds. The top receiver will be **Jayden Alexander (sr)**. Last season he had 479 receiving yards for 6 tds. **Hay-**



Northwood Academy Chargers standouts

ward Moore (jr) last season had 159 receiving yards for 2 tds.

The **Hilton Head Christian Eagles (7-4)** coached by **Ron Peduzzi** hopes to win **Region 1-AAA** and advance to the playoff finals again.

The Eagle offense will be led by quarterback **Reid McCollum (sr)** who last season completed 183 passes for 2443 yards scoring 21 tds. He also rushed for 845 yards 16 tds.

Hudson Baker (sr) last season had 291 rushing yards. **Kres Langhals (jr)** last season had 205 rushing yards for 5 tds. He also had 233 receiving yards for 3 tds.

Joseph Houpt (jr) last season had 784 receiving yards for 5 tds and **Sam Strum (so)** had 384 receiving yards for 2 tds.

First Baptist School (2-8) and John Paul II (1-10) are working hard to climb the competitive ladder.

The **Wilson Hall Academy Barons (11-2)** coached by **Adam Jarecki** are on a mission to defend their **Region 2-AAA** crown and make it back to the playoff finals.

The Barons will be led by **Ford Wilder(sr)** who last season had 122 passing yards for 2 tds and 518 receiving yards for 5 tds. **Milling Galloway (sr)** rushed for 777 yards 8 tds. **Ben McLaurin** rushed for 511 yards 6 tds. **Harris Naylor (sr)** rushed for 246 yds 1 td and had 176 receiving yards 2 tds.

The **Northside Christian Crusaders (10-2)** coached by **Dean Howell** will be in a rebuilding year after 16 graduated from last years squad.

This season the rebuild will be lead by quarterback **B J Suits (jr)**. Last season he had 474 passing

yards for 2 tds and rushed for 444 yards 7 tds.

Other impact players for the Crusaders will be **Cason Veasey (so), Will Brodie (jr), John Rogers (sr)and Hunter Peeler (jr)**.

The **Florence Christian Eagles (6-5)** coached by **Neil Minton** are ready to claim a region title. The Eagles quarterback **Riley Minton (so)** last season had 571 passing yards for 5 tds. **Brooks Poston (sr)** had 147 receiving yards.

The Eagles rushing attack will have **Andrew Miller (jr)** who rushed for 926 yards 8 tds. **Josh Davis (sr)** rushed for 591 yards 7 tds and **Landon Feagin (sr)** rushed for 150 yards 3 tds.

The **Trinity Collegiate Titans (4-7)** coached by **Shawn Fagan** are hoping for a breakout season. The Titans offense will be led by quarterback **Davidson Lynch (sr)**. Last season he had 1346 passing yards for 12 tds. He also rushed for 487 yards 2 tds.

The Titans rushing will have **Robert Mack (jr)** who rushed for 538 yards 2 tds. **Andre Jackson (jr)** rushed for 237 yards 1 td.

The pass receivers will be **Owen Bex (jr)** who had 312 yards 4 tds. **Garrison Copeland** had 298 yards 1 td. **Desmond Williams (sr)** had 357 yards 5 tds and **Robert Mack (jr)** had 321 yards 2 tds.

The **Pee Dee Academy Golden Eagles (12-0)** coached by **Jonathan King** are ready to defend their Region 1-AA and State titles.

The Golden Eagles will have a strong running game led by **Tristan Heckman (sr)** who last season rushed for 1062 yards for 23 tds. He also had 195 receiving yards for 2 tds. On defense he had 102 tackles. **Ryan Small (sr)** rushed for 378 yards 3 tds and had 76 defensive tackles.

Judson Martin (jr) rushed for 171 yards 1 td.

The **Bethesda Academy Blazers (9-4)** coached by **Antwain Turner** hope his 14 seniors can get them back to the finals.



Northwood's Johnny Waters

SCISA AAAA Top 6 (As of 8/23/25)

1. Hammond
2. Northwood Academy
3. Porter-Gaud
4. Augusta Christian
5. Cardinal Newman
6. Laurence Manning

SCISA AAA Top 6 (As of 8/23/25)

1. Pinewood Prep
2. Wilson Hall
3. Hilton Head Christian
4. Trinity Collegiate
5. Florence Christian
6. John Paul II

Running Backs Feature



Some of the top running backs across South Carolina

2026 running backs class looks solid from top to bottom

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR

Goose Creek – South Carolina has a long history of producing some outstanding running backs and the 2026 class will continue that trend as there are several backs poised to add to their impressive career totals.

The past couple of years three running backs have joined the exclusive 6,000 plus career yards in **Midland Valley’s Traevon Dunbar (23), BHP’s Mar-guise Henderson (24), and South Aiken’s Jevon Henderson (24)**. Dunbar rushed for over 6,500 yards aided by a 3000-plus his senior year. Henderson, now at **Clemson**, ushed for 6,580 yards and Jevon led them all with 6,689 yards.

They joined the states all time leading rusher **Demetrius Summers (Lexington) 9,076 yards, Derek Watson (Palmetto) 6,766 yards and John LaBoard (Middleton) 6,500 yards**.

This season the top-rated running back and one of the top ten players in the state by the HSSR are ready to join that exclusive group in Thomas Heyward Academy’s **Tony O’Banner**

O’Banner (6-1,215) has been one of the top athletes in SCISA since 2020 when he rushed for over 800 yards and scored 10 touchdowns and averaged 11.6 points per game and six rebounds as an 8th grader. He is big strong back who runs through contact has excellent vision and reads his blocks well. He has good speed (4.56) and can score from any time he touches the football. A very versatile player who as sophomore played quarterback throwing for over 900 yards. A diamond in the rough where people will question his competition but as an 8th grader he rushed for 74 yards, averaging 6.4 yards per carry against **AAAA Bluffton**.

Heading into his senior season O’Banner can become just the second running back in state history to rush for over 7,000 yards. He has 5,882 yards, averaging over 10 yards a carry and has averaged over 2,000 yards the past two season so 8,000 yards it not out of the question. He presently has an offer from **Liberty** but several schools have shown interest. Some colleges also like him as an outside linebacker.

O’Banner scored two touchdowns on runs of 52 and 48 yards in the SCISA Class A state championship game this past November against **Williamsburg Academy**. Despite being the focus of all 11 defenders in the game, O’Banner was literally untouched by any opposing player on one of his TD’s runs out of the Wildcat formation. Both **SC** and **Clemson** are maintaining interest in O’Banner along with **Duke**. He carries a 3.7 GPA in the class room.

Note: Former **Mountain View Prep** running back **Jaylen McGill** had been a top 10 RB in the **HSSR** 2026 class of running backs, but he reclassified to the 2025 class and he is now at **North Carolina**. One source close to the family said McGill received a \$1.2 NIL offer to enroll a year early with the Tar Heels.

Gaffney’s **Jaiden McDowell (5-10, 165)** is the 16th ranked player in the state and the second highest rated running back by the HSSR. McDowell had a solid freshman year for the Indians but as a sophomore he was named the Region 2 AAAAA offensive player of the year. After rushing for 1313 yards and 13 touchdowns while grabbing 45 passes for 548 yards another four scores. Last season was cut short due to injuries but the Mercer commit is expecting a big senior season.

“Jaden was slowed with an injury last year and missed the majority of his junior season. I hope his senior year compliments or is an extension of his 10th grade year,” said Gaffney head coach **Donnie Littlejohn**. “His strengths are his vision, breakaway speed, confidence and experience coming in as a 4-year starter.”

Ashley Ridges **Ryan Campbell (5-9, 185)** is the 48th ranked player in the HSSR top 100. He comes to Ashley Ridges after spending his first three seasons at rival Fort Dorchester where he rushed for over 1800 yards and 18 touchdowns. He brings blazing speed to the Swamp Fox backfield this season. He runs a 4.31 forty and has clocked at 10.07 in the 100 meters. He has great vision in the hole and reads the play and blocks well. He can score from anywhere on the field. He has several offers: Appalachian State, Coastal Carolina, Colorado State, North Carolina, Pittsburgh, UConn, Wake Forest, and West Virginia.

Batesburg-Leesville’s **Amandre Wooden (5-11, 205)** checks at 59th in the HSSR top 100. He is ranked as the top returning player in the Midlands by The State newspaper. He used his 4.4 speed to rush for the third highest single season rushing yards in Batesburg-Leesville history with 2138 yards and 26 touchdowns. He rushed for over 300 yards against Andrew Jackson in the AA play-offs. He has

“I have worked on my ball security and running behind my pads this summer because I had a couple of fumbles last year when the tackler got lower than me,” said Wooden. “We want to win state this year so we can leave a legacy like past teams.”

North Augusta’s **Michael Doe (5-9, 190)** is another speed demon who rushed for 1828 yards and 32 touchdowns a year ago. He has committed to Gardner Webb after getting offers from several other schools. He checks in as the 66th best player by the HSSR.

Kingstree’s **Tyleek Dukes (6, 200)** is coming off a break year where he rushed for 1798 yards and 21 touchdowns for the Blazers. He ranked 92nd by the HSSR. He got his first offer from Presbyterian over the summer and is hearing from Navy and Coastal Carolina.

Former coach **Brian Smith** said, “Tyleek has great vision and balance to go with excellent speed. He was one of the best players I’ve coached but he is even a better person.”

Dukes talked with the **HSSR** at media day about his

goals and said, “I want to do the same thing I did my junior year and play with my brothers and go out with a bang. I trained a lot over the summer to get bigger, stronger, and faster and I can’t wait to get started.”

A couple of seniors who are under the radar are Clinton’s **Javen Cook (5-7, 175)** and Andrew’s **AJ Lee (5-10, 190)**. Cook rushed for 1824 yards and 21 touchdowns. He has 2191 career yards and with another season like last year and he could top 4000 yards for his career.

Lee came on strong his sophomore year as he led the Yellowjackets in rushing after an injury to Touch-tone North/ South all-star **Lavon White** with 1257 yards and followed that up with a team high 1467 yards. He can also top the 4000 career yards with another strong campaign. He is currently hearing from SC State, Erskine, and Coastal Carolina.

Andrews head coach **Scott Durham** said about AJ, “ We just need him to be the best version of himself that he can be. We don’t need him to be superman, we just need him to be AJ and he will have a great year.”

The **HSSR** asked AJ what his goals for this year, “I want to make all my stats count. I’m really going for 2500 yards this year. I plan to show out with my teammates in my senior year. I want to play at the next level so I’m going to what I have to do to get noticed.”

Some other senior to watch are **Nehemiah Brown (5-11, 180)** of Barnwell, **Brayden Williams (5-11,175)** of Saluda, **Damais Seegars (5-11,175), Ter-rance Wilson (5-10,200)** of Lake City, and **Domonick Felton (5-11,170)** of Dillon.

In the SCISA ranks there are some very good returning running backs in Dorchester Academy’s **John Whetsell (5-11,200)**, Beaufort Academy’s **Nych Underwood (5-10,190)**, Saint John’s Christian’s **Dor Reichley (5-9, 185)**, and Northwood’s Academy **Kaven Ford (5-8, 180)**. All if this backs ran for over 1500 yards last season with Whetsell leading the bunch with 1752 yards.

Northwood’s head coach Johnny Waters said of Kaven, “We expect a big year this year from Kaven as he will not have to share the ball as much this year. He is an unselfish player who works hard every day to get better.”

The junior class could be one of the strongest in recent memory as four of the HSSR’s top 25 players are running backs in **#5 Jayven Williams (5-8,165)** Summerville, **#6 Trenton Lynch (5-9,185)** Spartanburg, **David Segarra #9 (5-10, 205)** Byrnes and **Josiah Mosley #24 (5-10,165)** Wren. Willaims rushed for over 2000 yards for the Green Wave last season.

Northwestern’s **Zymier Gordon-Miles (6,200)** is another junior to watch. He ran for over 1200 yards in the Trojans pass happy offense.

Also, in the junior class (2026) are **Cross’s**

Quarterbacks Feature

SC Quarterbacks solid at the top in 2026

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR
Goose Creek – The quarterback position has certainly changed over the years, from the option of-fenses such as the wishbone and the split back veer, to the run and shoot, to the shot-gun and now you have the “RPO” game where the quarterback makes a read to run, handoff or throw the ball, all in a split second, which is why you see one of the best athletes on the team at that position.

Last season Irmo’s **AJ Brand Jr**, a **Virgina Tech** signee, was the top QB running the RPO as he threw for over 2,600 yards and rushed for over 2,000 yards. There were many more outstanding quarterbacks like **Westside’s Cutter Woods**, now at **South Carolina**, along with **Northwestern’s Finley Polk** and **Hammond’s Andrew Turner**. This trio put up more passing yards but were effective runners in their team’s offense also.

Hilton Head Christian Academy has used the Quarterback centric offense for a while and head coach **Ron Peduzzi** stated what a lot of coach’s feels about this type of offense, “Our offense is a multiple read progression with check offs, automatic calls, and hot calls,” he said. “Throw in some RPO’s and options and you have a very diverse offense. It takes some time to learn our system.”

While 2026 Quarterback class may not have a player of Brand Jr’s athletic ability it has some quality talent with three of the top four quarterbacks rated by the *HSSR* already committed to play at the Division 1 level. They are **Gaffney’s Jayvon Gilmore (Arkansas)**, **Stratford’s Jachin Davis (Liberty)**, and **Spartanburg’s Trey Burke (East Carolina)**.

Gilmore (6-5, 200) is the top-rated QB by the *HSSR* and the number four ranked player in the state. He transferred to Gaffney from SCISA school **Ben Lippen**, after throwing for 1,767 yards and 22 touchdowns as a sophomore. He showed last season that the AAAAA stage was not too big for him as he led the Indians to a region 2- AAAAA championship, and a berth in the upper state finals. He threw for 2,510 yards and 26 touchdowns last season and picked up an additional 176 yards on the ground. He committed to Arkansas last August and has stuck with them despite 20 plus other offers from around the country. He is ranked as the 24th best QB in the nation by 247 sports “Jayvon has arm talent and is a returning starter in our offense. He has experience with region 2 AAAAA football and that experience will be an asset this season. He has continued grow and mature into the position and has become a team leader,” said Gaffney head coach **Donnie Littlejohn**.

Believe it or not. Gilmore will be challenged for playing time this season, by **Greenville High** transfer **Banks Bouton** (6-2,200) who passed for 2,253 yards and 18 TD’s as a junior. Bouton also rushed for 441 yards and he added 13 touchdowns on the ground. Gaffney defeated Dutch Fork, 21-14 in a two -quarter jamboree recently that was halted due to severe lighting around the stadium. Bouton tossed two TD passes in this game after Gilmore struggled to move the of-fense earlier. Bouton will start at WR when not playing quarterback.

Ashley Ridge’s Trevor Kalisz (6,215) is the next highest rated QB by the *HSSR* and is number 28 in the state by the *HSSR*. He has had two outstanding years under center for the Swamp Cats and has led them to consecutive playoff berths. He has passed for 6549 yards and 61 touchdowns while completing over 70% of passes last season. One area that he needs to work on is taking care of the football as he tossed 28 interceptions over the past two seasons.

Sitting at 29 in the *HSSR* Top 100 is **Stratford’s Jachin Davis** (6-1, 203). The Liberty commit had over 2500 yards of total offense last season and accounted for 26 touchdowns. He is ranked as the 131st



Some of the state’s best quarterbacks

QB in the nation by 247 sports. He is also an outstanding baseball player. Last season he hit .493 while stealing 32 bases.

“Jachin has always been one to lead by example. He is starting to become a vocal leader but prefers to let his actions lead. He has excellent athletic ability, is a Fierce competitor, and smart but he is also very underrated player. His best football is ahead of him,” said Stratford head coach **Dennie McDaniel**.

Trey Burke (6-3, 205) of Spartanburg has committed to **East Carolina** and will be joining former Viking QB **Raheim Jeter** in Greenville, North Carolina. He is the 31st ranked player in the state by the *HSSR* and is ranked 170th by 247 sports. Last season injuries limited him to 9 games but he returned to lead the Vikings to the AAAAA division 1 upper state finals. He finished the year with 1,065 yards passing and 11 touchdowns.

South Florence **Messiah Jackson** (6-1,220) checks in at 39th in the *HSSR* Top 100. Last season he led the Bruins to their third consecutive state AAAA championship game and their second state title in three years. He threw for over 2000 yards and 30 touchdowns. He also ran for 369 yards and 11 touchdowns. He has offers from Davidson, Lenior-Rhyne, Newberry, and UNC Pembroke.

“Messiah has grown tremendously over the past 3 years. His accuracy on short throws, ability to push the ball down the field, ability to have an impact in the game running and getting the ball out on time are all areas his improved upon. He is the team leader and I’m excited to watch him play this season,” said South Florence head coach **Drew Marlowe**.

South Pointe’s **Cameron McMillon** (6-4, 235) is ranked 61st by the *HSSR* coming into the season. He started his career at **Fairfield Central** where he threw for 5714yards and 55 TD’s during his freshman and sophomore seasons. He transferred to **South Pointe** for his junior season. Last season he led the Stallions to the AAAA upper state finals throwing for 2,580 yards and 31 touchdowns bringing his career numbers to 8,294 yards and 86 touchdowns. This season he has the opportunity to join a very select group in South Carolina history. He can become just the 11th QB in state history to pass for over 10,000 career yards. He currently has offers from **Marshall** and **West Georgia**.

SCISA’s top QB is **Hilton Head Christian’s Reid McCollum** (6-4,215). He is arguably among the top athlete in SCISA, and he is projected to play linebacker at the next level. He has committed to the **Naval Academy** and ranked is 46th in the *HSSR* Top 100. Last season was his first at QB for the Eagles and he threw for 2,443 yards and 21 touchdowns while leading them in rushing with 845 yards and another 16 touchdowns. As a sophomore he was a demon on the defensive side of the ball totaling 78 tackles with 14 TFL’s and 9 sacks. He also had four picks and a fumble recovery.

“Reid had to learn to play the position last season.

He can throw the ball 75 yards no problem and is load when he tucks it and runs. As the season went on he learned how to be a quarterback in our system. He continues to get bigger and stronger and we are expecting big things from him this season,” said coach Peduzzi.

Some other senior QB’s to watch this season are **Johnny Collins –Blythewood, Roper Wentzky – AC Flora, and Quinn Mahoney – Bishop England**. They all threw for over 2,000 yards last season and 20 plus touchdowns a season ago. Mahoney is committed to **Campbell University**.

There are some exciting juniors to watch this season led by **Oceanside Collegiate’s Aiden Manavian** (6, 185). He burst on the scene as a freshmen when he took over the starting job for an injured senior **Edward Reidenbach** and led the Landsharks to their first state championship. Last season he followed it up by throwing for 3,469 yards and 19 scores while leading the Landsharks to back-to-back state championships. This one was at the AAA level.

Other junior QB’s to watch in the class of 2027 are **Tre Howard III** (5-10, 180)– **Ridge View, Grayson Clary** (6-2, 215) – **Daniel, Gideon Merhib** (6, 175) – **Riverside, Sam Holiday** (6,195) – **Fountain Inn, and Henry Rivers** (5-10,175) – **Berkeley**. Clary threw for over 2,800 yards and 41 touchdowns with only two picks while completing 70% of his throws. He also rushed for over 300 yards and another seven touchdowns while leading the Lions to the upper state championship game.

Rivers is a two-year starter with over 3500 career passing yards while Holiday rushed and passed for over 1,000 yards last season. Rivers is a gold glove outfielder on the Stags state championship baseball team.

In SCISA **Laurence Manning** junior **Grainger Powell** (5-11, 170) had a breakout season as a sophomore throwing for more than 2,000 yards and 20 plus touchdowns. He has a quick release and nice touch on the deep ball.

Rising sophomores to watch are **Jace Grass** (6-1,180) of Pendleton and **Jaiden Holloway** (5-10, 160) of Ridge Spring-Monetta. Grass threw for 1969 yards and 18 scores as a freshman while Holloway completed 65% of his throws for 1,010 yards and he rushed for 1,153 yards.

In the 2029 class the top freshman QB in the state is Dillon’s **Khayel Samfong Talia** (6-2, 208). “Khayel” tossed three TD passes in the Wildcats 21-14 win over Darlington in a recent jamboree. He was named a next level Under Armour all-American and played in a national all-star game in Orlando, Florida last December.

He is already getting serious recruiting interest from **Georgia, Florida, SC, Clemson** and **BYU**.

*Quarterbacks that have thrown for over 10,000 career yards: 1 – **Justin Worley – Northwestern – 13385, 2- Shuler Bentley – Byrnes – 13245, 3- See Quarterbacks, pg. 31**

SCISA Football Feature



In 2024, Pee Dee Academy captured the SCISA AA title

The **St. Johns Christian Cavaliers** (4-7) coached by **Shaun Welch** should be competitive in Region 1-AA. **Jacob Glover** (sr) is back at quarterback. Last season he had 1298 passing yards for 12 tds. **Dor Reichley** (sr) is back as running back. Last season he rushed for 1510 yards 17 tds. He also had 150 receiving yards for 2 tds.

Hilton Head Prep (3-7) and **Dillon Christian School** (2-6-1) are working hard to be more competitive in 2025.

The **Calhoun Academy Cavaliers** (9-3) coached by **Todd Layton** are set to defend their Region 2AA title and a trip to the State finals.

Colt Layton (jr) is back to lead the offensive attack. Last season he had 829 passing yards for 11 tds, 1158 rushing yards for 15 tds and had 141 receiving yards for 1 td.

Crews Felder (sr) had 131 receiving yards and **Joseph Lyons** (so) had 136 rushing yards 2 tds and 274 receiving yards for 4 tds.

The **Greenwood Christian Hawks** (8-3) coached by **Will Rooney** has a goal of winning the Region 2-AA title and a trip to the State finals. Leading the Hawks offense from the quarterback slot is **Leland Reed**. Last season he had 1621 passing yards for 22 tds and rushed for 311 yards 8 tds.

Cole Hamby (sr) will lead the rushing attack. Last season he rushed for 378 yards 1 td. **Eli Seigler** (so) will also be a running back. Last season he had 104 yards 2 tds. **Bryson Dixon** (sr) should be the top receiver. Last season he had 411 receiving yard 7 tds.

The **Spartanburg Christian Warriors** (3-8) coached by **Sean Rogers** should be more competitive in 2025. **Cameron Bright** (jr) will spark the offense from the quarterback slot. Last season he had 237 passing yards for 4 tds and rushed for 612 yards 4 tds.

Noah Caffell (jr) last season had 138 passing yards and had 267 rushing yards for 6 tds. **Jacob Wiley** (jr) last season rushed 133 yards 1 td.

Orangeburg Prep (5-6), **Thomas Sumter Academy** (1-8) and **Clarendon Hall Academy** (0-10) hope to be competitive.

The **Williamsburg Academy Stallions** (10-2) coached by **Tyler Boyd** are ready to defend their Region 1-A title and advance to the playoff finals. The Stallions will be led by **Micah Balder** (sr) from the quarterback slot. Last season Balder had

1072 passing yards for 14 tds and rushed for 822 yards scoring 10 tds. **Jay Kellahan** (sr) will be a target in the receiving game. Last season he had 135 receiving yards scoring 1 td.

The **Dorchester Academy Raiders** (8-3) coached by **Michael Nelson** has enough power to take the Region 1-A and advance to the finals. **John Quattlebaum** (sr) from the quarterback slot will power the offense. Last season he had 1105 passing yards for 11 tds and 188 rushing yards. Quattlebaum has a powerful running back in **John Whetsell** (sr) who had 1752 rushing yards last season scoring 15 tds. Joining Whetsell in the rushing **Reed Almers** (so) who had 333 rushing yards scoring 2 tds. **Wyatt Judy** will also be a running back. **Abe Shuler** (sr) will be the primary receiver. He last season had 446 receiving yards scoring 3 tds.

Carolina Academy (5-5) and **Lee Academy** (4-6-1) will be competitive hoping for a deep run in post-season.

The **Thomas Heyward Academy Rebels** (12-1) coached by **Daniel Bryan** are ready to defend their Region 2-A and State titles.

Tony O’banner (sr) will power the Rebel of-fense. O’banner last season had 1970 rushing yards scoring 27 tds and passed for 384 yards scoring 4 tds. **Joshua Gibson** (sr) had 396 receiving yards for 5 tds.

The **Beaufort Academy Eagles** (8-4) coached by **Nic Shuford** has a strong running game behind **Nych Underwood** (sr). Underwood last season rushed for 1565 yards scoring 20 tds and had182 receiving yards and 1 td. **Nic Shuford** (so) last season had 403 receiving yards for 2 tds and rushed for 116 yards 3 tds. **Devin Fripp** (sr) had 563 receiving yards for 5 tds.

The **Colleton Prep War Hawks** (7-4) coached by **Greg Langdale** has enough fire power to make a serious run for region and state finals. **Cale Owens** (jr) from the quarterback slot fire the offense. Owens last season had 1214 passing yards scoring 13 tds. He also had 656 rushing yards.

Hartman Fisk (jr) had 214 rushing yards and 339 receiving yards. **Thomas Corbett** (jr) had 627 receiving yards. **Tanner Wolf** (sr) had 240 rushing yards and **Lucas Pellum** (so) had 121 rushing yards.

Patrick Henry Academy (4-7) and **Andrew Jackson Academy** (1-8) will work hard to be com-



Last season, Pinewood Prep captured the SCISA AAA crown

petitive. The **Richard Winn Academy Eagles** (12-0) coached by **Paul Brigman** are ready to defend their **8-Man Region One** and State titles in 2025. He has strong senior and junior leadership to build around.

It appears **Bennett Nicholson** (sr) will be the quarterback. Last season Nicholson had 229 receiving yards for 3 tds. **Eli Smith** (sr) rushed for 490 yards scoring 6 tds.

The **Laurens Academy Crusaders** (9-4) coached by **Jolly Doolittle** has enough power to make it to the finals and take care of unfinished business.

Ethan Collins will again lead the Crusaders from the quarterback slot. Collins last season had 1893 passing yards scoring 18 tds and rushed for 277 yards 3 tds. **Caleb Hardy** (jr) rushed for 488 yards 9 tds and had 751 receiving yards 7 tds. **Mason Cooper** (so) rushed for 441 yards 2 tds. **Nathan Bell** (sr) had 142 receiving yards.

Wardlaw Academy Patriots (8-3) coached by **Mark Rodgers** will be in a rebuild mode as he has to replace over 4000 yards of offense. However, the Patriots could be by mid-season a team that de-rails the other teams plans for playoff seedings.

The **W W King Academy Knights** (2-8) coached by **Brian Kneece** could be a sleeper team to have a break-out season. Kneece will have 25 on his roster which is the largest roster in many years. **Elijah Hutto** (jr) will be the quarterback. The Knights running game will have **Ty Doolittle (jr), Joseph Morse** (so), **Jacob Bussey** (fr) and **Jacob Clamp** (jr).

The Knights OL/DL will be anchored by **Wyatt Burbank** (sr), **Smith Kirby** (sr), **Josh Oswald** (so) and **Casen Buzhardt** (jr).

The **Knights receivers** will be **Dallas Hill** (sr), **Luke Harvey** (jr) and **Landell Anderson**(jr) **Newberry Academy** (3-7) and **Christian Academy** of **Myrtle Beach** (1-8) will work on climbing the competitive ladder.

SCISA 8-Man Region 2 will have **Holly Hill Academy** (9-2), **Jefferson Davis Academy** (11-2) and **Cathedral Academy** (8-3) **fighting for the top three slots. Kings Academy** (5-5), **Cross Schools** (2-9) and **Palmetto Christian** (4-4) work on climbing the competitive ladder.

SCISA AA Top 6 (As of 8/23/25)

1. Pee Dee Academy
2. Orangeburg Prep
3. Bethesda Academy
4. Greenwood Christian
5. Dillon Christian
6. St. Johns Christian

SCISA Class A Top 6 (As of 8/23/25)

1. Williamsburg Academy
2. Thomas Heyward
3. Lee Academy
4. Dorchester Academy
5. Patrick Henry
6. Colleton Prep

SCISA 8-Man Top 6 (As of 8/23/25)

1. Richard Winn
2. Holly Hill Academy
3. Jefferson Davis Academy
4. Wardlaw Academy
5. Laurens Academy
6. WW King Academy

AAAAA, continued from pg. 3

Region 6-AAAAA Predicted Order of Finish
Carolina Forest
Myrtle Beach
North Myrtle Beach
Socastee
Conway
St. James

The “beach region” was a lot of fun last season and it would seem that every team is better. Carolina Forest and Myrtle Beach are the teams to beat but both have holes to fill.

Carolina Forest won the region last year and finished with six wins overall. Coach **Marc Morris** may look to senior **Kamren Long** for his QB1 slot. Long has some experience as a backup. The running game is solid with the return of 1,700-yard rusher **Jaryn Fox**. Returning up front are **CJ Johnson**, **Gavin Williams** and **Michael Ries**.

Cayden Cole and **Nick Zincone** appear to be the top pass-catching threats. Linebacker **Darius Huggins** is a key leader defensively, along with safeties **Aiden Armstrong** and **Mason Jones**. Top defensive lineman are **Quillen Johnson** and **Anthony Cunningham**.

Top returners at Myrtle Beach include receivers **Jon Ross** and **JJ Brown**, and hard-hitting linebacker **Antonio Brown**. Another returning linebacker is **Jamarcus Carroll**. **Malachi Geathers** and **Eli Williams** return on the defensive front.

Next in line for the always important quarterback nod is **Tanner Gaddy**. **Michael Cohen** returns in the running game. **B.P. Jordan** is a returner on the offensive line. **Amare Brown** also is a factor offensively at receiver.

North Myrtle Beach’s best athlete, **Bricey Gore**, returns for his senior season and should be a factor on both sides of the ball. **Jaden Wilson** and **Lamonte Smith** will take over at running back and **Will McNeely** is a first-year starter at quarterback.

Linebacker **Mike Cavallini** is the top returner on defense, aside from **Gore**.

Socastee will be improved in 2025. Coach **Ben Hampton** is back with the program after missing most of last season attending to his son, who is now in cancer remission.

Sophomore running back **Landon Wilder** will be a key offensive threat and senior **Christian Rogers** in set at quarterback.

At Conway, **Noah Legg** returns with experience at quarterback. Wide receivers **Jordan Jenkins** and **Tramaine Hunter** are solid threats. Top linemen include **Tramaine Chandler** and **Sakari McLendon**.

St. James looks to get back in the win column after an 0-10 2024 season. The Sharks have a returning quarterback in **Alex Sandt** and a key receiver in **Josh Harnish**.

The defense should be led by ends **Hayden Broz** and **Jefferson Sterling**, along with linebacker **Hayes Cochrane**.

Region 7-AAAAA Predicted Order of Finish
Berkeley
Stratford
Cane Bay
Wando
Lucy Beckham
Goose Creek

With a bevy of three-year starters, inexperience cannot be used as an excuse if the Berkeley Stags struggle this fall. This very well could be the year Berkeley fans should expect to contend for the Division II state title in class AAAAA.

Directing an explosive offense is junior quarterback **Henry Rivers**, now a third-year varsity starter and a dual-threat in the backfield. Experience at running back with **Jessie Brown** and **Bryson McGee** will run behind a line that is anchored by senior tackle **Zion Britt**.

The receiving corps is talented but unproven. **John Cleveland** is a basketball player giving football a shot and 6-3 sophomore **Eli Williams** is a transfer from James Island. McGee also factors as a receiver.



2025 Spring Valley Vikings

The strength defensively is in the back seven with three-year starters **Gehad Snead**, **Kevin Rivers** and **Marcus Henderson**, all linebackers, with safety **Cam McCue** and corner **DJ Thompson** anchoring the secondary.

The 2025 Stratford Knights are potentially the best team **Dennie McDaniel** has had at Stratford. Though there are some concerns in areas on defense, the Stratford offense should be able to score some points.

Good teams have good quarterback play and the Knights have one of the best in the state in senior **Jachin Davis**. Having already secured a scholarship to Liberty University, the two-sport star is primed for a big finale.

The favorite target for Davis will be senior, an early commit to Georgia Southern. Stratford’s offense got a huge boost when running back **Maliq McGowan** transferred from Goose Creek late in the summer. McGowan is one of top running backs in the Lowcountry.

The offensive line returns a ton of experience, led by veterans **Jameson Pellum** and **Ben Johnson**.

Linebacker **Amir McKnight** is the top returner defensively. **Kermit Davis** is a sophomore to watch along the defensive line.

The Cobras of Cane Bay had a wacky 2024 season that started with seven straight losses and ended the regular season with three straight wins a region title.

Coach **Russell Zehr** can’t expect the same type of fortune this fall.

The Cobras will be solid at quarterback with the return of starter **Colby LaRocca**, a third-year varsity performer. **Tyler Meyers** is the top returning running back with **Coran Houpe** serving as a versatile offensive threat.

Anchoring the offensive line is returning third-year starter **Troy Stevens** while **Jamari Blandin** anchors the defensive secondary as an all-region performer. Senior **Brody Thacker** returns as an anchor at linebacker, along with senior **Cameron Smith**.

The kicking game is strong with the return of **Aiden Thorn**.

Wando improved from one win in 2023 to five wins in **Isaiah Perrin**’s first season as head coach.

Offensively, the Warriors return solid experience at quarterback as senior **Harris Stone** played in five games as a sophomore and was QB1 last fall. Stone lost all of his top receiving threats but **David Vennard** could be a key target this season.

Perrin reports a lack of experience along the offensive line but likes the overall size and potential of that group. Two key linemen include **Ben Buffkin** **Truere Rothchild**.

While the defense also lost valuable talent, the leader of the unit returns in senior linebacker **Matt Payes**, who Perrin says is the top overall player on the team.

The new transfer rules decimated the **Goose Creek** program with as many as nine potential and likely starters opting for new schools. That included the loss of the best quarterback, best receiver, best defensive backs and top running back. Coach **Jason Winstead** anticipates many freshmen and sophomores on the field but feels the Gators can be a competitive team. “We’re not changing our expectations here,” he said.

Freshman **Ty Deas** is expected to take over at quarterback and sophomore **Sincere Lewis** is a promising

prospect at running back. The Gators must replace four starters on the offensive line but the defensive front shows promise with **Brayden Reeves**, **Cameron Campbell**, and **Elijah Black**. **Deshawn Green** and **Kannan Williams** are leaders at linebacker.

After winning 16 games over two seasons (2022-23), the **Lucy Beckham** Bengals slipped to four wins in their first season in Class AAAAA. Coach **Jamel Smith** lost a ton of experience to graduation but the program is in solid position to compete.

The biggest hole to fill is at quarterback where **Chalmers Ballard** was a two-year starter and very productive. **Finn Gunter** is the leading candidate to take over the position. **Seth Damron** and **Ty Johnson** are expected to lead the offensive line, with **Nick Buggie** serving at tight end, **Brendan Dick** is the top returning wide receiver.

On defense, look for safety **Ian Crump** and linebackers **Troy Thompson** and **Jack Lamonica** to evolve as leaders.

Region 8-AAAAA Predicted Order of Finish
Summerville
James Island
Ashley Ridge
Fort Dorchester
West Ashley
Stall

A huge part of Summerville’s 26 wins over the last two seasons was the play of quarterback **Jaden Cummings**, who topped 6,000 passing yards over the last two seasons.

Cummings has graduated and Rafferty must decide on a starter between senior **Cooper Kafina** and transfer **Max Stafford**. Both are more than capable but the offense will need a consistent voice and leader.

Running back junior **Jayvn Williams** is coming off a huge sophomore season that produced more than 2,000 all-purpose yards. Wide receiver **Jaiden Kelly-Murray**, also a junior, caught 72 passes for more than 1,200 yards last season. Sophomore **Terue Davis** transferred from Goose Creek after a spectacular freshman season.

Jahmarion Lott should be the leader along the front, along with **Chris Hewitt**.

The defense must replace several key contributors but expect a talented group of linebackers to be strong. The unit will be led by senior **Tyree Patton** (113 tackles) and **JT Williams**. Another transfer, **Dexter Chavous** from Silver Bluff, will make an immediate impact along the defensive line.

James Island is 33-6 over the last three seasons under **Jamar McKoy**, who enters his sixth season at the school. The coach reports there are holes to fill but likes the chemistry and competitive nature of the 2025 Trojans.

A key returner offensively is senior quarterback **Connor Dantzler**, who showed great progress over the course of last season. The running back position lacks experience but the offensive line should be a strength with the return of tackle **Israel “Shank” Harris**, **Demontrai Cooper** and **Jimmy Jones**.

Among the favored targets in the passing game are **Raphael Puiu** and **James Hurteau**.

Dawson Wilson returns at defensive end and **Bryson Bowers** is a returning linebacker. **Jaseyvin Brown** is the top returning starter in the secondary.

Ashley Ridge head coach **Jeff Tate** will sit out the 2024 season

See AAAAA, pg. 29

Green Acres Turf Farm Prospects Page



HSSR 2025 Top 100 Senior Football Prospects

HSSR Revised & Updated Top 100 2026 Senior Football Prospects In SC (As of August, 25)

(Coaches Only: Nominate 2026 Top 100 Nominee, with stats: hsreport@aol.com)

Note: Once you pledge to a college, or flip to a new one, please let us know via e mail at hsreport@aol.com Please also let us know if we have your name misspelled.

HSSR TOP 100 2026 Class In SC

1. Desmond Green-Timberland-OL-6-5,333-Florida
2. Tony O’Banner-Thomas Heyward- RB-Ath-6-1,215
3. J’zavien Currence-South Pointe-DB-6-3, 205-South Carolina
4. Jayvon Gilmore-Gaffney—QB-6-5,200- Arkansas
5. Zyon Guiles-Carvers Bay-OL-6-4,295-South Carolina
6. Zay Robertson-Dillon-WR-6-0,165 (4.4)-North Carolina
7. Julian Walker-Dutch Fork-DE-6-6,220- Michigan
8. Kentavion Anderson-Dorman-FS-6-2,181-Clemson
9. Carnell Warren-Bluffton-WR-6-4,196-North Carolina
10. Anthony Baxter-South Pointe-OL-6-3,330-South Carolina
11. Sequel Patterson- Indian Land-WR-6-0,165-South Carolina
12. Jamel Howze-Newberry-TE-6-3,215-South Carolina
13. Michael Boulware-Gray Collegiate-MLB-6-2,205- STUD
14. Scotland Dover-Gaffney-OL 6-5,305-App State
15. Jaiden McDowell-Gaffney-RB-5-10,165-Mercer
16. Malcolm Gaston-North Augusta-OL-6-5, 330
17. Tamarion Watkins-DB-Northwestern-6-4, 200-Texas A&M
18. Jeremiah Favorite-Boiling Springs-CB-5-10,170-Michigan St.
19. Jude Hall-Christ Church-WR-6-3,185-Memphis
20. Caden Ramsey-Cross-WR-FS-6-5,200-Verbal Sept 8th
21. Somad Eaddy-Riverside-Ath.-6-0,165-Wake Forest
22. Jayden Boyd-Fairfield Central-WR/DB-Duke
23. Kelton Smith-Gaffney-DT-6-5,290-East Carolina
24. Tre Aiken-Clinton-OL-6-4,265-NC State
25. Tilden “T” Riley-Orangeburg Prep-TE-6-5,203-Vandy
26. Tristian Lewis-Greenwood-QB/DB-6-4,200-SC
27. Trevor Kalisz-Ashley Ridge-QB-5-11, 215
28. Kam Taylor-Woodruff-TE-6-6,230
29. Jachin Davis-Stratford-QB-6-1,185-Liberty
30. Amiri Acker-Crescent-WR-6-2,185-Liberty
31. Trey Burke-Spartanburg-QB-6-3,205-East Carolina
32. Caden Muskus-Chapin-OL-6-5,280-App. State
33. Chris Doyle- Bluffton-DL-6-1,29—App State
34. Jordyn Best-Ridge View-DB-5-11,180-NC State
35. Jordan Avinger-Orangeburg-Wilkinson-LB-6-3,222-Arkansas
36. Jaemin Pinckney-Woodland-WR-6-5,217-S Florida
37. Zyon Ratchford-Gaffney-LB-6-4, 200-East Carolina
38. Kadarus Hainsworth-Mountain View -WR-6-1,161-UNC Char
39. JT King-Pinewood Prep-DE/TE-6-4,240
40. Nyterrious Greer-Harrison-Crescent-WR-FS-6-0,170
41. Sawyer Arnold-Oceanside Collegiate-DE-6-4,220-App State
42. Romello Patterson-West Florence-LB-6-3,224-Coastal Car.
43. Kaleb Simpkins-Strom Thirmond-DB-6-1,175-offer-Wake
44. Reid McCollum-Hilton Head-LB-6-4,215-Navy
45. Walker Kelly-TL Hanna-TE-6-5,220-Wofford
46. Ryan Campbell-Ashley Ridge-RB-5-9,182
47. Anthony Atkins II-Christ Church-Ath-6-1,180-Navy
48. Daniel Capeheart-Dillon-OLB-RB-6-1, 200-
49. Will Love-Spartanburg-PK-6-2,205-Va. Tech
50. Garrison Vaughn-Laurens Academy-OL/DL- 6-4,251 (Sleeper)
51. Kam Vance-Northwestern-WR-5-8,170-Lafayette
52. Terry Radford-Chester-DE-6-1-230

53. Bryson More-Irmo-OL-6-2,305-CSU
54. Bryson Connor-Indian land-DB-5-10,180-Hampton
55. Jarrell Turner-Richland Northeast-WR-6-0,185-UNC Char.
56. Keriyon Brown-Dillon-LB-5-11,210-
57. Amandre Wooden—Batesburg-Leesville-RB-5-11,205
58. Ethan Offing-Dutch Fork-QB-5—,182-
59. Cameron McMillon-South Pointe-QB-6-2, 187
60. Gray Patterson-Fort Mill-OLB-6-3,210-UNC-Char
61. Bryson Ginn-South Pointe-LB-6-2, 215
62. Dsa’Shan Scriven-Crestwood-DB-5-10,175
63. Bryson Connor-Indian Land-DB-5-10,180-Hampton
64. Michael Doe-North Augusta-RB-5-9,180-Gardner Webb
65. Dallas Williams-Greer-OL-6-4,275-
66. Terry Gordon-South Florence-ILB-5-11,225
67. Marcus Cann-Bamberg-Ehrhardt-DB-6-2,280
68. Mike Jones-Oceanside Collegiate-DL-6-2,285-
69. JT Williams-Summerville-OLB-6-0,200
70. Josh Singleton-Northwestern-DB-6-2,170
71. Tylin Drakeford-Camden-WR-5-9,165
72. Nehemiah Brown-Barnwell-RB-5-11,173
73. Terry Gordon-South Florence-ILB-5-11,225
74. Jaden Baylor-Abbeville-DB/WR-6-0,170
75. Kenshon Speaks-Beaufort-OL-6-3, 295
76. Kemori DeWeese-Summerville-WR-5-11,170
77. Jaylin Baylor-Abbeville-WR-6-1, 170
78. Cody Peterson-Ashley Ridge-OL-06-5,315
79. Brayden Williams-Saluda-RB-5-11,175
80. Bristol Biegenzahn-West Ashley-DE/TE-6-5,240- Elon
81. Kylif Miller-Hartsville-RB-5-10,180
82. Kaleb Sutton-Hillcrest-QB-6-3,185-
83. Chris Coleman-Northwestern-OL-6-3, 280
84. Alec Bell-Fox Creek-OL-C-6-1, 285
85. Nick Sapp-Denmark-Olar-DL-6-0,300
86. Damais Seegars-Andrew Jackson-RB-5-11,175
87. Jadyn Rice-JL Mann-DB-WR-5-9,180
88. Bryce Seaborn-Greenwood-DB-RB-5-11,190-
89. Kamyron Jones-Abbeville-OL/DL-6-2, 280
90. Jason Brigham-Johnsonville-DL-6-0,230
91. Quashaun Hampton-Keenan-OL-6-4,290-
92. Tyleek Dukes-Kingstree-RB-6-0,190
93. Terrence Wilson-Lake City-RB-5-10,200
94. David Rogers-Lakewood-OL-6-2, 280
95. Zori Pierce-Lamar-QB-Ath.-6-0,170
96. Marquis Copeland-Laurens—WR-DB-6-0,165
97. Jordan Roseborough-Dutch Fork-OL-5-11, 215
98. Jordan Jenkins-Conway-WR-6-4,190
99. Domonick Felton-Dillon-RB-5-11,170
100. Lucas Tankersley-Travelers Rest-MLB-6-1, 205
101. Jaylon Davis-Union County-OL-6-0,290
102. Chase Price-Lake View-QB-6-1,205
103. Harris Stone-Wando-QB-6-2,280
104. Jordan Strong-Lewisville-DB-5-8,160
105. Jadyn Rice-JL Mann-DB/WR-5-9,180
106. ZJ Jenkins-Summerville-WR-6-4,175-
107. Christian Hewitt-Summerville-OL-6-0,300
108. Harris Stone-Wando-QB-6-2,180
109. Jaxx Wilson-Westside-LB/SS-6-0,185
110. Speedy Taylor-Eastside-WR-5-7,171
111. Wynn Meetz-Gilbert-FS-5-9,160
112. Jaylon Davis-Union County-DL-6-1,290
113. Dy’lon White-Green Sea Floyds-6-3,310