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High School Sports Report

Our Goal: Recognizing The Achievements Of Young Athletes

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72 Pages

SCACA busy adapting to changes in high school athletics

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Anderson – Whether it be transfer rules, NIL, or region realignments, the high school athletics landscape is in a state of constant change these days.

One of the primary responsibilities of the South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association is to help the Palmetto state's coaches to navigate the changes.

As he enters his third year as the Executive Director of the SCACA, **Scott Earley** spends much of his time traversing the state to listen to concerns from coaches. He also visits other states to get ideas and gain knowledge as it pertains to working with various groups.

Earley has plenty of knowledge and experience with the ins and outs of the coaches association. He became actively involved with former director **Keith Richardson** in 2000 and has been a major force in making the Touchstone Energy North-South all-star football game and major event every De-

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**SCACA Director
Scott Earley**

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SC COACHES



BUILDING LEGENDS

A Message From The
Publisher
Billy G. Baker
email: bilrecruit@aol.com



The annual SCACA clinic is a time to learn, exchange ideas & renew lasting friendships

Greenville—With nearly 8,000 SCACA coaches pre-registered for the annual “Coaches Clinic”, under-way between July 27-30 at the Greenville Convention Center, the start of the 2025-2026 school year is about to begin.

Time to jam the torpedoes and forge full speed ahead!

The process of learning is a never-ending endeavor. The late **John McKissick** would come to the clinic, sit on the front row, listen carefully, and take notes; clinging to every word that came out of the speaker’s mouths.

Dabo Swinney once commented, “I am a brand-new head coach at **Clemson**, and I am at the Coaches Clinic giving a talk about Clemson football. There in the front row sits John McKissick taking notes, as if every word I spoke had relevance to him. Moments like that, you don’t forget.”

Coaches gather at the clinic from all 46 counties in South Carolina. They represent over 350 high schools and middle schools, and they traveled roads to get to the clinic this writer has also been down many times, in a 40-year crusade in search of future first round NFL picks, WNBA picks, etc. Sometimes even getting to take note on a second stringer, working hard to be a first stringer, who caught my eye as I noted their name on a yellow legal pad, that reminds me of where I’ve been.

Have you ever visited Gaddy’s Mill, or been to the town of Silver? How many of you coaches road by the famous Peach on I-85 passing through Gaffney on your way to “Clinic Land”. Have you ever climbed on the famous Angel Oak tree on Johns Island, where I lived for a few years growing

up? Somewhere on that historic Oak tree you can find my initials carved, many years before the City of Charleston bought it as a tourist attraction.

This is the 39th year the “*High School Sports Report*” has been a vender at the SCACA Coaches clinic. I do believe that we might be the only media supporting the SCACA with a booth, smack dab in the vending hall, adjacent to sporting goods Titan, “BSN”. Also, I get to say hello to my old friend **Mike Reeder**, who has also been a long time SCACA supporter. Mr. Reeder shares financial advice with coaches as a clinic speaker. Did you know that Mr. Reeder once played football under **Pinky Babb** at Greenwood? (small world after-all).

This writer will turn 71 on August, 7th. I have joked many times that it would be okay for me to die in a press box on Friday night, but only as the game was ending. We feel blessed to have survived through 39 seasons of being the only statewide prep publication in the nation covering all sports.

This might be an ideal time for you, as an athletic director, to stop by the *HSSR* booth to discuss the possibilities of your hard-working student athletes, in all varsity sports, receiving statewide publicity as the various sports roll though the 2025-26 school year. It is honestly more affordable than you might think to have your school sponsored and plugged into our vast network for a whole year. The fact that we are the only combination statewide print media/web site in the state should have value for sure.

Here are a couple selling points to consider. For example, as soon as the *HSSR* places a story about your football team, volleyball team, swim team etc.

online, google and other search engines picks up the article and makes it available for reading, free of charge. So, a grandmother living in Texas, or college recruiters from **Newberry** to **Notre Dame** can read articles relevant to them. You see, our website has free access. Simply enter hssr.com in your browser and read away! We pay our bills, and maintain expenses for sustaining our statewide media, through sponsor ads in the printed publication. We feel it is important to keep the web site free as long as possible.

How many times have you tried to read a story online from the majority of daily newspapers, and other websites, and you get to read the first paragraph, and then you got blocked by a pay wall? (It might also say: To continue reading click here to get your online subscription!) Every article the *HSSR* writes, we also place on our web site at hssr.com. Search engines like picking up free content and sharing the information with anyone in the world who has access to the internet.

In all honesty, if you want colleges, large and small, from all over the nation, to read about your athletes in the state of South Carolina, it just might be the time for you to stop by the *HSSR* booth and have a chat with us.

Recently, a father called to thank me for our coverage. He said that a small college had recently offered his daughter a softball scholarship, and the contact was made with his daughter’s school after the college coach had read an article at hssr.com about his daughter hitting three home runs in one game! He asked them; How did you find out about

See Editorial, pg. 71

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my daughter? The college coach informed him that she read a story in the “*The High School Sports Report*”.

We also upload our entire printed publication for free down loading at hssr.com every month! Would you believe that hssr.com received one million home page hits last year! Every sponsored school, like **Christ Church**, **Gaffney**, **Summerville**, **Dillon**, etc. also receive a free school page located

Midlands, continued from pg. 36

would be worth keeping an eye on.

Ridge View (8-5, 5-1 Region 5-5A). The Blazers placed second behind **Sumter** in the region and went deep in the 5A Division I postseason after an early exit in 2023. Fifth-year head coach **Derek Howard** looks to build on last year’s momentum, and he’ll have his son, quarterback **Derek “Tre” Howard III** in charge of it. The younger Howard passed for 2,476 yards and 22 touchdowns and rushed for 298 yards and three touchdowns. In addition, running back **Spencer Bobian** (146 carries, 973 yards, 5 TDs) returns, as well as Howard’s top three receivers—**Khristian Jackson** (49 catches, 737 yards, 10 TDs), **Darius Carter** (36 catches, 549 yards, 3 TDs), and **Hayden Morris** (32 catches, 465 yards, 7 TDs).

White Knoll (8-6, 1-4 Region 4-5A). The Timberwolves got off to a 4-1 start last fall but the buzzsaw of region play tempered their record to 5-5. Even so, White Knoll reached the third round of the playoffs. Among other seniors, the Timberwolves lose 3-year starting quarterback **Landon Sharpe** (2,765 passing yards, 31 TDs; 568 rushing yards, 7 TDs).

Fairfield Central (12-2, 4-0 Region 3-2A) The Griffins reached the upper state final, falling 32-21 to eventual 2A champion Clinton. **Ty’Derion Grier**

HHCA, continued from pg. 34

players returning, including senior quarterback **Reid McCollum**. The Eagles run a quarterback-centric offense so having an experienced and talented signal caller back is a nice commodity to have.

McCollum completed 183 of 305 passes for 2,443 yards and 21 touchdowns while tossing 10 interceptions. McCollum was far and away the lead-

under school pages at hssr.com.

School administrators, or athletic booster clubs, can always get in touch with me directly at 843-200-9555.

In the summer of 1987, the *High School Sports Report*, walked into the lobby of a Columbia hotel hosting the SCACA Clinic, and passed out 3,000 copies of a special issue about the coaching career of **Pinky Babb**, a **Greenwood** High football coach-

(2,184 rushing yards, 37 TDs) graduated along with 17 other seniors.

River Bluff (10-3, 3-2 Region 4-5A). The Gators got off to a 6-0 start and finished behind Dutch Fork and Irmo in the region. River Bluff loses quarterback **Parker Murray** (1,091 passing yards, 9 TDs) and 29 other seniors, but running back **Hayden Myers** (1,360 yards, 12 TDs) returns.

Gilbert (8-5, 5-2 Region 4-4A). The Indians got off to a 1-3 start before finishing the regular season 6-4. They reached the third round of the playoffs and fell 63-14 to eventual 4A champion North Augusta.

Batesburg-Leesville (Region 2-2A). The Panthers rebounded from a 5-6 effort in 2023 to reach the third round of the 2A playoffs, falling to eventual 2A state champion **Clinton**. Batesburg-Leesville loses quarterback **Tanner Watkins** (1,245 passing yards, 16 TDs) and top receiver **Jamerius Clark** (25 catches, 500 yards, 7 TDs) and 14 other seniors, but return running back **Amadre Wooden** (1,543 rushing yards, 19 TDs) and receiver **K.D. Whitt** (21 catches, 423 yards, 9 TDs), among others.

Camden (9-4, 4-2 Region 3-4A) The personnel losses after the Bulldogs’ 3A state championship run in 2023 affected them in 2024, but not by much.

ing rusher, picking up 845 yards and 16 touchdowns on 154 carries. The next highest carry total was 47.

McCollum has his top target back in junior **Joseph Haupt**. He caught 65 passes for 784 yards and five touchdowns.

“We look for a great challenge this season,” Peduzzi said. “We have a group of fine young men

ing legend, who had recently passed. We took a wide-angle photograph of literally every coach in the lobby glued to this special issue, focused on the career of a highly respected coaching legend. This special issue was six months in the making.

Wonder if there are many coaches at this year’s clinic who remember reading about Coach Babb’s wonderful career at the SCACA Clinic back in 1987?

Camden finished the regular season 7-3 and placed second in the region behind **South Pointe**, then went 2-1 in the postseason. This fall the Bulldogs are without quarterback **Wyatt Thompson** (941 passing yards, 11 TDs; 1,032 rushing yards, 6 TDs) and 13 other seniors. Camden has another quarterback returning who played in seven games last year, junior **Greyson Rimpf** (853 passing yards, 6 TDs), the son of longtime head coach **Brian Rimpf**. Also returning is top receiver **Tylin Drakeford** (56 catches, 938 yards, 11 TDs).

AC Flora (8-4, 4-2 Region 3-4A). The Falcons are another team that may be poised for a fantastic 2025. After a 13-1 season in 2022 in which A.C. Flora reached the lower state final, the 2023 season (4-7) was a letdown. So in 2024, then-junior and second-year quarterback **Roper Wentzky** continued to throw the longball, to the tune of 2,684 yards and 28 touchdowns. Wentzky most of the rest of the team return, as the Falcons lost just 11 seniors to graduation. This year’s A.C. Flora team, under fourth-year head coach **Ken Floyd**, could well be the most surprising team of the Midlands.

playing for the Hilton Head Christian Academy Eagles this season, and we’re looking forward to getting the season started.”

Hilton Head Christian will travel to **Charleston** to face **Porter-Gaud** in its season opener on August 22.

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One of the last hires that Wessinger was the hiring of **Ryan Cole** as head coach in 2024. Cole succeeded **Justin Gentry**, who had coached the Eagles since 2010 and saw the program’s growth from the 3A to the 5A classification. Cole was an assistant coach under both Gentry and longtime Eagles coach **Eddie Muldrow** and has a wealth of Chapin experience as well as football experience.

The Eagles finished 6-6 with a 1-4 record in the grinding Region 4-5A that includes 5A powers **Dutch Fork** and **Irmo**, up-and-coming **White Knoll**, and competitive programs in **Lexington** and **River Bluff**.

“Coach Ryan Cole has done a tremendous job leading our varsity football program. I am looking forward to watching him lead his team for his second season,” Williams said. “He brings great energy, experience, and a clear vision for building a competitive and character-driven team. His leader-

Northwood, continued from pg. 46

pionships under great coaches like **Jerry Stoots** in football and baseball and **Anthony Houston** with our boys’ basketball program and we sense Jerry Waters is building our football program to a championship as he begins his 4th season,” said Coach Leaver. “Coach Curtis has won state championships with the girls’ basketball program and her teams have been consistent winners every season.”

Archery, head coached by **Doug McLeod**, has been a highly successful sport for the school, having won six state titles in a row. “This might come as a surprise but the sport of Archery has been a huge revenue boost for our athletic program,” said Coach Leaver. “You can have 10 to 12 teams participate in one competition with a huge number of fans in attendance. We actually earned \$6,000 at one Archery event last year, between the gate and concessions.”

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the job with **Delores Conn**, a Dillon Christian legend, according to Alphrin.

Alphrin said Conn is teaching him the ropes of an athletic director’s duties.

Alphrin isn’t the only new head coach on the Dillon Christian staff for the upcoming school year. **Bo Stone** has stepped down as the boys basketball

Abbeville, continued from pg. 38

rience and leadership to our tennis program. Additionally, we welcome Jeremiah Boyd to AHS. He brings valuable coaching experience in cross country and track and will be a great asset to our team.”

Jamie Nickles returns as the head football coach. Nickles led the Panthers to a state title last fall, his ninth as the school’s head coach. He is the all-time winningest coach in school history.

Pinewood Prep, continued from pg. 51

ical piece of the puzzle to take our student-athletes’ experience to the next level. His infectious positivity and seemingly endless energy will serve this community well for many years to come.”

A proud native of **Timmonsville, SC**, Hanna brings a rich background in both education and athletics. He attended **Florence County** public schools before earning his **Bachelor of Science in Sports and Retail Management** from the **University of South Carolina (Columbia)**, followed by a **Master’s Degree in Elementary Education**.

Hanna’s career began in management, but his true calling brought him back to education. Over his extensive career in teaching, he has held numerous roles, including kindergarten TA, ITS Teacher Assistant, and math teacher for grades 7-12. In these roles, he has consistently demonstrated a talent for mentorship, curriculum development, and fostering student achievement. His dedication to students earned him the honor of being named **District Teacher of the Year**.

In addition to his classroom achievements,

ship is setting the tone not just for football, but for the high standards we want across all our athletic programs. I’m excited to support him and the rest of our coaching staff as we head into a new season.”

Another hire was **Terrance Jones**, who took the boys basketball head coaching job in April, replacing **Chad Boland**. Jones led **Denmark-Olar** to the 1A state championship, a 20-5 record and a Region 4-1A championship last winter.

“Terrance Jones brings a strong commitment to developing athletes on and off the field, and I’m excited to see the impact he’ll have on our program,” Williams said.

Williams and Chapin is working on a successor to longtime baseball coach **Scott McLeod**.

McLeod retired after another successful season last spring. McLeod led the Eagles for 31 years, seeing the program grow from 2A to 5A. He won 557 games, 12 region titles, and state championships in

Northwood Academy will welcome a new head cheer coach this year in **Christy Christmas** and she was the cheer coach at **Porter-Gaud** last year. The volleyball program has a new coach in **Kennedy Pointer** and she was an assistant at **The College of Charleston** last year. **Kim Infinger** will be starting her 5th season as the Cross-Country head coach.

Ryan Meadows returns for his second season as the head boys’ basketball coach. **Eddie Tolar** will return to the Charger softball program and **AJ Hickey** will start his third season with the varsity baseball team. **Rob Stolin** is back as the head wrestling coach. **Eric Bach** also returns to the girl’s tennis team. **Keith Bolus** is back as the track and field coach. Jason Bond is back to coach the girls’ soccer team and **Paul Dalesandro** is back for his 5th season with the boys’ soccer program. **Dave Jones**

head coach with the graduation of his son, **Jackson Stone**.

Tyler Davis, a Dillon Christian graduate, will replace him. Davis was the girls basketball head coach at **St. John’s Christian Academy**.

Dillon Christian will have a new softball coach as well, it just doesn’t know who quite yet. **Ben An-**

Sara Wojtkowski returns for her second season as the volleyball coach. Jameson and **Katie Finley** handle the cheerleading program.

Doug Belcher is the boys basketball coach, having led his team to the Class A Upper State title last season. **Ellis Belton** returns as the girls basketball coach and **Bill Glace** is the head wrestling coach.

In the spring, **Daniel Little** is the head baseball

Hanna has been involved in youth development through sports. He has coached at multiple levels, serving as an assistant coach for varsity football and basketball teams, and taking on head coaching roles for both boys’ and girls’ basketball teams.

In large part, Pinewood has a seasoned group of returning coaches for its varsity programs. However, the school has hired a few more coaches.

The **Panthers** have added Softball to their list of sports and asked **Ben Snyder** to head the program. The school will probably just field a JV team this year, but with the addition of a new softball field under construction will eventually field a varsity team.

The Panthers have a new Girls Basketball coach, **Will Priester**, and new Cheerleading coach, **Veronica Pieretti**. **Amber Andrews** is new to the Sports Medicine program.

The school’s other head coaches are familiar to students and parents alike.

Pat Eidson has been the Boys’ Basketball coach for more than 30 years and has led Pinewood teams

1996, 2001, 2002, and 2008.

As the summer winds down and the school year cranks up, Williams said she is excited to get down to the business of seeing to athletes, coaches, parents, and the Chapin community.

“I naturally believe students are at the center of everything we do. At the end of the day, it’s all about the kids, developing them not just as athletes, but as people,” Williams said. “That mindset will influence every decision I make as I step into the role as Athletic Director. My goal is to continue to create an environment where our student-athletes feel supported, seen, and proud to represent Chapin High School. Whether it’s improving facilities, enhancing recognition, or making sure every team has what they need, my goal is to keep the student experience at the center of our work.”

will begin his 7th season as the head swim coach at Northwood.

Johnny Waters will start his 4th season with the football team and numerous transfer players should help make the Chargers contenders this season. Coach Leaver will also return to the football field as he will serve as defensive coordinator for the football team.

Without a doubt, Coach Curtis has been the most successful coach at Northwood. Her girls’ basketball teams won 8 region championships in a row, between 2016-17 and 2023-24. The Chargers won a state title in 2017 and they were state runners-up in 2019, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24. To date, Coach Curtis has a 185-51 career record.

draws stepped down after one season because of the graduation of his daughter, **Molly Andrews**.

The head coaches who are returning are **Tony Blackmon** for baseball and **Kelly McColl** for girls basketball. **Jennier Easterling** and **Kelly Jacobs** will coach volleyball.

coach while **Tim Collins** and **Lacy Johnson** team up as the softball coaches.

Andy Hagood is the boys golf coach. The soccer teams are coached by **Martin Lockyer** (girls) and **Arnaldo Sabatino** (boys).

to multiple region and state championships. In January, he claimed his 944th career victory to break the South Carolina record for most basketball coaching wins.

Gail Osborne has been the Pinewood Girls Soccer coach since 2005 and led the program to multiple region championships and eight state championships.

Jessica Archambault has coached Swimming for the school for more than 15 years, but is now sharing responsibilities with **Tony Schupp**. Baseball coach **Jay Buddin** has been with the school for more than 10 years.

Other coaches returning are **Andy Morgan** (Lacrosse and Girls Golf), **DeVonte Holloman** (Football), **Tuesday Abernathy** (Girls Volleyball), **Brandon Brown** (Boys Golf), **Jake Birdsong** (Cross Country/Track), **Sean Murphy** (Girls Tennis), **Nick Brammer** (Boys Soccer) and **Cadill Maharaj** (Boys Tennis).

2025 SCHSL Current Coaching Records													
modern turf													
REGION 1-A-A-A-A-A				DREHER				TREIGH SULLIVAN					
EASLEY	COACH	RECORD	YR	LANCASTER	COACH	RECORD	YR	15-41	6	REGION 3-AA	COACH	RECORD	YR
GREENVILLE	SAM R. HOUSTON	1-9	1	LANCASTER	MARCUS SURREATT	15-41	6	CHESTER	VICTOR FLOYD	153-116	23		
GREENWOOD	STEVE WATSON	32-24	5	RICHLAND NE	WALTER WILSON	101-94	21	COLUMBIA	JASON BUSH	27-74	10		
HILLCREST	CHRIS LINER	109-85	17	SOUTH POINTE	BOBBY COLLINS	55-53	10	EAU CLAIRE	SHAQUILLE HILTON	1-35	4		
J L MANN	BENNETT SWYGERT	18-7	2	YORK	DEAN BOYD	240-134	31	FAIRFIELD CENTRAL	DEMETRIUS DAVIS	117-52	14		
MAULDIN	BRYCE SMILEY	FIRST YR						MID CAROLINA	CHRIS ARNOULT	46-66	11		
T L HANNA	ANDRE COOK	4-27	3	REGION 4-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR						
	JASON TONE - SC	54-13	7	AIKEN	STEVE HIBBITTS	63-93	15						
	JASON TONE - GA	24-20	4	AIRPORT	CHRIS NAPIER	FIRST YR		REGION 4-AA	COACH	RECORD	YR		
WOODMONT	MALCOLM BOYD	FIRST YR		BROOKLAND-CAYCE	LOUIS CLYBURN	29-64	9	ANDREW JACKSON	TODD SHIGLEY	50-36	8		
				GILBERT	OZZIE EXUME	8-5	1	BUFORD	ED SUSH	63-97	18		
REGION 2-A-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	GRAY COLLEGIATE	DEANGELO BRYANT	38-36	7	CENTRAL	JOHNATHAN EASON	22-26	5		
BOILING SPRINGS	MATT REEL	53-36	9	MIDLAND VALLEY	BRENT DORN	5-6	1	CHERAW	ANDY POOLE	60-42	9		
DORMAN	JAKE MORRIS	9-12	2	NORTH AUGUSTA	RICHARD BUSH	25-17	4	CHESTERFIELD	NICK DIXON	FIRST YR			
EASTSIDE	ANDRE WOOLCOCK	37-47	8	SOUTH AIKEN	CHRIS HAMILTON	57-51	10	NORTH CENTRAL	TYROONE DRAKEFORD	29-50	8		
GAFFNEY	DONNIE LITTLEJOHN	FIRST YR											
JAMES F. BYRNES	REGGIE SHAW	129-78	18	REGION 5-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 5-AA	COACH	RECORD	YR		
RIVERSIDE	MATTHEW ROCHESTER	22-22	4	CRESTWOOD	ROOSEVELT NELSON	53-60	11	BARNWELL	BRIAN R. SMITH	131-107	21		
SPARTANBURG	MARK HODGE	130-67	16	DARLINGTON	JAMIE JOHNSON	6-6	1	EDISTO	MARCUS LIVINGSTON	26-42	7		
WADE HAMPTON	REUBEN WRIGHT	11-40	5	HARTSVILLE	JEFF CALABRESE	217-86-1	24	HAMPTON COUNTY	ROBERT HANNA	36-12	4		
				LAKEWOOD	WILLIE OFFORD	5-26	3	LAKE MARION	JARVIS DAVIS	16-23	4		
REGION 3-A-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	LOWER RICHLAND	TAYLOR MARLIN	22-28	5	WHALE BRANCH	WILLIE WHITE	FIRST YR			
CATAWBA RIDGE	ZAC LENDYAK	33-31	6	SOUTH FLORENCE	DREW MARLOWE	50-14	5						
CLOVER	PERRY WOOLBRIGHT	95-73	15	WILSON	BRIAN WILSON	FIRST YR		REGION 6-AA	COACH	RECORD	YR		
FORT MILL	ROB MCNEELY	8-56	7					ACADEMIC MAGNET	AUSTIN MILLER	FIRST YR			
INDIANLAND	ADAM HASTINGS	27-24	5	REGION 6-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	ANDREWS	SCOTT DURHAM	86-45	12		
NATION FORD	JAKE BENTLEY	FIRST YR		BEAUFORT	BRYCE LYBRAND	43-26	6	BURKE	ANTHONY STERLING	36-103	15		
NORTHWESTERN	PAGE WOFFORD	58-15	6	BISHOP ENGLAND	LOGAN HALL	9-3	1	PHILIP SIMMONS	ERIC BENDIG	46-31	7		
ROCK HILL	LEON BOULWARE	4-7	1	BLUFFTON	JOHN HOUP	31-48	8	TIMBERLAND	GREG WRIGHT	32-31	6		
				COLLETON COUNTY	ADAM KINLOCH	3-18	2	WOODLAND	EDDIE FORD	104-43	15		
REGION 4-A-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	HILTON HEAD	B J PAYNE	68-62	13						
CHAPIN	RYAN COLE	6-6	1	MAY RIVER	RICHARD BONNEVILLE	12-10	2	REGION 7-AA	COACH	RECORD	YR		
DUTCH FORK	TOM KNOTTS	178-28-1	15					ATLANTIC COLL	ANTOINE RIVENS	2-9	2		
IRMO	AARON BRAND	48-23	6	REGION 1-AAA	COACH	RECORD	YR	EAST CLARENDON	LARRY CORNELIUS	64-92	16		
LEXINGTON	STEWART YOUNG	93-38	11	BELTON-HONEA PATH	RUSSELL BLACKSTON	133-44	14	KINGSTREE	BRANDON CANTRELL	FIRST YR			
RIVER BLUFF	PERRY PARKS	54-46	9	CRESCENT	SHELDON EVANS	34-39	7	LAKE CITY	RONNIE BAKER	31-63	10		
WHITE KNOLL	NICK PELHAM	30-20	4	PENDLETON	GRAYSON HOWELL	28-37	6	MANNING	REGGIE KENNEDY	197-148	30		
				WALHALLA	BLAKE DYAR	FIRST YR		MARION	BRIAN HENNECY	28-15	4		
REGION 5-A-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	WEST-OAK	GLEN PADGETT	9-31	4	MULLINS	MARC LOWERY	7-4	1		
BLYTHEWOOD	JAMES MARTIN	19-21	4										
LUGOFF-ELGIN	JARVIS LITTLEJOHN	19-20	4	REGION 2-AAA	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 1-A	COACH	RECORD	YR		
RIDGE VIEW	DEREK HOWARD II	48-28	7	CAROLINA	CHRIS GLOVER	5-25	3	ABBEVILLE	JAMIE NICKLES	235-46-1	21		
SPRING VALLEY	NORMAN WASHINGTON	FIRST YR		CHRIST CHURCH	QUINN HATFIELD	48-14	5	CALHOUN FALLS	ZAK THEUS	5-27	3		
SUMTER	MARK BARNES	98-20	10	PALMETTO	RYAN NORTON	8-15	2	DIXIE	MARK SORROW	13-30	4		
WESTWOOD	STEPHEN BURRIS	18-2	2	POWDERSVILLE	ROBERT MUSTAR	82-66	13	MCCORMICK	LEROY COLLIER	5-17	2		
WEST FLORENCE	CHAD WILKES	62-22	7	SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	JONATHAN GESS	187-49	18	WARE SHOALS	CHRIS JOHNSON	43-68	11		
				ST. JOSEPH	ERIC NASH	5-6	1	WHITMIRE	ANDREW CAMPBELL	14-18	3		
REGION 6-A-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR										
CAROLINA FOREST	MARC MORRIS	73-53-1	11	REGION 3-AAA	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 2-A	COACH	RECORD	YR		
CONWAY	JOSH PIERCE	18-66	8	GETTYS BROOME	LYNN FLEMING	125-115	21	C A JOHNSON	RODNEY BARR	30-54	8		
MYRTLE BEACH	MICKEY WILSON	156-47	16	CHAPMAN	HARRY CABANISS	51-37	8	GREAT FALLS	SYVELLE NEWTON	2-8	1		
N. MYRTLE BEACH	GREG HILL	8-24	3	MOUNTAIN VIEW PREP	GREY RAMSEY	12-1	1	LAMAR	TYLER BOYD	22-3	2		
SOCASSEE	BEN HAMPTON	16-31	5	UNION COUNTY	QUINNION ISOM	2-8	1	LEE CENTRAL	JUSTIN DANNER	53-72	13		
ST. JAMES	TOMMY NORWOOD	21-45	7	WOODRUFF	BRETT SLOAN	48-30	7	LEWISVILLE	TRENT USHER	35-28	6		
								MCBEE	ANDY KARCHER	11-11	2		
REGION 7-A-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 4-AAA	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 3-A	COACH	RECORD	YR		
BERKELEY	ERIC LODGE	12-12	2	FOX CREEK	LEMUEL LACKEY	108-87	18	BLACKVILLE-HILDA	KEVIN JONES	20-14	3		
CANE BAY	RUSSELL ZEHR	63-48	10	W J KEENAN	JARRETT NEELY	8-5	1	CALHOUN COUNTY	WAYNE FARMER	160-143	27		
GOOSE CREEK	JASON WINSTEAD	40-34	7	NEWBERRY	CEDRICK JETER	17-18	3	HUNTER-KINARD-TYLER	WILLIE FELDER	27-21	5		
LUCY BECKHAM	JAMEL SMITH	20-15	4	SILVER BLUFF	MATT HAYES	2-9	1	RIDGE SPRING-MONETTA	JERRY BRANNON	7-16	2		
STRATFORD	DENNIE MCDANIEL	40-52	9	SWANSEA	WILLIE FOX	74-38	10	WAGENER-SALLEY	BLAZE GILLESPIE	2-7	1		
WANDO	ISAIAH PERRIN	5-6	1					WILLISTON-ELKO	KENNY LIPSEY	33-46	7		
REGION 8-A-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 5-AAA	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 4-A	COACH	RECORD	YR		
ASHLEY RIDGE	ASHLEY HASKINS	64-90	14	AYNOR	JASON ALLEN	47-22	7	ALLENDALE-FAIRFAX	TRAVIS LEWIS	FIRST YR			
FORT DORCHESTER	SHAUN LORENZANO	6-6	1	DILLON	KELVIN ROLLER	42-7	4	BAMBERG-EHRHARDT	COREY CROSBY	38-11	4		
JAMES ISLAND	JAMAR MCKOY	42-15	5	GEORGETOWN	TOMMY ADAMS	3-7	1	DENMARK-OLAR	WILLIAM RAYSOR	4-7	1		
R B STALL	KEN FREEMAN	0-9	1	LORIS	GREY MANCE	28-21	5	HARDEEVILLE	ARTHUR GARDNER	FIRST YR			
SUMMERVILLE	IAN RAFFERTY	45-14	5	MARLBORO COUNTY	CORY JOHNSON	0-9	1	RIDGELAND	JAMIE ISSAC	5-5	1		
WEST ASHLEY	RASHAD GRAHAM	FIRST YR		WACCAMAW	AMONDRE JOHNSON	14-32	5						
REGION 1-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 6-AAA	COACH	RECORD	YR	REGION 5-A	COACH	RECORD	YR		
EMERALD	TAD DUBOSE	15-36	5	BATTERY CREEK	TERRANCE ASHE	10-36	5	BAPTIST HILL	MARION BROWN	108-94	19		
FOUNTAIN INN	BRETT NICHOLS	9-22	3	HANAHAN	MILAN TURNER	125-54	21	BETHUNE-BOWMAN	CODY MCNEAL	4-27	3		
LAURENS	GREG PORTER	122-79	17	NORTH CHARLESTON	ADRIAN GRADY	4-6	1	BRANCHVILLE	SANDY DUKE	41-32	8		
SOUTHSIDE	A J MILLIS	FIRST YR		OCEANSIDE COLL	BRENT LAPRAD	FIRST YR		CROSS	SHAUN WRIGHT	95-53	13		
WESTSIDE	BRIAN LANE	143-69	18	OR'BURG-WILKINSON	CHRIS CARTER	58-82	13	MILITARY MAGNET	DERRELL PRINGLE	9-21	3		
WREN	ANTHONY FRATE	40-21						SCOTTS BRANCH	PATRICK FLEMING	4-7	1		
REGION 2-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YEARS	REGION 1-AA	COACH	RECORD	YR	ST. JOHNS	ERIC BROWN	0-10	1		
BEREA	DREW CHISHOLM	39-57	9	BLACKSBURG	JOSH BATCHER	6-24	3						
BLUE RIDGE	JOHN BOGGS	50-117	16	CHESNEE	BRETT CHAPPELL	6-6	1	REGION 6-A	COACH	RECORD	YR		
DANIEL	CHRIS STONE	10-12	2	CLINTON	COREY FOUNTAIN	109-31	11	CARVERS BAY	MATTHEW RICHARD	30-31	6		
GREER	WILL YOUNG	157-95	22	LANDRUM	MIKE REID	FIRST YR		GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	PATRICK MARTIN	3-18	2		
PICKENS	JAMES REYNOLDS	18-34	5	LIBERTY	PAUL SUTHERLAND	153-112	24	HANNAH-PAMPlico	JAMES JOHNSON	46-47	9		
SENECA	DAVID CRANE	60-59	11					HEMINGWAY	MIKE DONALD	0-10	1		
	DAVID CRANE	8-32	4	REGION 2-AA	COACH	RECORD	YR	JOHNSONVILLE	KEN CRIBB	169-98	23		
TRAVELERS REST	CHRIS GOODMAN	31-17	4	BATESBURG-LEESVILLE	GARY ADAMS	46-39	8	LAKE VIEW	DARYL KING	150-63	17		
REGION 3-A-A-A-A	COACH	RECORD	YR	NINETY-SIX	MATTHEW BENNETT	11-11	2	LATTA	BRANDON ISEMAN	56-49	10		
A C FLORA	KEN FLOYD	25-12	3	PELION	CORY HELMS	16-18	3						
CAMDEN	BRIAN RIMPF	71-30	8	SALUDA	GREG WOERNER	FIRST YR							
				STROM THURMOND	ANDREW WEBB	40-38	7						

AAAAA Football Feature

Dutch Fork and Gaffney open as HSSR top-ranked teams in AAAAA

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Moncks Corner – The more things change, the more they stay the same. Makes no sense really but in the case of South Carolina high school football, the 2025 preseason rankings by the *High School Sports Report* look very similar to the rankings in previous years.

With transfers being a major part of the landscape, it seems the rich are getting richer as players seek better opportunities. Regardless of what we hear, a large portion of transfers go to other programs to chase a ring. Certainly not anything wrong with that but stop saying the new program will get your more heavily recruited. If you can play at a high level, go to camps and colleges will find you.

Anyway, back to the rankings. In Class AAAAA Division I, perennial No. 1 and title contender **Dutch Fork** will sit atop the rankings until someone can knock them off. No team did that last year as **Tom Knotts** won his ninth state championship. Knotts is closing in on 500 career wins and has 177 wins since taking over at Dutch Fork in 2010.

The Silver Foxes allowed just seven points per game last season and some feel the 2025 defense stands to be even better. Linebacker **Raleigh Salters** and linemen **Julian Walker** (Michigan commit) and **Luciano Cesario** will anchor the unit. Walker is a Georgia transfer.

Two key offensive transfers are running back **Cole Martin** and receiver **Stone Furrey**, both from Chapin High. Two solid weapons to aid the development of junior first-year starting quarterback **Jaxon Knotts**.

Speaking of transfers, **Summerville**, the Division I state runner-up last fall, has done quite well in the portal. Two key newcomers from Goose Creek are sophomore receiver **Teru Davis** and senior defensive back **Jordan Ravenel**.

Summerville also two of the top junior prospects returning in receiver **Jaiden Kelly-Murray** and running back **Jayven Williams**. Battling for the starting nod at quarterback are returner **Cooper Kafina** and transfer **Max Stafford**.

Spartanburg should be plenty capable offensively with quarterback **Trey Burke** (ECU), running back **Trenton Lynch** and receiver **Kendarion Keenon** all returning as impact performers. The Vikings also a major threat at placekicker in **Will Love**.

“We like our team a lot,” coach **Mark Hodge** said. “This group of seniors have put in a lot of time in this program and I expect good things from them. I think offensively we can very good and our defense will build as they go through the season.”

Dorman also stands to be improved this fall, especially on defense where linemen **Christian Waring** and **James Porter** return as anchors.

Linebacker **Kentavion Anderson** is a Clemson commitment and running back **Nick Means** has speed to burn.

Ridge View has a boatload of seniors and solid talent returning. The Blazers need a good season from quarterback **Tre Howard**. Ridge View’s four losses last season came to Dutch Fork, Northwest-ern, Summerville and Sumter.

Gaffney, Northwestern favored in Division II
One might expect defending state champion **Northwestern** to take a fall from the top with the

losses to graduation. But, anyone thinking the Trojans are done as a contender are sorely mistaken.

Page Wofford has built a strong program as he enters his seventh season as head coach. A program built to sustain losses in personnel.

Tamarion Watkins returns as a key defensive leader at linebacker but the defensive front must replace four three-year starters with a fresh crop. Quarterback **Finley Polk** has moved on to college, leaving junior **Xavier Means** to operate Wofford’s run-and-shoot offense.

Cam Vance returns as a top receiver and **Quay Mobley** will shoulder the load in the running game.

Oh, by the way, Northwestern returns five starters on the offensive line.

“I feel like we can be pretty good,” Wofford says. “I know our kids and I’ve seen their work ethic over the offseason. We need to stay healthy and continue to grow but we have a chance.”

Former player and assistant coach **Donnie Littlejohn** takes over the **Gaffney** program after long-time coach Dan Jones retired. The Indians are loaded with returners and got help from the portal as well.

Quarterback **Jayvon Gilmore**, an Arkansas commit, returns as a big-time producer offensively. Running back **Jaiden McDowell** is back from injury and is a game-breaker.

Linebackers **Ty McGill**, **Kendarius Bailey** and **Zyon Ratchford** will lead a solid defense.

Irmo lost major production offensively but the Yellow Jackets should be right back in the mix. Gone is quarterback **AJ Brand** (Va. Tech), who accounted for about 4,600 yards and 57 touchdowns last season. Receiver **Donovan Murph** reclassified and is now at South Carolina.

Junior running back **Amire White** should have a big season, along with receiver **Maleek Miller**.

Berkeley could be a sleeper to watch. The Stags return almost all of their defense, led by linebackers **Marcus Henderson**, **Javon Snead** and **Kevin Rivers**, along with safety **Cam Myers**.

Offensively, quarterback **Henry Rivers**, a junior, will be a third-year starter. The entire receiving corps graduated by the running back position is well-stocked with sophomore **Bryson McGee** and junior **Jessie Brown**.

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
SOCASTEE	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

Earley, continued from Cover

cember.

“I learned from the best.” Earley says. “I became more and more involved in the mission of the coaches association. Then, since January (2023), I have been working with coach (**Shell**) **Dula**. It has been a smooth transition period. I have a much greater appreciation for the job.”

One thing Earley has noticed is that this state’s coaching association is as productive and hands on as any state in the country. He knows the importance of a strong coaches association.

“This business is not what it used to be. It’s a scary time in many ways,” he said. “We’ve got a lot of issues to deal with.

“Our coaches, and our kids, need an advocate. They need representation and the association has taken on that role and run with it. This organization is growing every year. We have set records for coaches registration this year. It’s an exciting time. There’s a lot going on in the world of athletics and that makes the coaches association even more important.”

Earley reports that the association has grown to a record 7,442 registered coaches. Revenue intake also is on the rise, which will allow the association

Williamsburg Academy, continued from pg. 56

Kevin Burrows returns for his ninth season as the boys basketball head coach.

“He’s been here several years now, and he’s a great guy with a strong knowledge of the game of

Saluda, continued from pg. 39

coach, **Sam Shealy** as the boys and girls cross country coach as well as the boys and girls track and field coach, **Travis Mills** as the baseball coach,

James Island, continued from pg. 24

overall and we feel like that can continue.”

James Island has had very little turnover among their varsity head coaching roster. The few coaches that have left in recent years either retired or took a better opportunity. The coaching list is stocked with veteran coaches who have been able to build their respective programs and create a winning culture.

“We have a great group and they are going to do right by the kids,” Holland said. “We try to give our coaches what they ask for, what they need. We are constantly working on improving our facilities and I think our athletes take a lot of pride in that.”

James Island opened its new gymnasium in the 2023-24 school year. The baseball team added covered batting cages and a new press box. Long-range plans include redoing the playing fields, namely the football field that is taking a beating with soccer and lacrosse. Holland says artificial turf has been dis-

Marion, continued from pg. 28

for the second straight year. State is Hennecy’s predecessor, having coached the Swam Foxes to the 2020 AA state championship game in his final season.

Keshawn Rowell will be joined by newcomer **Darry Russ** in coaching the offensive line, while newcomer **Rick McMahan** will pair up with returner **Yamasi Buey** to coach the wide receivers.

Fox Creek, continued from pg. 45

for the girls. **Derrick Quinn** is the athletic director and is back for his 11th season as the softball head coach. **Jake Torres** returns for his fourth season as the boys lacrosse coach, while **Alexis Cohan** is the girls lacrosse coach.

Roby Gillespie had a tremendous season in his second year in charge of the baseball program.

Belton- Honea Path, continued from pg. 61

cheer, **Sam Patterson** boys and girls cross country, **Russ Tyst** boys basketball, Strickland wrestling,

to expand its scholarship program for children of coaches.

“That is very important and we want to see that continue to grow,” Earley said. “We were able to award 129 kids of coaches with some scholarship money in the last year. Let’s keep growing that number each year.”

A major concern of high school coaches is the increasing number of athletes that are transferring to other schools, both in-state and out-of-state schools.

“Coaches now have to recruit their own players to stay,” Earley said. “There is an increasing number of our athletes leaving the state for the sports academies. For some, it works out ok, but we need to convince our kids they can get the same coaching and competition right here.”

Much like the changes that the SCHSL is working through, there also are changes for the SCACA on the horizon. The biggest change will be the future scheduling of the annual coaches clinic.

For years the clinic has run Sunday through Wednesday in late July. Starting next year, the event will run Friday-Sunday. The following week will be a “dead week” for high schools, allowing coaches to spend time with family before the fall sports season

basketball,” Furse said. “We’ve got a lot of guys returning off of last year’s team, so I expect them to be very competitive this year.”

Wildes will continue as the boys and girls cross

Tonya Chapman as the cheer coach, and Phillips as the boys soccer coach.

The only new varsity head coach is girls tennis

cussed by the price tag is too high currently.

“We’d like to get more practice fields and redo our home section of the stadium but those will have to wait. We’re doing what we can and we’re always looking at ways we can improve our facilities,” Holland said.

For the coming year, most of the coaches return. **Jamar McKoy** is back as head football coach and **Matt Spivey** will return as the baseball coach and assistant athletic director. Spivey has led his program to back-to-back state championships the last two seasons.

Scott McInnis will add boys golf coach to his duties as girls golf coach and **Jason Yeates** is the girls volleyball coach. **May Yeates** will coach the boys volleyball team.

David Lee heads up the highly successful cross country program and **Lindsay Howard** coaches the

Demetrious Johnson will be in charge of the running backs. Caullder will coach the quarterbacks.

State will handle the linebackers with **Randy Dennison** coaching the safeties and Buey the cornerbacks. Rowell will coach the defensive ends, and **Draper Pearson** will be in charge of the defensive tackles.

This is an excellent and experienced staff,” said

Mark Thomas is again in charge of both the boys and girls golf programs, while **Taylor Thomas** returns for her 10th season as the competitive cheer head coach.

Jason Spinks is back for his thrd season in charge of the girls soccer program, while Schladenhauffen returns as the boys soccer coach. **Jessica**

Blair Streifel girls soccer and **Shamad Lomax**

boys and girls track and field.

begins.

The changes will affect the number of individual sport clinic speakers but Earley feels the new format can work.

“We will still have speakers but the setting will be more of general assembly format,” he said. “We may have, for instance, Dawn Staley speaking but to the entire group of coaches from all sports. There will be meetings of individual sports but not as many.

“We’ve have input that maybe the clinic has become stale so we want to look at things that may energize the coaches and the clinic. Sometimes change is needed.”

The clinic will remain in Greenville for the next two years before moving to Charleston in 2028 and 2029. Greenville, Columbia and Charleston will bid for the event after that. Here is the upcoming schedule.

2026 – Greenville, July 24-26
2027 – Greenville, July 23-25
2028 – Charleston, July 24-26
2029 – Charleston, July 21-23
2030 – TBA, July 20-22

country coach. McFaddin will be the boys and girls track and field coach, and **Lucie Ann Smunk** will be the cheerleading coach.

coach **Jeff Hallman**.

boys and girls tennis teams. **Jamie Knox** heads up the cheerleaders and **Josh Stroble** is the swim coach.

Travis Smith returns to coach boys basketball while **Emily Baldwin** returns as the girls coach. **Tony Bolen** is the head wrestling coach and **Alec Westerman** heads up the strength and conditioning programs for all sports.

Courtney Hill will return to coach softball and **Todd Robinson** and **Gerard Walker** coach the boys and girls soccer teams, respectively. **Matt Loda** coaches boys lacrosse and **Sarah Updegraff** is the girls lacrosse coach. **Joe Eshelman** is the head track coach and **Stephanie Davey** is the head athletic trainer.

Hennecy, who will be the special teams coordinator. “Most of them have been together for six years.”

Marion is scheduled to begin its season on Thursday, August 21, with a home game against **Lake View**. The Swamp Foxes will again be part of Region 7-AA.

Weir is entering her sixth year as girls tennis head coach. Emma Paden is back as the boys and girls swim coach, and Norman will again be the boys tennis head coach.

2025 Football Schedules

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

AAAA Football Feature



2024 South Florence Bruins

South Florence wins rematch with Westside; claims AAAA once again

Publishers Note: Due to a mix-up on story assignments the Class AA & AAAA feature articles were not written on time for this issue. However, they will be up at hssr.com by Tuesday at 9p.m.

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher

Orangeburg—Had *ESPN* aired the SCHSL Class AAAA football state championship game, won by **South Florence** over **Westside**, 42-41 at **South Carolina State University** on December, 13th, it would have given a national audience of sports fans a first-hand view of just how strong football truly is in the Palmetto State.

It was a shame either team had to lose this

Prize Fight quality rematch of last year's AAAA title game when Westside High rallied to win (34-32) after getting down 20-7 to the Bruins early.

After this year's big win, South Florence's five-year coaching veteran, **Drew Marlowe**, shared his thoughts; "This team just kept fighting and fighting throughout the game, and they were not going to be denied," said Coach Marlowe. "You have number 16 (**LaNorris Sellers**) already a legend at South Florence, and now number 17 (brother **Jayden Sellers**) is also a legend in our program with his great performance tonight.

“Our quarterback’s ability (**Messiah Jackson**) to check plays, check protection, and to get us into the right calls is unreal,” said Coach Marlowe.

“Most high school quarterbacks are not as intelligent as he is and he has worked hard to get better every week.

“I told Jayden all week not to feel like he had to win the game for us,” said Coach Marlowe. “I told him to let the game come to you and it did.”

Coach Marlowe was also proud of the Bruins offensive line. "I felt like they were dominant all game and they were physical and nasty with 9 and 10 bodies in there," said Coach Marlowe. "We told them at half-time, if we want to win the game that we have to break them. We have to control the tempo of the game, and I thought our line and our running backs accomplished that."

Coach Marlowe's comments on the play of Woods, "I told him after the game that it has been an honor to play against him. It has also been a pain also."

Coach Marlowe talked about how his team handled the two-point loss to Westside in the finals a year ago, as they prepared for the 2024 season

knowing, in their minds, it could be a match-up with the Rams once again in the finals. “I think you can take those experiences, and you can let them humble you, crush you, or fuel you. Another thing we talked about is that it is okay to be upset about it, and angry about it, but let’s make sure that it is a controlled rage that we come to practice with every day.”

Coach Marlowe said that when “Sellers & Sellers” become teammates at South Carolina next season positive things will be happening. “They love playing together and they love playing for each other,” said Coach Marlowe. “They make each other better.”

Coach Marlowe said he and his staff made few half-time adjustments but he was to the point with his charge to the team. "Down

his charge to the team. "Down seven, with two quarters to play, I told them we have to break them. We are not just trying to win a football game, but we have to win a street-fight and we have to break them with hard-nosed physical play."

South Florence football will be graduating 21 seniors. "Most of them have played together in 45 games the past three seasons and we miss everyone of them," said Coach Marlowe.

Brian Lane is the head coach at Westside High. After the hard-fought game he told the *HSSR*, "I was a great game, and going for two at the end was the right call," said Coach Lane. "You have to execute big plays with the game on the line and we came up one point short."

Coach Lane's thoughts about Wood's 411 passing yards and six TD passes: "What a great young man who has been a tremendous

leader for us throughout his career and I am very proud of him and what he has meant to our program," said Coach Lane. "He has a tremendous future ahead of him.

"Our kids put it on the line tonight and I am proud of each and everyone of them," said Coach Lane. "The plan is to keep winning, and to keep building the program, and I have enjoyed 35 years of playing and coaching the great game of football."

Cutter Woods also spoke with the *HSSR* after the game, “It was great to have Bomar and Weaver transfer into the program (from **Byrnes**) this season and they are so fast they can get behind the defense on most plays and they did that again tonight,” said Woods as USC quarterback **LaNorris Sellers** stood near him. “I left it all on the field tonight.

"I liked the two—point play call and give credit

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	

to the South Florence defense for making a great play on the ball,” said Woods. “Although we came up a couple points shy, I am excited for them.

"I am just thankful to God for allowing me to be a Westside Ram and I will always have Him first and foremost in my thoughts going forward," said Woods. "I always tried to give it my all, and whether or not I deserve the credit, I love the game and look forward to my future."

South Florence's **Jayden Sellers** led the Bruins on offense with three touchdown receptions. He told the *HSSR* after the game, "We have been working towards playing Westside again since Week one," said Sellers. "It has been a blessing to play for South Florence and I just thank God for the strength to work hard early in the mornings and late into the night."

"The coverage was tight on me tonight but I consider myself a play-maker and it is my job to make plays regardless," said Sellers. "Our quarterback throws to a spot and it is up to me to make a play on the ball."

"I am looking forward to joining my brother at South Carolina next season," said Sellers. "We have been playing football together since we were little kids and I am looking forward to the future."

Woods, a South Carolina signee, did all he could

See AAAA Feature, pg. 9

AAA Football Feature

Highly regarded QB will lead Dillon to the top in AAA in ‘25

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Moncks Corner—The *HSSR* is just being the messenger with a prediction that **Dillon** will win the 2025 AAA state football championship with rising freshman Under Armour all-American quarterback **Khayel Sam Fonga-Talia** (6-1,191) leading the way, along with **North Carolina** wide receiver commitment **Zay Robertson** (6-0,170,4.4).

Behind Dillon in the HSSR Class AAA football ranking is second ranked **Mountain View Prep**, the defending AAA champs **Oceanside Collegiate** is number three, followed by **Loris** and **BHP** at 4-5 respectively.

Dillon finished 10-2 last season. In this tradition rich football community, the goals and expectations never change. “We always want to be playing our best football once the play-offs start,” said head coach **Kelvin Roller**. “We always have a goal of playing in the final game and competing for a state championship.

“I have coached at both Dillon and Marlboro County, and sometimes you win a state championship, not so much for having more talent, but for having focused hard-working players who play with unity and purpose,” said Coach Roller. “It’s all about getting everyone, coaches included, to work towards a goal of winning a championship.”

Dillon set attendance records for junior varsity football games last season when “Khayel” lit up the scoreboard with his big time NFL arm.

He and Robertson are a match made in heaven, and opposing defenses will have fits trying to stop the Wildcat’s balanced attack of run and throw during the 2025 season. As they say, “Chose your poison?”

Dillon head coach **Kelvin Roller** is very high on his young quarterback. “Aside from his physical size, Khayel is a quarterback who can make all the throws,” said Coach Roller. “No doubt he is a special player with a huge upside. The thing that has also impressed me is his leadership skills to be an incoming freshman. The guys on the team look up to him and follow him around everywhere. He’s a young man that leads by example.

“Zay is just a great natural athlete who is also a talented basketball player,” said Coach Roller. “When he faces press coverage is it similar to the defenses he sees as a point guard on the basketball team. He is long and lengthy and he catches a ball at high point. He is so fluid and a great route runner also. He is a very smart football player.

“We expect Khayel to help Zay and vice-versa this season,” said Coach Roller. “We will have some talent on the other side also.”

Senior **Dominick Felton** returns as a key running back, after nursing injuries his sophomore and junior seasons. “We know that Dominick is a good football player, and he gives us great depth at running back, but we need for him to stay healthy,” said Coach Roller.

The offensive line returns left guard **Kiele Pompey** (6-0,270). “He’s the strongest kid on the team,” said Coach Roller. “He is built like a brick

house and he is very coachable.” Pompey will flip to the defensive line this season and start both ways, a very rare two- way player for Dillon.

The OL should also add depth from **Dillon Christian** sophomore transfer **Jasper McEntyre (6-4,245)** who will start at one of the tackle slots. “Jasper is a big kid with good football genes,” said Coach Roller. “His father played at **Wofford** and his grandfather played at **South Carolina**.

Depth at WR is expected to come from senior **Rike Niyongabo** and **Jotavious McAlister** who is being moved from FS to slot receiver.

Freshman **Nibras Huggins**, cousin to former Dillon WR **Ahmari Bruce Huggins** who played at **Louisville**, will be the team’s back-up quarterback and he will add depth at receiver.

Coach Roller also said that linebacker **Daniel Capehart** (6-1, 195) looked good in the play-offs last year when he got some carries at running back. “Capehart has had an extremely good off-season and he is locked up with more strength this season. He runs a legit 4.5 forty. He reminds me of some of those old schools I formation running backs that run downhill right at you.” Capehart will still start at linebacker on defense where he had 120 tackles last year including three TFL and three sacks.

Noah Singletary also returns to provide depth at running back. **Keyshawn Ray** will see action as a tight end and linebacker.

Speaking of the *Nasty Cats* of defense, leading tackler linebacker **Keriyon Brown** returns bigger, stronger and faster and he will lead the linebacking

group. Brown led the defense with 158 total tackles last season, including 9 TFL and three sacks.

“Keriyon is a three-year starter with great football instincts and he was just a tackling machine last year,” said Coach Roller. “He is also a good team leader. He is an outstanding linebacker who can also come down and play in the box.”

Kelvion Manning returns at FS where he 49 tackles and five TFL a year ago. **Tristian Blue** returns to play LB after having 49 tackles and three sacks last season. **JJ McAlister** is back at one corner after having four picks last season. Sophomore **Lucas Butler** (6-1, 180) will see action in the defensive front this season. **Jamir Washington** and **Dan Rogers** will provide depth in the defensive front also.

Dontavious Tanksley should provide depth at LB and in the DL.

Dillon will have a new kicker with the same last name of last year’s place kicker. **Steven Rojas** has graduated but his brother Jose Rojas will take over place kicking this season. While punting duties are still up in the air, **JJ Campbell** is back after doing a good job in the play-offs last season.

Dillon’s first scrimmage in August will be hosted by **Carolina Forest** and they will also be joined by teams form **North Myrtle Beach** and **West Florence**. On June, 19 Dillon will also compete in a 7-on-7 skills competition camp at USC. Last year they played in the championship finals against a highly regarded team from Atlanta.

Dillon will once against host the Dillon Jam-boree on August, 15 and the Wildcats will play **Darlington**. Dillon will start the regular season on

2024 Final Region Standings

REGION 1-AAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
BELTON-HONEA PATH	4-0	13-2	617	242
CRESCENT	3-1	7-5	343	237
WALHALLA	2-2	6-6	310	286
PENDLETON	1-3	4-6	295	289
WEST-OAK	0-4	3-8	168	437

REGION 2-AAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
POWDERSVILLE	5-0	9-4	412	296
CHRIST CHURCH	4-1	6-5	231	259
ST. JOSEPH	3-1	5-5	261	240
PALMETTO	2-3	5-7	275	292
SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	1-4	2-7	124	233
CAROLINA	0-5	1-9	81	393

REGION 3-AAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
MOUNTAIN VIEW PREP	4-0	12-1	556	203
WOODRUFF	3-1	9-2	419	260
CHAPMAN	2-2	3-8	222	360
UNION COUNTY	1-3	2-8	157	414
GETTYS BROOME	0-4	3-8	249	419

REGION 4-AAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
NEWBERRY	4-0	7-4	422	202
W J KEENAN	2-2	8-5	417	285
SWANSEA	2-2	7-4	265	268
SILVER BLUFF	2-2	2-9	202	335
FOX CREEK	0-4	5-6	249	262

REGION 5-AAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
LORIS	5-0	11-2	428	160
DILLON	4-1	10-3	472	224
WACCAMAW	3-2	6-5	321	266
AYNOR	2-3	6-5	304	344
GEORGETOWN	1-4	3-7	145	409
MARLBORO COUNTY	0-5	0-10	301	115

REGION 6-AAA	REG	ALL	OFF	DEF
OCEANSIDE	4-0	11-3	467	252
OR'BURG-WILKINSON	3-1	8-4	321	227
HANAHAN	2-2	6-6	311	268
BATTERY CREEK	1-3	3-7	180	306
NORTH CHARLESTON	0-4	4-6	205	289

the road at **Scotland County**, NC on August, 22. There next two games are at home against **Socastee** and **Wilson**.

The only thing that will stop Dillon’s potent offense in 2025 is unfortunate injuries and everyone hopes that will not happen.

As long as **Mountain View Prep** has senior running back **Jaylen McGill** in the back field, they will be a strong contender for the goal medal round in AAA this season.

McGill’s recruiting has been all over the place. In January he committed to Rutgers, then flipped to North Carolina in April, and there was even one report that he would reclassify to the 2025 class and enroll at North Carolina over the summer. Apparently, McGill is staying at MVP and that gives his team every opportunity to be a contender in AAA.

McGill rushed for 1,658 yards on 163 carries while scoring 24 touchdowns as a junior. He has a good set of

See **AAA Feature**, pg. 32

2025 Football Schedules

10/17	DENMARK-OLAR	8/22	NORTH CHARLESTON	9/26	AT HEMINGWAY	8/29	AT FIRST BAPTIST	9/19	SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN
10/24	AT BAMBERG-EHRHARDT	8/29	AT ACADEMIC MAGNET	10/3	AT HANNAH-PAMPLICO	9/5	AT LAURENCE MANNING	9/26	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE
10/31	HARDEEVILLE	9/5	TBA	10/10	CARVERS BAY	9/12	TBA	10/3	AT PROVIDENCE HOME
	BAMBERG-EHRHARDT	9/12	AT PHILIP SIMMONS	10/17	AT LATTA	9/19	BEN LIPPEN	10/10	ORANGEBURG PREP
(0-0)		9/19	CROSS	10/24	TBA	9/26	AT HAMMOND	10/17	TBA
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	BETHUNE-BOWMAN	11/1	at Green Sea-Floyds	10/3	CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/24	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN
8/22	AT EDISTO	10/10	BAPTIST HILL			10/10	at Porter-Gaud	10/31	AT CAMDEN MILITARY
8/29	BUFORD	10/17	TBA		LATTA (0-0)	10/17	TBA		
9/5	BARNWELL	10/17	AT BRANCHVILLE	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	10/24	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	TRINITY COLLEGIATE (0-0)
9/12	AT CALHOUN COUNTY	10/24	AT ST. JOHNS	8/22	EAST COLUMBUS, NC		HEATHWOOD HALL	DATE	OPPONENT
9/19	WOODLAND	10/31	AT SCOTTS BRANCH	8/29	Marion			8/22	PEE DEE ACADEMY
9/26	AT HUNTER-KINARD-TYLER		SCOTTS BRANCH (0-0)	9/5	AT MCBEE		PORTER-GAUD (0-0)	8/29	AT BEN LIPPEN
10/3	AT HARDEEVILLE	DATE	OPPONENT	9/12	AT MULLINS	DATE	OPPONENT	9/5	AT PINWOOD PREP
10/17	RIDGELAND	8/22	SCORE	9/19	AT GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	8/15	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	9/12	AT FIRST BAPTIST
10/24	ALLENDALE-FAIRFAX	8/29	AT EAST CLARENDON	10/3	CARVERS BAY	8/22	FIRST BAPTIST	9/19	DILLON CHRISTIAN
10/31	AT DENMARK-OLAR	9/5	MANNING	10/10	AT HEMINGWAY	8/29	AT SAVANNAH COUNTRY DAY	9/26	NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN
		9/12	HEMINGWAY	10/17	LAKE VIEW	9/5	HAMMOND	10/3	CAMDEN MILITARY
	DENMARK-OLAR (0-0)	9/19	AT LAKE VIEW	10/24	HANNAH-PAMPLICO	9/12	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	10/10	AT WILSON HALL
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	BRANCHVILLE	10/31	AT JOHNSONVILLE	9/19	BISHOP ENGLAND	10/17	TBA
8/22	WAGENER-SALLEY	9/26	ST. JOHNS			9/26	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	10/24	LAURENCE MANNING
8/29	SWANSEA	10/10	AT CROSS	SCISA CLASS 4-A		10/3	AT BEN LIPPEN	10/31	AT FLORENCE CHRISTIAN
9/5	AT BURKE	10/17	AT BETHUNE-BOWMAN			10/10	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY		
9/12	AT HUNTER-KINARD-TYLER	10/24	AT BAPTIST HILL		AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN (0-0)	10/17	TBA		WILSON HALL (0-0)
9/19	AT BLACKVILLE-HILDA	10/31	MILITARY MAGNET	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	CARDINAL NEWMAN	DATE	OPPONENT
9/26	AT EDISTO		ST. JOHNS (0-0)	8/15	GREENVILLE HURRICANES	10/24	AT LAURENCE MANNING	8/22	AT ORANGEBURG PREP
10/3	RIDGELAND	DATE	OPPONENT	8/22	AT JOHN MILLEDGE,GA	8/29	AT BULLOCH ACADEMY,GA	8/29	AT NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN
10/10	AT HARDEEVILLE	8/29	AT BISHOP ENGLAND	9/12	PORTER-GAUD	9/5		9/5	BEN LIPPEN
10/17	AT ALLENDALE-FAIRFAX	9/5	FIRST BAPTIST	9/19	LAURENCE MANNING		FIRST BAPTIST (0-0)	9/19	LAURENCE MANNING
10/31	BAMBERG-EHRHARDT	9/12	AT NORTH CHARLESTON	9/26	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	DATE	OPPONENT	9/26	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN
		9/19	ACADEMIC MAGNET	10/3	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	8/15	BEN LIPPEN	10/3	PINEWOOD PREP
	HARDEEVILLE (0-0)	9/26	AT SCOTTS BRANCH	10/10	HAMMOND	8/22	AT PORTER-GAUD	10/10	TRINITY COLLEGIATE
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	CROSS	10/17	TBA	8/29	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/17	TBA
8/22	BETHUNE-BOWMAN	10/10	AT BETHUNE-BOWMAN	10/24	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	9/5	AT ST. JOHNS HIGH SCHOOL	10/24	AT THOMAS SUMTER ACAD
8/29	WHALE BRANCH	10/17	AT BAPTIST HILL	10/31	AT BEN LIPPEN	9/12	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	10/31	AT FIRST BAPTIST
9/5	EAST CLARENDON	10/24	MILITARY MAGNET			9/26	AT BAPTIST HILL		
9/12	AT HILTON HEAD	10/31	BRANCHVILLE		BEN LIPPEN (0-0)	10/3	AT JOHN PAUL II		CAMDEN MILITARY (0-0)
9/19	AT LEE CENTRAL			DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	DATE	OPPONENT
10/3	BAMBERG-EHRHARDT	REGION 6-A		8/15	AT FIRST BAPTIST	10/17	TBA	8/29	TBA
10/10	DENMARK-OLAR			8/22	TBA	10/24	PINEWOOD PREP	9/5	AT SPARTANBURG CHRIS-
10/24	BRANCHVILLE		CARVERS BAY (0-0)	8/29	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	10/31	WILSON HALL	10/31	AT SPARTANBURG CHRIS-
10/31	AT ALLENDALE-FAIRFAX	DATE	OPPONENT	9/5	AT WILSON HALL			9/12	PINEWOOD PREP
		8/22	AT WACCAMAW	9/12	CARDINAL NEWMAN	0)		9/19	WILSON HALL
	RIDGELAND (0-0)	8/29	KINGSTREE	9/19	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENT	9/26	TBA
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	AT ANDREWS	9/26	AT LAURENCE MANNING	8/15	AT PORTER-GAUD	10/3	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE
8/22	AT EAU CLAIRE	9/12	AT GEORGETOWN	10/3	PORTER-GAUD	8/22	BATTERY CREEK	10/10	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN
8/29	AT EAST CLARENDON	9/19	HANNAH-PAMPLICO	10/10	HEATHWOOD HALL	8/29	AT BETHESDA ACADEMY	10/17	TBA
9/5	WHALE BRANCH	9/26	GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	10/17	TBA	9/5	TBA	10/24	AT HEATHWOOD HALL
9/12	MANNING	10/3	AT LATTA	10/24	AT HAMMOND	9/12	JOHN PAUL II	10/31	NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN
9/19	AT BURKE	10/10	AT LAKE VIEW	10/31	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	9/19	HAMMOND		
9/26	HARDEEVILLE	10/17	AT HEMINGWAY			9/26	AT PINWOOD PREP	SCISA REGION 1-AA	
10/3	AT DENMARK-OLAR	10/24	JOHNSONVILLE		CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/3	TBA		BETHESDA ACADEMY
10/10	ALLENDALE-FAIRFAX			(0-0)					
10/17	AT BAMBERG-EHRHARDT		GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	FIRST BAPTIST	(0-0)	
10/24	TBA	(0-0)		8/15	AT CANNON SCHOOL,NC	10/17	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENT
10/31	TBA	DATE	SCORE	8/22	ST. JOSEPH	10/24	AT JOHN PAUL II	8/22	THOMAS HEYWARD ACAD
	REGION 5-A	8/29	LORIS	8/29	DREHER	10/31	at HILTON HEAD PREP	8/29	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN
		9/5	LAMA	9/5	AT CHRIST SCHOOL, NC			9/5	AT JOHN PAUL II
	BAPTIST HILL (0-0)	9/12	AT MULLINS	9/12	AT BEN LIPPEN		JOHN PAUL II (0-0)	9/12	AT HILTON HEAD PREP
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	AT AYNOR	9/19	HEATHWOOD HALL	DATE	OPPONENT	9/19	PATRICK HENRY ACADEMY
8/22	TBA	9/26	LATTA	9/26	AT CARVERS BAY	8/15	COLLETON PREP ACADEMY	9/26	TBA
9/5	NORTH CHARLESTON	10/10	AT HANNAH-PAMPLICO	10/3	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	8/22	AT LAURENCE MANNING	10/3	AT BEAUFORT ACADEMY
9/12	AT ACADEMIC MAGNET	10/17	JOHNSONVILLE	10/10	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	8/29	AT BATTERY CREEK	10/10	AT DILLON CHRISTIAN
9/19	BETHUNE-BOWMAN	10/24	AT HEMINGWAY	10/17	TBA	9/5	BETHESDA ACADEMY	10/17	TBA
9/26	TBA	10/31	AT LAKE VIEW	10/24	AT PORTER-GAUD	9/12	AT HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	10/24	PEE DEE ACADEMY
10/3	AT MILITARY MAGNET			10/31	AT HAMMOND	9/19	TBA	10/31	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN
10/10	AT BRANCHVILLE				HAMMOND (0-0)	9/26	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN		DILLON CHRISTIAN (0-0)
10/17	ST. JOHNS	DATE	HANNAH-PAMPLICO (0-0)	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	FIRST BAPTIST	DATE	OPPONENT
10/24	SCOTTS BRANCH	8/22	OPPONENT	8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE	HILTON HEAD PREP	8/22	OPPONENT
10/31	AT CROSS	8/29	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	8/29	AT CHRIST CHURCH		TBA	8/29	FLORENCE CHRISTIAN
		9/5	AT WACCAMAW	9/5	PINEWOOD PREP	10/24	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	9/5	AT LEE ACADEMY
		9/12	TBA	9/12	AT PORTER-GAUD	10/31	AT PINWOOD PREP	9/26	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY
	BETHUNE-BOWMAN (0-0)	9/19	LEE CENTRAL	9/19	HEATHWOOD HALL			9/12	TBA
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	AT CARVERS BAY	9/26	AT HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN		PINEWOOD PREP (0-0)	9/19	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE
8/22	AT HARDEEVILLE	9/26	AT JOHNSONVILLE	9/26	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENT	9/26	HILTON HEAD PREP
8/29	AT EAU CLAIRE	10/3	LAKE VIEW	10/3	AT LAURENCE MANNING	8/15	ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN	10/3	AT ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN
9/5	WOODLAND	10/10	GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	10/10	AT AUGUST CHRISTIAN	8/22	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	10/10	BETHESDA ACADEMY
9/12	AT BATTERY CREEK	10/24	AT LATTA	10/17	TBA	8/29	AT HAMMOND	10/17	TBA
9/19	AT BAPTIST HILL	10/31	HEMINGWAY	10/24	BEN LIPPEN	9/12	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	10/24	TBA
9/26	AT MILITARY MAGNET			10/31	CARDINAL NEWMAN	9/5	AT CAMDEN MILITARY	10/31	AT PEE DEE ACADEMY
10/3	AT BRANCHVILLE					9/12			
10/10	ST.JOHNS	DATE	HEMINGWAY (0-0)		HEATHWOOD HALL (0-0)	9/19	TBA		HILTON HEAD PREP (0-0)
10/17	SCOTTS BRANCH	8/22	OPPONENT	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN	DATE	OPPONENT
10/24	CROSS	8/29	ORANGEBURG-WILKINSON	8/22	HANNAH-PAMPLICO	10/3	AT WILSON HALL	8/15	OPPONENT
		9/5	AT SCOTTS BRANCH	8/29	LAURENCE MANNING	10/10	TBA	8/22	BEAUFORT ACADEMY
	BRANCHVILLE (0-0)	9/12	BURKE	9/12	AT FLORENCE CHRISTIAN	10/17	TBA	9/26	AT ST. ANDREWS ACADEMY
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	LAKE VIEW	9/5	AT HAMMOND	10/24	AT FIRST BAPTIST	9/5	TBA
8/22	AT WHITMIRE	10/3	AT JOHNSONVILLE	9/12	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/31	JOHN PAUL II	9/12	BETHESDA ACADEMY
8/29	C A JOHNSON	10/10	LATTA	9/19	PORTER-GAUD			9/19	TBA
9/5	AT AMERICAN LEADERSHIP	10/17	CARVERS BAY	9/26	AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	SCISA REGION 2-AAA		9/26	AT DILLON CHRISTIAN
9/12	AT SCOTTS BRANCH	10/24	AT GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	10/3	AT BEN LIPPEN			10/3	PEE DEE ACADEMY
9/26	AT CROSS	10/31	AT HANNAH-PAMPLICO	10/10	TBA		FLORENCE CHRISTIAN (0-0)	10/10	AT JOHN PAUL II
10/3	BETHUNE-BOWMAN			10/17	CAMDEN MILITARY	DATE	OPPONENT	10/17	ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN
10/10	BAPTIST HILL		Johnsonville (0-0)	10/24	AT NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	8/22	AT DILLON CHRISTIAN	10/24	TBA
10/17	MILITARY MAGNET	DATE	OPPONENT	8/29	LAURENCE MANNING (0-0)	8/29	AT THOMAS SUMTER ACAD-	10/31	HILTON HEAD CHRISTIAN
10/24	AT HARDEEVILLE	8/22	AT CHESTERFIELD	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE			
10/31	AT ST JOHNS	8/29	AT ATLANTIC COLLEGIATE	8/22	JOHN PAUL II	9/5	HEATHWOOD HALL		PEE DEE ACADEMY (0-0)
		9/5	GEORGETOWN	9/12	AT HEATHWOOD HALL	9/12	PEE DEE ACADEMY	DATE	OPPONENT
	CROSS (0-0)	9/12	WACCAMAW	8/29	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY	9/19	WILLIAMSBURG ACADEMY	8/22	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	AT LAKE VIEW	9/5	AT WILSON HALL	9/26	AT WILSON HALL	8/29	AT WILLIAMSBURG ACAD-
8/22	CALHOUN COUNTY	9/26	HANNAH-PAMPLICO	9/12	AT AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN	10/3	TBA	9/26	AT WILLIAMSBURG ACAD-
8/29	AT NORTH CHARLESTON	10/3	HEMINGWAY	9/19	BEN LIPPEN	10/10	AT CAMDEN MILITARY	9/5	TBA
9/5	TIMBERLAND	10/17	AT GREEN SEA-FLOYDS	9/26	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN	10/17	TBA	9/12	AT FLORENCE CHRISTIAN
9/12	LAKE MARION	10/24	AT CARVERS BAY	10/3	TBA	10/24	AT NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN	9/19	ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN
9/19	AT MILITARY MAGNET	10/31	LATTA	10/10	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE	10/31	TRINITY COLLEGIATE	9/26	LEE ACADEMY
9/26	BRANCHVILLE			10/17	PORTER-GAUD			10/3	AT HILTON HEAD PREP
10/3	AT ST. JOHNS		LAKE VIEW (0-0)	10/24	AT TRINITY COLLEGIATE		NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN (0-0)	10/10	TBA
10/10	SCOTTS BRANCH	DATE	OPPONENT	8/15	OPPONENT	SCORE	OPPONENT	10/17	AT CAROLINA ACADEMY
10/24	AT BETHUNE-BOWMAN	8/22	AT MARION	8/22	AT GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN	10/24	AT GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN	10/24	AT BETHESDA ACADEMY
10/31	BAPTIST HILL	8/29	MULLINS	8/29	CALHOUN ACADEMY	10/31	DILLON CHRISTIAN	10/31	DILLON CHRISTIAN
		9/5	TBA				WILSON HALL		
	MILITARY MAGNET (0-0)	9/12	SCOTTS BRANCH	DATE	NORTHWOOD ACADEMY (0-0)	9/12	AT ANDREW JACKSON ACAD-	DATE	ST JOHNS CHRISTIAN (0-0)
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	Johnsonville	8/15	OPPONENT	SCORE	EMY	DATE	OPPONENT
				8/22	STRONG ROCK		PINEWOOD PREP		SCORE

2025 Football Schedules

8/29	AT WADE HAMPTON	10/10	LANCASTER		9/12	BATESBURG-LEESVILLE	10/31	AT BLUFFTON
9/5	POLK COUNTY, NC	10/17	A C FLORA		9/19	AT DARLINGTON		
9/12	EASTSIDE	10/24	AT SOUTH POINTE	DATE	9/26	CRESTWOOD	REGION	1-AAA
9/19	AT PICKENS			8/22	JAMES ISLAND	10/3		
9/26	AT LANDRUM			9/5	AT MARLBORO COUNTY	10/10		
10/3	AT SENECA		LANCASTER (0-0)	9/12	DUTCH FORK	10/17		BELTON-HONEA PATH
10/10	GREER	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/19	AT MIDLAND VALLEY		
10/17	AT TRAVELERS REST	8/22	CHESTER	9/26	NORTH AUGUSTA	10/24		
10/24	DANIEL	8/29	INDIANLAND	10/3	AT BROOKLAND-CAYCE			
10/31	BEREA	9/5	AT ROCK HILL	10/10	AT AIRPORT	DATE		
		9/12	AT FORT MILL	10/17	SOUTH AIKEN	8/22		
	DANIEL (0-0)	9/26	RICHLAND NORTHEAST	10/24	AT AIKEN	8/29		
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	10/3	AT A C FLORA	10/31	GILBERT		
8/22	AT CHAPMAN		10/10	AT DREHER				
8/29	AT STRATFORD		10/17	SOUTH POINTE				
9/5	J L MANN		10/24	AT CAMDEN				
9/19	AT CLINTON		10/31	YORK	DATE			
9/26	SENECA				8/22	MIDLAND VALLEY (0-0)		
10/3	BEREA		RICHLAND NORTHEAST	8/29	OPPONENT	SCORE		
10/10	PICKENS	(0-0)		9/5	AT J L MANN	10/10		
10/17	AT TRAVELERS REST	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	8/22	BLYTHWOOD		
10/24	AT BLUE RIDGE	8/22	AT SPRING VALLEY	9/19	AT LEXINGTON	10/17		
10/31	AT GREER	8/29	AT CRESTWOOD	10/3	AT BROOKLAND-CAYCE	10/24		
		9/5	AT WESTWOOD	10/10	AT AIRPORT	DATE		
	GREER (0-0)	9/12	NATION FORD	8/22	GILBERT	8/22		
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/19	CAMDEN	8/29	AT AIKEN		
8/22	BOILING SPRINGS		9/26	AT LANCASTER	10/17	SOUTH AIKEN		
8/29	AT BELTON-HONEA PATH		10/3	DREHER	10/24	NORTH AUGUSTA		
9/5	AT HILLCREST		10/10	A C FLORA	10/31			
9/12	AT JAMES F. BYRNES		10/24	AT YORK	DATE	NORTH AUGUSTA (0-0)		
9/19	BEREA		10/31	AT SOUTH POINTE	8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE	
9/26	AT TRAVELERS REST				8/29	THOMSON, GA		
10/3	PICKENS		SOUTH POINTE (0-0)	9/5	AT LEXINGTON	10/10		
10/10	AT BLUE RIDGE	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/12	AT SOUTH AIKEN		
10/17	AT SENECA	8/22	AT HOUGH, NC	9/19	STROM THURMOND	GILBERT		
10/31	DANIEL	8/29	ROCK HILL	9/26	AT GRAY COLLEGIATE	REGION	6-AAAA	
		9/5	BALLANTYNE RIDGE, NC	10/3	AIKEN	DATE		
	PICKENS (0-0)	9/12	NORTHWESTERN	10/17	AIRPORT	8/22	BEAUFORT (0-0)	
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/19	AT AC FLORA	8/29	FORT DORCHESTER	SCORE	
8/22	AT EASLEY		10/3	AT CAMDEN	9/5	AT GREENWOOD		
8/29	WALHALLA		10/10	YORK	9/12	PHILIP SIMMONS		
9/5	LIBERTY		10/17	AT LANCASTER	9/19	AT GOOSE CREEK		
9/12	AT ST. JOSEPH		10/24	DREHER	8/22	BATTERY CREEK		
9/19	BLUE RIGE		10/31	RICHLAND NORTHEAST	10/3	AT BLUFFTON		
9/26	AT BEREA				10/10	COLLETON COUNTY		
10/3	AT GREER		YORK (0-0)	9/12	AT BISHOP ENGLAND	DATE		
10/17	DANIEL	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/19	MAY RIVER		
10/24	SENECA	8/22	INDIANLAND	9/19	AT HILTON HEAD	8/22		
10/31	AT TRAVELERS REST	8/29	AT NATION FORD	9/26	GILBERT	8/29		
		9/5	UNION COUNTY	10/3	AT AIRPORT	9/5		
	SENECA (0-0)	9/12	AT CLOVER	10/17	AT GRAY COLLEGIATE	9/12	BISHOP ENGLAND (0-0)	
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/19	AT DREHER	10/24	AT MIDLAND VALLEY	SCORE	
8/22	AT POWERSVILLE		9/26	A C FLORA	10/31	AIKEN		
8/29	WOODMONT		10/10	AT SOUTH POINTE				
9/5	AT WEST-OAK		10/17	CAMDEN	REGION	5-AAAA		
9/12	WALHALLA		10/24	RICHLAND NORTHEAST	DATE	CRESTWOOD (0-0)		
9/19	TRAVELERS REST		10/31	AT LANCASTER	8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE	
9/26	AT DANIEL				8/29	MANNING		
10/3	BLUE RIDGE	REGION	5-AAAA		9/5	AT RICHLAND NORTHEAST		
10/10	AT BEREA				10/17	AT KINGSTREE		
10/17	GREER		AIKEN (0-0)	9/12	AT SUMTER	10/31		
10/24	AT PICKENS	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/19	AT SOUTH FLORENCE		
		8/22	AT AYNOR	9/26	AT LOWER RICHLAND	DATE	BLUFFTON (0-0)	
	TRAVELERS REST (0-0)	8/29	AIRPORT	10/3	WILSON	8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE
DATE	OPPONENTS	SCORE	9/5	HILTON HEAD	10/10	AT HARTSVILLE		
8/22	AT WADE HAMPTON		9/12	LUGOFF-ELGIN	10/24	DARLINGTON		
8/29	EMERALD		9/26	AT GILBERT	10/31	LAKEWOOD		
9/5	AT PALMETTO		10/3	AT NORTH AUGUSTA				
9/19	AT SENECA		10/10	BROOKLAND-CAYCE				
9/26	GREER		10/17	MIDLAND VALLEY				
10/3	PENDLETON		10/24	GRAY COLLEGIATE	DATE	DARLINGTON (0-0)		
10/10	AT DANIEL		10/31	AT SOUTH AIKEN	8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE	
10/17	BLUE RIDGE				8/29	LAMAR		
10/24	AT BEREA				9/5	AT NORTH MYRTLE BEACH		
10/31	PICKENS	DATE	AIRPORT (0-0)	9/12	AT LUGOFF-ELGIN	10/24		
		8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/19	CHERAW		
	REGION 3-AAAA	8/29	MAY RIVER	9/26	LOWER RICHLAND	DATE	COLLETON COUNTY(0-0)	
		9/5	AT AIKEN	10/3	AT LAKEWOOD	8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE
	A C FLORA (0-0)	9/12	AT ORANGEBURG-WILKIN-	10/17	SOUTH FLORENCE	8/29	HAMPTON COUNTY	
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SON	10/24	HARTSVILLE	9/5	AT WOODLAND	
8/22	WESTWOOD		9/12	AT WESTWOOD	10/31	AT CRESTWOOD	9/5	LOWER RICHLAND
8/29	CHAPIN		9/26	SOUTH AIKEN		AT WILSON	9/12	R B STALL
9/5	AT SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN		10/3	MIDLAND VALLEY			9/19	AT STRATFORD
9/12	AT LAURENS		10/10	GRAY COLLEGIATE		HARTSVILLE (0-0)	10/3	AT MAY RIVER
9/19	SOUTH POINTE		10/17	AT NORTH AUGUSTA	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	
9/26	AT YORK		10/24	AT GILBERT	8/29	AT CAROLINA FOREST	10/10	AT BEAUFORT
10/3	LANCASTER		10/31	BROOKLAND-CAYCE	9/5	CAMDEN	10/17	BLUFFTON
10/10	AT RICHLAND NORTHEAST				9/12	ROCK HILL	10/24	AT HILTON HEAD
10/17	AT DREHER				9/19	AT DILLON	10/31	AT BISHOP ENDLAND
10/31	CAMDEN	(0-0)			9/26	WILSON		
		DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	10/3	AT LOWER RICHLAND	DATE	HILTON HEAD (0-0)
	CAMDEN (0-0)	8/29	RIVER BLUFF	10/10	CRESTWOOD	8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/5	AT WHITE KNOLL	10/17	AT DARLINGTON	8/29	R B STALL
8/22	WHITE KNOLL		9/12	MAY RIVER	10/24	LAKEWOOD	9/5	AT JAMES ISLAND
8/29	LUGOFF-ELGIN		9/26	AT SOUTH AIKEN	10/31	AT SOUTH FLORENCE	9/12	AT AIKEN
9/5	AT HARTSVILLE		10/3	MIDLAND VALLEY			9/19	HARDEEVILLE
9/12	AT RIDGE VIEW		10/10	GRAY COLLEGIATE	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	
9/19	AT RICHLAND NORTHEAST		10/17	AT AIKEN	8/22	SUMTER	10/3	BLUFFTON
9/26	DREHER		10/24	AT GILBERT	8/29	WESTWOOD	10/17	BISHOP ENGLAND
10/3	SOUTH POINTE		10/31	NORTH AUGUSTA	9/5	AT DREHER	10/24	AT MAY RIVER
10/17	AT YORK			AT AIRPORT	9/12	EAST CLARENDON	10/31	AT COLLETON COUNTY
10/24	LANCASTER				9/19	WILSON		BEAUFORT
10/31	AT A C FLORA	DATE	Gilbert (0-0)	9/26	DARLINGTON	MAY RIVER (0-0)		
		8/22	OPPONENT	SCORE	10/10	OPPONENT	SCORE	
	DREHER (0-0)	8/29	LEXINGTON	10/17	AT SOUTH FLORENCE	8/22	AT AIRPORT	
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/12	AT RIVER BLUFF	10/24	LOWER RICHLAND	8/29	WEST ASHLEY
8/22	W J KEENAN		9/19	AT NORTH AUGUSTA	10/31	AT HARTSVILLE	9/5	AT LAKE CITY
8/29	AT CARDINAL NEWMAN		9/26	AIKEN		AT CRESTWOOD	9/12	AT BROOKLAND-CAYCE
9/5	LAKEWOOD		10/3	AT SOUTH AIKEN			9/26	GEORGETOWN
9/12	AT BISHOP ENGLAND		10/10	AT MIDLAND VALLEY	DATE	LOWER RICHLAND (0-0)	10/3	COLLETON COUNTY
9/19	YORK		10/17	BROOKLAND-CAYCE	8/22	OPPONENT	10/10	BISHOP ENGLAND
9/26	AT CAMDEN		10/24	AIRPORT	8/29	AT LUGOFF-ELGIN	10/17	HILTON HEAD
10/3	RICHLAND NORTHEAST		10/31	AT GRAY COLLEGIATE	9/5	AT COLLETON COUNTY	10/24	AT BEAUFORT

AAAA Feature, continued from pg. 5

do to help his team compete to defend their title. He completed 11-of-19 passes for 411 yards and six TD’s. The Rams rallied late in the game when Woods hit **Chamarryus Bomar** with a 50-yard scoring pass with 1:52 left, to close the deficit to a mere point. A trick play calling for a WR reverse pass to the end zone was well defended to preserve the win for SF.

The game was a tale of two extremes. While the Rams passed for 411 yards, and ran just 27 plays the entire game, the Bruins ate the clock with 361 rushing yards and ran 77 plays. The time of possession favored South Florence 38:45 to 9:15.

The Bruins were led in rushing by sr. RB **Tre Leonard** who rushed for 191 yards on 25 carries and a TD. **Zion Gilbert** rushed for 114 yards on 20 carries and the speedy Jackson added 49 yards on 14 carries and two rushing touchdowns.

Westside scored first with 5:41 left in the first period when Bomar ran a streak route and Woods delivered a well-timed pass, right on target, for a 38-yard score. **Brayden Burnette** made the first of his five PAT’s during the game to put the Rams up, 7-0 early.

With 2:06 left in the first, SF tied the game 7-7 on Jackson’s 18-yard scoring pass to **Jayden Sellers**. **Evan Holland** made the first of his six PAT’s in the game.

The Rams went up 14-7 with 1:45 left in the first when receiver **Dreson Evans** scored a 74-yard home run ball by Woods that hit him on stride for a touchdown. The PAT was good.

Then with 9:53 left in the second quarter, the strong and deftly accurate arm of Woods struck again, catching Bomar behind the defense on a 69-yard scoring pass that looked like money when it was in the air coming at him. The PAT was good and it was now 21-7.

SF closed out first-half scoring, to close the

AA Feature, continued from pg. 7

and one. However, a fumble pushed it back to the 15 and it missed out on the scoring opportunity.

With the Warhorses receiving the second-half kickoff, that may have afforded them the opportunity to climb back intp the game. A 32-yard kickoff return by **Jordan Peeples** left BHS starting at its 38. A 32-yard completion rom Austin to wide receiver **William Robinson** gave it a first down at the Clinton 31.

On third and one from the 22, Austin was dropped for a 1-yard loss. Austin then threw an in-completion to turn the ball over on downs.

“That hurt us, that hurt us big,” Smith said of the inability to convert in that situation. “We’ve got to be able to do that.”

The Red Devils responded with a 7-play scoring drive that ended with Richardson throwing a 29-yard TD pass to wide receiver **Devin Swindler** to make it 28-6 with 4:57 to go in the third quarter.

“You could have just stuck your foot on their neck at the end of the half, and we didn’t do that,” said Fountain, who won two state titles at **Lamar**. “We didn’t do that and that had me worried. But we were able to get the stop and go down the field and score. It just shows what kind of team we are.”

Any doubt of the game’s outcome was put away when Gilliam scored on an 8-yard with 6:49 left in the game. Gilliam rushed for 59 yards and two

deficit to 21-14, following a double-digit play drive, when Jackson scored on a two-yard run with just 39 seconds left. The PAT was good.

In the second half, the SF senior dominated line began to win the battle of the line of scrimmage. The Bruins scored with 10:37 left in the third period on Jackson’s one yard scamper and Holland’s PAT to tie the game at 21.

On Westside’s next possession, Woods once again showcased his “NFL” arm with a 74-yard “*Dan Marino*” looking TD pass to Weaver with 10:03 left in the third. The PAT gave the Rams a 28-21 lead.

Then with 2:55 left in the third period, Jackson showed off his own arm’s accuracy with a 22-yard touchdown strike to a well-covered Sellers and the made PAT tied the game again at 28-28.

Here came Woods again, on the Ram’s next possession. This time he hit Bomar for a 56-yard scoring strike at the 1:41 mark of the third period, and the PAT by Burnette, gave Westside a 35-28 lead heading into the 4th period.

With 9:08 left, Jackson tossed his third touchdown pass of the game to Sellers, a South Carolina signee, from 31-yards and the PAT tied the game at 35 each.

Finally slowing down the “*Woods Express*” the Bruins took over after a quick kick. In another clock eating drive, Bruin RB **Tre Leonard** scored on a four-yard run with 2:12 left in the game to put the Bruins up 42-35 (PAT good), to give them their first lead as their fans began to rock the foundation of *Oliver C. Dawson* Stadium.

“*The Woods Express*” took only 20 seconds to cut the deficit to 42-41 with 1:52 left in the game on a 50-yard strike to Bomar who looked like his pass route running ability was launched from a cannon. Going for the win, the Rams two-point trick play, on a wide receiver reverse pass failed after a mass pile-

touchdowns on 11 carries, while Clark had 37 yards and a score on seven carries.

Leading rusher and junior running back **Javen Cook** didn’t score but did have 93 yards on 20 carries. Swindler had both of the BHS catches for 38 yards.

Kahzeer Wesley was the top target for Austin, coming up with six catches for 52 yards. Robinson had three catches for 44 yards and **Logan Sturkie** has two catches for 21 yards.

Robinson also had a big game on defense, coming up with 12 tackles from his free safety post.

Smith put everything in perspective on what his team achieved.

“It’s not the outcome we wanted, but it’s a whole lot better than sitting at home and watching it,” he said. “Our goal every year is to get here. It was a great year, a phenomenal year.”

Fountain said winning state was a culmination of all of the hard work put in by everyone involved. “I’m just very happy, very happy for our players, our fans, our coaches, the work they have put in,” Fountain said. “Those seniors have been putting in the work since they were in middle school. The work in the weightroom paid off today.

“It takes a buy-in, not just from me, but from all of these coaches. They made this happen today.”

All of the Red Devils talked about how special it

up of players in the end zone.

Westside did get the ball back on a tremendous 42-yard punt by Jackson to the one-yard line with 39 seconds left. The SF defense stiffened, and the game ended on a 14-yard pass completion from Woods to Weaver as time expired.

The stats leader for SF included Jackson who completed 9-of-11 passes for 134 yards and three touchdowns. Sellers caught all three scoring passes and he netted 121 yards on seven catches. **Malik Robinson** and **Lennix Valerie** each had one catch also.

Behind the Bruins leading rusher Leonard, **Zion Gilbert** ran well, finishing with 114 yards on 20 carries and Jackson added 49 yards on four carries with two rushing touchdowns. Sellers had four carries for 13 yards.

The SF defense was led by **Willie Kennedy** and **Terry Gordon** with three and two tackles respectively. Clemson five-star defensive end commitment **Amare Adams** had one tackle and one sack in the game.

Bomar led Westside receivers with four catches for 213 yards and four receptions resulting in touchdowns. Weaver finished with four catches for 115 yards and a touchdown. Evans had one catch for a 74-yard TD and **Sharode Richardson** and **Da’-Maysa Dawson** each added a catch.

Woods and Richardson each gained 27 yards rushing for the Rams. Woods had two quick kicks for a 52-yard average and **Jaxson Barbee** added a 46-yard punt for the Rams.

The top tackler for the Rams included **Jameson Wilson** with 16.5 total tackles, **RJ Livingston** added 10 total tackles along with **Dreson Evans** (7.5), Weaver (six) and **Malachi Peterson** (5.5) as leaders on the Rams hit index.

was to win the title for the community. There couldn’t have been too many folks left in Clinton based on the numbers in the stands.

“It means a lot to win it because they’ve been supporting us since Day 1,” Aiken said. “The town deserves it. They’ve been waiting for it and we were able to give it to them.”

“Through our four years of high school to have worked so hard and come up short, it really feels good to get it done for the community, the coaches and the players,” said Richardson, who also had an interception on defense.

While Copeland also wanted to win for the community, he also wanted to win so he could lord it over some former teammates.

He is the youngest of the four Copeland brothers. The other three were integral parts of the three previous teams, but Kason is the only one who will have a state championship ring.

Does he plan on giving his siblings a constant reminder of that fact?

“Oh, yes sir,” Copeland said. “It means everything to win state. I’ve poured my heart into this. It’s a good feeling. We’ve worked so hard for this.”

Attention! Coin collectors throughout the state are invited to attend the Lowcountry Coin Club’s Coin Show at the Ladson Fairgrounds in North Charleston on July 25-27!



Coward begins second year as athletic director

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Dillon—*In athletics, stability is a good thing.*
As **Keith Coward** begins his second year as the athletic director at his alma mater (**Dillon High**) he is thankful that all varsity head coaches remain the same at his school and that everyone is pulling the wagon in the same direction.

“First of all, becoming the athletic director behind the leadership of **Zach Hayes** and **Jackie Hayes** made my job so much easier,” said Coach Coward. “Jackie is still employed by the school district and he is always available to answer any questions I might have.

“Also, our Superintendent **Ray Rogers** has been very helpful and supportive,” said Coach Coward. “He has many years of experience to share and he can break down any problem. I am fortunate to have his support and help any time I tis needed.”

As Coach Coward enters year two in his role as athletic director, what were some things he learned in his job during year one? “First of all, the entire experience was eye opening,” said Coach Coward. “It is very important to stay organized and communicate with all your coaches on a frequent basis. You need to get on matters as early as possible to keep them from becoming bigger concerns.

“I compare being an athletic director to being an auditor,” said Coach Coward. “When situations do arise, they are more often more negative in nature, rather than positive. My job is to help find solutions and results when these situations happen.”

While serving as athletic director, Coach Coward is also the head baseball coach at Dilon High. “As the athletic director I am obligated to help all our sports, but when baseball season begins, I also want to give my best for the team I coach,” he said.

Coach Coward was asked about the new transfer rule approved by athletic directors at their annual conference in the Spring. This new transfer rule allows any high school varsity athlete a one-time opportunity to transfer to a different high school without their family having to move. Coach Coward serves as the athletic director for both Dilon and Lake View High Schools.

“People, by their very nature, are resistant to change and this applies to life and not just sports,” said Coach Coward. “The new one-time transfer rule can be a positive change if it is not abused. However, everyone involved will need to follow the rules.

“In our school district we do not want to see athletes transfer to Dilon, or athletes transfer to lake View,” said Coach Coward. “We do not want one athletic program to benefit at the expense of the other.”

Coach Coward talked about the winning tradition at Dillon High and how it has developed into a winning culture. “We expect to win in all our sports at Dillon,” said Coach Coward. “We have high expectations in all sports. There is no doubt in my mind that our culture has helped us

win many games over the years. When you expect to win, winning results most often follow.”
There are two improvement projects either under-way, or just completed, involving Dillon and Lake View High Schools. At Dillon new batting cages have been installed at both the baseball and softball fields. At Lake View new locker rooms, shared by all the athletes, have been installed in the gym.

In terms of longest serving coaches at Dillon High, **Alan “Tiger” McLaurin** takes honors with 32 years of service as the wide receivers coach for the football team. Head girls’ basketball coach James McMillian has served 20 years as a coach at Dillon. Head football coach **Kelvin Roller** and assistant football coach **Kevin Roberts** each have 19 years of experience in the coaching profession.

Other varsity head coaches returning for the upcoming school year include Johnna Jones in volleyball, Bryan Grice with the boys’ basketball team, while Stevie Grice is back as head softball coach. **Karla Grice** returns to handle the co-ed soccer program while Randy Gray and Sam Grooms return to coach the boy’s and girl’s track teams.

On a personal note, Coach Coward wanted to pay tribute to long-time football stats and public address announcer **Lonnie Turner** who passed away earlier this summer. “Mr. Lonnie was very dedicated to Dillon High School for over 50 years and he will be greatly missed,” said Coach Coward. “His work and dedication to the athletic program at Dillon High will never be matched.”

Coach Howard also said that **Brandy Hugins** does an excellent job at helping run the athletic program at Lake View High. He also cited **Sprinter Spivey** for his assistance in helping him run the Dillon athletic program.

“We have many volunteers we also need to thank who help out in numerous ways,” said Coach Coward. “Two of them that come to mind are **Macado Bethea** who helps out maintaining some of our athletic fields and **Ronnie Herring** who helps out with fund raising activities.”

Rep. Jackie E. Hayes
House District #55
Dillon, SC 843-229-3661

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Dillon
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2025 Football Schedules

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	10/3	AT WHITE KNOLL											
8/22	AT YORK		10/10	IRMO											
8/29	AT LANCASTER		10/17	AT CHAPIN	DATE	CAROLINA FOREST (0-0)	9/12	BEAUFORT	10/31	FORT DORCHESTER					
9/5	ANDREW JACKSON		10/24	AT DUTCH FORK	8/29	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/26	AT SUMMERVILLE						
9/19	AT MARVIN RIDGE, NC		10/31	LEXINGTON	9/5	HARTSVILLE	10/10	10/3	AT WANDO						
9/26	ROCK HILL				9/12	AT NEW HANOVER, NC	10/17	10/10	BERKELEY						
10/3	NATION FORD				9/19	AT IRMO	10/24	9/5	AT LUCY BECKHAM	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	8/22	LUCY BECKHAM	
10/10	AT CATAWBA RIDGE				9/26	ASHLEY RIDGE	10/31	10/24	AT CANE BAY	8/29	AT MAY RIVER		9/5	AT CANE BAY	
10/17	CLOVER				10/3	AT SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN		10/31	STRATFORD	9/12	AT BERKELEY		9/19	WANDO	
10/24	AT FORT MILL				10/10	SOCASTEE				10/3	AT JAMES ISLAND		10/10	FORT DORCHESTER	
10/31	AT NORTHWESTERN				10/17	ST. JAMES				10/17	AT R B STILL		10/17	AT R B STILL	
					9/5	BROOKLAND-CAYCE				10/24	SUMMERVILLE		10/31	ASHLEY RIDGE	
					9/19	AT CANE BAY				9/5	AT WESTSIDE				
					9/26	AT FORT DORCHESTER				10/17	SOUTHSIDE				
					10/3	RIVER BLUFF				10/24	FOUNTAIN INN				
					10/10	DUTCH FORK				10/31	AT LAURENS				
					10/17	AT IRMO									
					10/24	AT LEXINGTON									
					10/31	CHAPIN									
DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	10/3	AT WHITE KNOLL											
8/22	AT WHITE KNOLL		10/10	IRMO											
8/29	AT LANCASTER		10/17	AT CHAPIN	DATE	CAROLINA FOREST (0-0)	9/12	BEAUFORT	10/31	FORT DORCHESTER					
9/5	ANDREW JACKSON		10/24	AT DUTCH FORK	8/29	OPPONENT	SCORE	9/26	AT SUMMERVILLE						
9/19	AT MARVIN RIDGE, NC		10/31	LEXINGTON	9/5	HARTSVILLE	10/10	10/3	AT WANDO						
9/26	ROCK HILL				9/12	AT NEW HANOVER, NC	10/17	10/10	BERKELEY						
10/3	NATION FORD				9/19	AT IRMO	10/24	9/5	AT LUCY BECKHAM	DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	8/22	LUCY BECKHAM	
10/10	AT CATAWBA RIDGE				9/26	ASHLEY RIDGE	10/31	10/24	AT CANE BAY	8/29	AT MAY RIVER		9/5	AT CANE BAY	
10/17	CLOVER				10/3	AT SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN		10/31	STRATFORD	9/12	AT BERKELEY		9/19	WANDO	
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Florence Area Feature Page

South Florence coaching staff maintains stability

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Florence – **West Florence** and **Wilson** high schools will have new looks to their football programs this fall. **South Florence**, on the other hand, will return with what has become a daunting, towering presence.

Veteran head coach **Chad Wilkes** will begin his first season as the head coach at West Florence, while former **Sumter** assistant **Brian Wilson** will be in his first head coaching gig at Wilson.

As for South Florence, **Drew Marlowe** is back for his sixth season. He led the Bruins to their second AAAA state title in three seasons last year. They are 41-4 during that stretch and were just three points shy of having consecutive 15-0 seasons when they fell to **Westside** 34-32 in the 2023 championship game.

South Florence went undefeated in 2022 with current **University of South Carolina** quarterback **LaNorris Sellers** leading the way.

Marlowe said the secret to the success has been a team effort among the coaching staff.

“We have had great consistency with our staff over the past six years, particularly in regard to the coordinator positions,” Marlowe said. “That consistency has allowed us to build trust with our players and their families, which has led to great success both on and off the field.”

Returning this season are defensive coordinator **Cannon Jordan** and offensive coordinator **Casey Ward**. Back to help Jordan with the defense are defensive backs coach **Jalen Barr**, inside linebackers coach **Tony Moore** and defensive line coach and junior varsity head coach Tony Biddy. Newcomers to the defensive staff are **Rashad Myers**, who will work with the defensive backs, and defensive line coach **Deshaun Carroway**.

Of Ward’s six assistants working with the offense, five are returning coaches. They are offensive line coach **Kody Varn**, tight end/H back coach **Joah Nelson**, quarterbacks coach **John Gathings**, running backs coach **Shawn Armstrong** and wide receivers coach **JT Varn**. **Mike McManus** is the lone newcomer, and he will coach wide receivers.

With the hiring of Coach Wilson, the Wilson football team will have a West Florence flavor to it. Wilson’s two new coordinators, defensive coordinator **Jerran Devlin** and offensive coordinator **Braxton Ivory**, have served in the same positions at West Florence.

See Florence Area, pg. 41



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Florence Christian to return entire coaching staff

By Dennis Brunson
Hssr.com Associate Editor

Florence – After undergoing changes in the head coaching position for its two primary spring sports, Florence Christian School athletic director **Neil Minton** is expecting things to remain status quo for the upcoming 2025-26 school year.

“We do not anticipate any changes in our varsity coaches this year,” said Minton, who holds down two of those spots as football head coach and girls basketball head coach.

Scotty Keefe will be back for his second season in his second tenure as the Eagles baseball head coach. Keefe guided the team to an 11-10 season. Jessie Lyles, who had been the junior varsity softball coach before moving up to varsity last season, will return for her second season.

Denise Carter remains in charge of the varsity volleyball program, leading FCS to an 11-11-2 record last season. **Clay Bochette** returns as the boys basketball head coach after guiding the Eagles to an 11-13 record and to the quarterfinals of the SCISA AAA state tournament. **Garrett Coker** will be in charge of the boys soccer team again after leading it to a 9-8 record, and **Rob Hardy** will again be the boys golf coach.

“We have a wonderful, knowledgeable, caring staff that has been loyal to our ministry and our school,” said Minton, who will be entering his fifth year as athletic director. Minton is preparing for his 14th season as Florence Christian’s football head coach and will be entering his 10th season in charge of the girls basketball program.

See Florence Christian, pg. 34

Boyd inheriting veteran coaching staff at Lamar

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Lamar – **Tyler Boyd** is the man carrying the title of football head coach at **Lamar High School**. However, he is definitely the newcomer in his return to his alma mater.

Boyd, who was an All-State quarterback for the Silver Foxes while playing for his father, **J.R. Boyd**, has inherited a coaching staff filled with veteran Lamar assistants.

The returning coaches are Rob Joye, **Hayden Wilks**, **Brian Scott**, **Jimmy Woods** and **Allen Poole**. The new assistants are **Javonte Green** and **Antonio Jones**.

“Having a lot of the same coaches, the adjustment has been more so for me than them or the players,” said Boyd, who came back to Lamar after two years as the football head coach at **Williamsburg Academy**. “For the older kids, I will be their third head coach in four years, so it will be about me earning their trust. I can understand where they are coming from.

“Me stepping in there with no coaches I brought, I want to keep a lot of the same things they’ve been doing because it worked well. But I want to bring in

my own stuff, but it’s a good situation to come into.”

Boyd inherits a team that went 9-4 and reached the quarterfinals of the Class A state playoffs under **Stephen Burris**, who departed after two seasons to be the head coach at **Westwood**.

Scott, the former **University of South Carolina** standout wide receiver, will coach wide receivers and defensive backs as will Jones. Wilks will coach the offensive lineman, while Woods will be in charge of the defensive line. Joye will coach wide receivers and linebackers, Poole will coach linebackers, and Green will coach running backs and linebackers.

It’s been so far, so good for Boyd.

“Things have been going great,” Boyd said of the summer workout. “We went to **Conway** last week, and that was our

See Lamar, pg. 41



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Bulldogs athletics set for 2025-26 school year

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Bennettsville – The past is best left in the past and the football program at **Marlboro County High** is ready to turn its focus to the 2025 season.

Marlboro County had one of the state’s top teams last fall. On the field, the Bulldogs went 9-1 in the regular season, losing only to Dillon. However, the final record was officially 1-9 after it was determined the team had six ineligible players participating. The players were transfers from schools in North Carolina and several did not comply with the residency rules of the South Carolina High School League.

Last fall was **Cory Johnson’s** first as the head football coach though much of the blame was attributed to administrative errors. So things have calmed a bit and Johnson has assumed duties as athletic director in addition to keeping his role as head football coach.

Johnson brought to Marlboro County a winning pedigree, posting a 61-12 record as a head coach in Clinton, North Carolina. Most of coaching back-

ground is on defense but his teams also have been quite adept at scoring points.

The coach has been hard at work with his players this offseason and there will be a focus on repeating the success of last season, without the issues.

As Johnson inherited the role of athletic director, one of his jobs is to make sure the varsity coaches have what they need to best compete. Hiring new coaches is another major task but Johnson reports that no varsity teams had a coaching opening this summer.

Among the varsity coaches are **Ryan Pierce** (baseball), **Kevin Inglis** (softball), **Demetrius Knox** (boys basketball), **Leah Zimmerman** (girls basketball), **Deon Quick** (boys golf, girls golf), **Anthony McMillan** (wrestling), **Dori Sanders** (cheer), **John Nall** (boys soccer), **Hallie Dyer** (girls soccer), **Ashley Pate** (volleyball), and **Dennis McFatten** (track and field).

The 2025 football season will kick-off on Aug. 22 against Lake Marion.

Rep. Jackie E. Hayes
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Hartsville athletic coaches continuing to thrive

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Hartsville – **Hartsville High** has a long tradition of success in athletics and from the looks of things, the winning will continue in the 2025-26 school year.

Athletic director **Brad Boob** feels a committed and dedicated coaching staff will keep the Red Foxes competing for region championships.

Hartsville won eight region championships during the 2024-25 school year. More importantly, every team showed a competitive spirit across the board.

This past year saw major success that will be a great foundation going into the new year,” Boob said. “We had a brand new region that really changed our normal game schedules and brought on new opponents. We were able to secure eight region championships last year, which led to over half of those teams taking deep runs in the playoffs. We are hopeful the success will continue and the consistency in our coaching staff will lead to more success in the new year.”

Certainly a key strength of Hartsville athletics is consistency in the coaching staff. At times, changes are inevitable, but Hartsville has good success in keeping their coaches in the program.

One of Boob’s primary jobs is giving each coach the necessary tools for success. His support is has been key and his focus on his coaches contributing to the overall success of the student/athletes is paramount.

“We have a great group of head coaches,” he said. “It has been important to us over the last few years to build a culture that thrives off our community and embraces our community. Our Head coaches work ex-

tremely hard building student-athletes that will be well-rounded citizens for our community for years to come. Sport teaches life lessons and our coaches are a true testament to that motto.”

Boobs reports four new varsity head coaches for the coming school year. **Laura Huggins** will take over the girls golf program and **Darrin St. Ours** is the new boys golf coach.

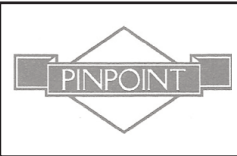
Cesare Castro is the new boys soccer coach. Hartsville also will have a new baseball coach but that position has yet to be named.

Jeff Calabrese returns this fall as the head football coach. This will be his 22nd season at the helm.

Macie Leeth will head up the competitive cheer program and **Parker Oldham** returns as the volleyball coach. **Randell Ewing** is the cross country coach and **Dani Fassett** directs the swim team.

Dusty Braddock will coach girls tennis in the fall and boys tennis in the spring. **Jason Earle** is the boys basketball coach and **Andre Hooks** is the girls basketball coach. **Michael Lynch** returns as the boys wrestling coach while **Aimee Jo Howle** coaches the girls wrestling team.

Amber Harvey heads up the softball program and **Steve Jewell** is the girls soccer coach. **Frankie Humphrey** heads up the track and field program.



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BHP's Blackston anxious for football season in '25

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Honea Path – After playing for the AAA state championship last season, **Belton-Honea Path High School** football head coach **Russell Blackston** is all keyed up to see what awaits the Bears in the 2025 campaign.

“Our summer has gone well,” said Blackston, who guided BHP to a 13-2 overall record. “I’m really anxious to see where we’re at. We must get better these last two weeks before we start (fall practice) on July 31.”

Blackston will be assisted by **John Ballenger**, **Dalton McLain**, **Chris Rogers**, **Chris Strickland**,

Josh Wade, **Cody O’Brien**, **Shamad Jordan** and **Chris Donovan**.

Jody LeCroy is returning as the Belton-Honea Path athletic director. He made a trio of new hires for the upcoming school year.

Paige Knotts will be the new volleyball coach, **Max Bolden** is the new girls basketball head coach and is the new boys soccer coach.

Chad Roper returns as the baseball coach as does state-championship-winning **Jarad Jennings** for softball. **Meredith Hitch** is coaching girls tennis, **Andrew Reeves** boys tennis, **Tessa Gambrell** girls golf, **Rogers boys golf**, **Stephanie Colley-Hughes**

See BHP, pg. 69

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Patriots coaching staff has two new faces this fall

By Roger Lee
Special to the HSSR
North Charleston – Fort Dorchester only had a couple of turnovers this Summer as far as its varsity head coaching staff is concerned.

“Tennis and baseball were the only two positions to fill for the 2025-26 school year,” Fort Dorchester Athletic Director Taryn Floyd said. “I am thrilled for both programs’ future.”

Jay Christmas has been named the head coach for Patriots Baseball. He replaces Ronnie Sayer, who led the program to one of its most successful seasons yet as the team’s interim coach this Spring.

The new coach is the father of Tyler Christmas, who was an All-State, All-American and Academic All-American shortstop for Fort Dorchester. The son signed with Duke University, but after an injury transferred and now plays for The Citadel.

“I have known Jay for years and I have no doubt he will bring knowledge, a strong work ethic, and family values to this special team and program,” Floyd said. “He got to work immediately preparing for what is sure to be an exciting season.”

Kyle Conway has been hired to head the Fort Boys Tennis program.

Everyone else is returning to the staff. “Since May, the coaching staff has been working on coaches trainings, facility updates and meeting weekly to develop plans for further improvements,” Floyd said. “We have short and long range plans to ensure we continue to make both DD2 and the North Charleston community proud.”

Shaun Lorenzano is preparing for his second

Lewis boasts a seasoned group of coaches at AR

By Roger Lee
Special to the HSSR
Summerville – Ashley Ridge teams are entering their second school year under the guidance of Athletic Director Kelly Lewis.

After 34 years as an educator, coach and administrator in North Carolina, Kelly was recruited by Ashley Ridge. He replaced Randall Tucker prior to the 2024-25 school year when Tucker left to become the AD at Cane Bay.

His first year at AR had its ups and downs, but Lewis is excited about returning.

“Overall, we have a strong coaching staff at ARHS,” Lewis said. “Some of our coaches have been here since the school opened and (last year) we added some region and lower state championships. We have also hired some new coaches.”

Prior to coming to AR, Lewis was the district athletic director for New Hanover County Schools in Wilmington, N.C. and was inducted into the N.C. Athletic Director’s Association Hall of Fame in 2024. His background is in physical education.

He was also an assistant football coach and spent five years as a head baseball coach when he lived in Charlotte.

“I’m entering my 23rd year in athletic administration,” he said. “In my second year at AR, we will begin to look at creating an ARHS Athletic Hall of Fame and I would like to also begin a student athlete leadership team with the help of the coaching staff.”

The AR varsity staff has three new coaches.



Baseball coach Jay Christmas (left) and Tennis Coach Kyle Conway (right) are new to the Fort Dorchester coaching staff in 2025-26

season as the head of the Fort Football program. Rashad Palmer, (Wrestling), Megan Foley (Girls Volleyball), Nicolas Danielski (Girls Cross Country) and Clinton Sydney (Swimming) are also entering their second season heading a Fort program.

Most of the school’s other head coaches have been at the Fort for a while. Boys Cross Country Coach Thane Williams and Boys Track and Field Coach Fred Hamilton have coached for more than 30 years, the majority being for the Patriots. Others returning are Tara Brigman (Cheerleading), Bobby Floyd (Strength and Conditioning), Kenny Walker (Golf), Neil Veloso (Boys Soccer/Girls Tennis), Elizabeth Govert (Boys Volleyball), Thomas McElveen (Boys Basketball), Katrina McClain (Girls Basketball), Ashley Johnson (Basketball Cheerleading), Jason Birchwood (Girls Soccer), Curtis Moore (Softball) and Jalain Whitfield (Girls Track).

Danielle Greenman, Renetta Barksdale and Jimmie Rogers head the Sports Medicine program.

Shane Calvert now heads the Girls Soccer program. He has coached at Lees McRae and Tusculum and had a stop at Clemson. He replaces the school’s original girls’ coach, Mark Weaver.

Brittany Farrell replaces Leigh-Ann Carter as the head of the Girls Volleyball program. Farrell most recently served as the interim head coach for USC.

Noelle Hauck is the new head of the Girls Tennis program.

“They have experience and we are thrilled to add such quality coaches to our staff,” Lewis said.

Ashley Haskins, who for the past two seasons served as the assistant head coach of the AR Football program and worked with offensive linemen, is serving as interim head coach in the absence of Jeff Tate.

Three head coaches for other sports have been at the school since it first opened in 2008.

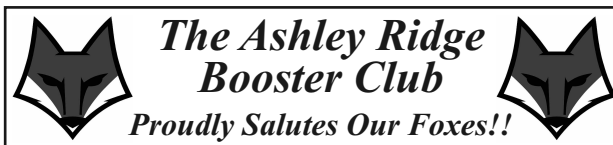
Nate Harris, the original Boys Soccer coach, led

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ASHLEY RIDGE



the Swamp Foxes to the 5A State Championship in 2023 and to a Lower State Championship in 2025.

BJ Bellush founded the AR Baseball program and has been its head coach for all but five seasons when co-founder Brian Givens held the “skipper” position. Bellush is also the strength and conditioning coach.

Jeff Plane came to the school in 2008 as an assistant football coach and now serves as the head coach for the Cross Country teams.

Victoria Merritt has been the AR Swimming coach for 10 years and led multiple teams to region championships. Larissa Shannon is another long-termer. As the AR Softball coach she once won six straight region titles. Boys’ basketball coach Brad Dobbels has more than 20 years of overall coaching experience. Under his leadership, the Swamp Foxes set a new school record for wins. He also coaches the Boys’ Golf team.

Jimmy Brown, who is entering his third year with the AR girls’ basketball team, has more than 20 years of total experience. Others returning include Taea Fonkert (cheer), Blair Steed (boys’ volleyball), Alan Aponte (wrestling) Ron McNally (girls golf), Alyx Sisofo (Sports Medicine) and Saeed Jones (track and field).

Bamberg County Feature Page

Bamberg Ehrhardt football built from within

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR

Bamberg – In 1979 Sister Sledge came out with the song “We are Family” and the Pittsburgh Pirates adopted it as their mantra for the year but the song may be a better fit for the football coaching staff at Bamberg Ehrhardt as most of the staff has either played for the Red Raiders or are from the area.

Head Coach Corey Crosby said “All my coaches are great. I built a staff where I didn’t want everybody to be the same. Each one brings a different strength to the program and they know the kids from a young age and they have watched them develop. They have all been with me for a while and I wouldn’t be where I am at without them.”

Travis Wilson has been with the program for a long time coaching the defensive line and being the defensive coordinator. Coach said he is tough on the kids but fair and they respond to him and what he is teaching.

Willie Carter came from Blackville Hilda with coach Crosby four years ago and is also the head basketball coach while Greg Fanning came to Bamberg two years ago and is the teams offensive coordinator. He has put his stamp on the offense.

The rest of the staff consist of Terrel Haynes, Marcus Cann, Charles Kelly and Thomas Williams.

Coach Crosby has also put his stamp on the program as he has gone 31-8/ 12-1 in his three seasons at the helm with two region championships and a lower state final’s appearance. Prior to his return home he went 9-3 at Blackville Hilda.

“I wanted to establish toughness and accountability when I took over the program. I have been around a lot of great coaches and have learned a lot. We wanted to make sure that the kids knew they are not entitled to anything. We have to earn what we get and you have work every year to get where you want to be at the end of the season,”

said coach.

Coach continued, “Every team is different and you have to be able to make changes with each one. You need to find out what that team does well and hone in on that. You also have to work to get better on the weak parts of your game.”

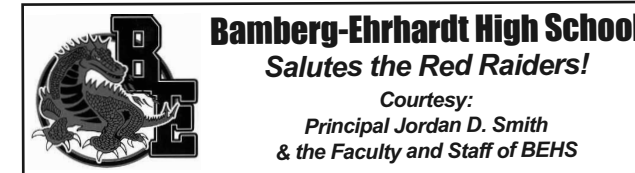
One thing that coach impresses upon his team is you have to put in the work off the field, in the community and in the classroom to achieve the goals you set and to show that you. He also talks about his final two years as a player for Bamberg Ehrhardt where the Red Raiders suffered through a couple of 2-8 seasons.

Coach said the memory of those years drive him to this day to be better tomorrow than he was today. He does not want his players to go through that type of season. He also jokingly said that he is hard to work for but his coaches understand his moods.

“I told our kids and it is what we say around here, ‘Leave the program better than you found it.’ You can only do that if you put in the work every-day and pay attention to the little things,” coach said.



Head Football Coach Corey Crosby



Denmark Olar’s Hercules Davis goes out on top

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR

Denmark – 2024/25 was exciting year for the Denmark-Olar Vikings as boys basketball team brought home a Class A state championship and every other sport made the class A lower state playoffs.

The state championship in basketball is the first for the Vikings in boys basketball. They finished runner up in 1990. They finished the year at 20-5 with all five losses coming against AAAA and AAAAA teams. They also finished the year on a 15-game winning streak with only two games coming within six points.

“These young men wanted this game so bad. From practice Day 1 of this year this is what they were working towards. It has been 35 years since Denmark-Olar has played in this game.” head coach Hercules Davis.

It also ended Davis’s 26-years at the helm of the Viking program as he retired from coaching.

Coach Davis has also been the head volleyball for the past five years and finished his tenure by guiding the team to a second-place finish in the region 4A and into the second round of the class A lower state playoffs.

After three straight trips to the state Class A finals the Lady Vikings, who moved to the lower state due to realignment, fell to eventual state champ Military Magnet in the lower state finals. Head coach Terrance Jones has guided his teams to a 108-18 record and five consecutive region titles. He is also an assistant on the football team.

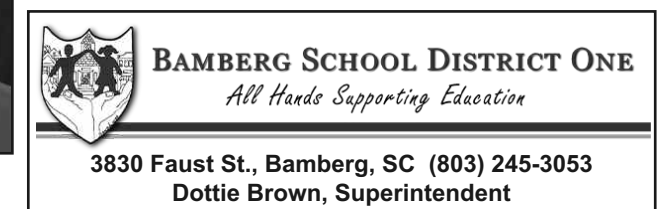
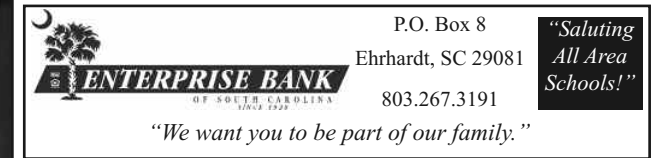
William Raysor finished his first year as the head football coach with a 4-7 record and a third-place finish in region 4A. The third-place finish got them into the playoffs where they went on the road to pull off an upset win over Carvers Bay 22-16 and move into the second round. He is also the head boys track and field coach as well as an assistant on the boys state championship basketball team.

“Right now, getting my guys acclimated to working hard every day and to win in the school building. Because if you can win in that school building, you can win on the football field,” Coach told the HSSR last fall.

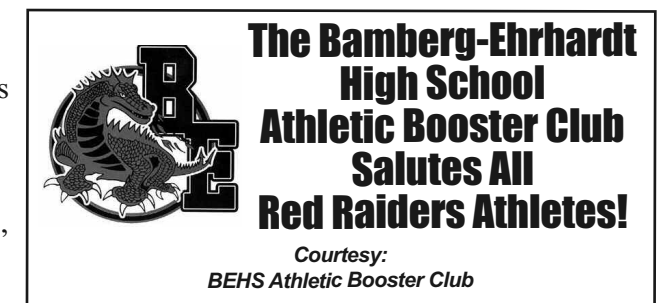
Xzavier Goldsmith took over the soccer program. Moving to the lower state put the Vikings into a tougher region but they still made the class A playoffs for the fifth consecutive year.

Chandra Williams is the competitive cheer coach and Lora Hampton is the head girls track and

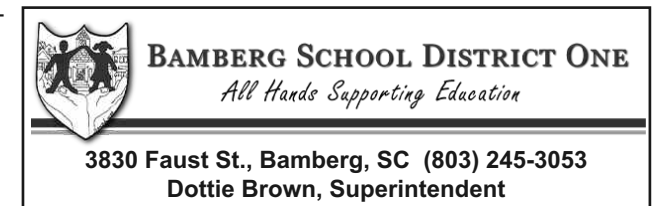
BAMBERG-EHRHARDT



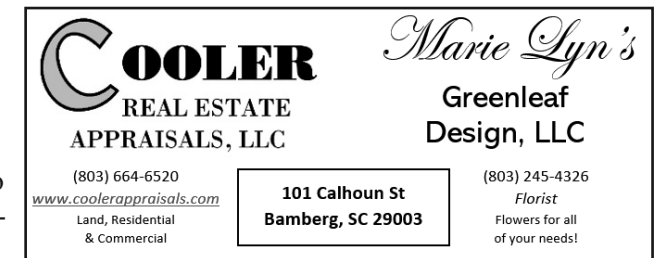
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DENMARK-OLAR



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field coach

Smith to be South head coach in all-star game

**By Billy G. Baker
Publisher**
Barnwell-Brian Smith begins his third season as the head football coach at Barnwell High School, and his second season as athletic director after leading the Warhorses to the AA football finals last season against Clinton.

“Barnwell High has a strong set of coaches across the board,” said Coach Smith. “This stability makes an AD’s job much easier with everyone on the same page.”

Coach Smith has also been selected as the head South coach in the annual North-South all-star game held annually in Myrtle Beach every December.

“I am very honored to be the head coach of the South squad,” said Coach Smith. “Of all the all-star games out there, this all-star game is the best in the country. I can’t wait for my week at the beach with my squad and fellow coaches.”

The vast majority of the Barnwell varsity coaches remain the same for the 2025-26 school year.

Cody McCollum, a Barnwell High graduate, returns for his third season, and this past season Barnwell won a region title while posting 19 wins.

Coach McCollum is assisted by **Lonnie Robinson**. **Jeremy Roland** is the head jayvee baseball coach. **Donald Williams** is a jayvee assistant while **Rick Bozard** heads up the middle school baseball team. **Corey Smith** and **Britt Pender** also help out with the baseball program.

Veteran head softball coach **Michael Beasley** has now completed nearly 30 seasons in coaching. His 2025 Lady warhorse softball team finished 20-7 and won a region title. Coach Beasley is assisted by **Rick and Rose Arnold**.

After the season, Coach Beasley told the *HSSR*, “We had a great season with a good mixture of young and experienced players,” he said. “We are pleased to be returning 10 players next season from this team.”

Alan LeRoy will be the head coach of the Barnwell boys’ basketball team and they had a rebuilding season in 2024-25.

William Hammonds is a long-time head varsity coach if the girls’ basketball team and he will return to lead the program once again this season.

Luke Catoe is back to head coach the boy’s and girls’ cross-country teams. Dwayne Garrick will once again head coach the boy’s golf team. The boys’ soccer team will be under the direction of former Barnwell player **Jay Harvey** who was also an outstanding kicker in high school. Coach Harvey is assisted by **Blair Williams**. Luke Catoe is the jayvee boys’ soccer coach.

The girls’ soccer team will be under the direction of **Tracey Turpin**. **Rob Roth** returns as the adult trainer. Thomas Davis returns as the head boy’s and girl’s track coach. **Teresa Sanders** is the head volleyball coach. **Isaac Cooper** returns once again to head up the Barnwell High wrestling program.

Coach Cooper and Coach Pender handle the weight lifting program at Barnwell.

Derek Youngblood will begin his second year as the Principal of Barnwell High. The Superintendent is Keri Schneider is the Assistant Athletic director.

Barnwell Football Team Busy Working Out In Anticipation Of Upcoming Season

Coach Brian Smith shares some of his thoughts about the upcoming football season with these com-



Head Coach
Brian Smith

ments: “It is an honor and privilege to coach team 107 in Barnwell Warhorse history,” said Coach Smith. “This team is led by a group of seniors that have experienced tons of success in their high school careers. The strength and experience of this team will be the box on both sides of the ball.

“Senior offensive lineman **Jackson Bedingfield** is back to lead our offensive line,” said Coach Smith. “He will be a three-year starter this fall. **Copeland Owens** is back after a knee injury along with his brother **Davison** who is a returning starter at the opposite tackle. **Nehemiah Brown** was a 1,000-yard rusher as a junior and he will carry the load offensively for the Warhorses this season.

“Right now, we have many positions that are wide open with **Josiah Gibson** and **Damahjai Devoe** are battling at Quarterback,” said Coach Smith. “Numerous players are battling for the kicker and punter jobs. **Traven Wilson** is leading our battle at center.

“Defensively, **Henri Creech** is returning to lead this unit,” said Coach Smith. “**Jayden Peebles** and **Damahjai Devoe** are returning starters at defensive back and will need to provide leadership to this group. **Torye Pickens** is leading our linebacker group and **Bedingfield** and **Carl Hines** are providing strong leadership up front on the defensive line.

“This team lacks the experience that last year’s team had,” said Coach Smith. “They have continued the Barnwell tradition of working hard to win the off season in the weight room and the classroom. From a coaching standpoint, the scrimmages, jamboree, and non- region games will be critical to develop depth and determine starters who can help us reach our season goals. These battles will be interesting to watch from my perspective and will allow us to coach a ton more than we did with last year’s more experienced group.”

Barnwell will have a picture day on July, 31 at 4 p.m. followed by a 5 p.m. practice. There will be a parent meeting at 6 p.m.

The Warhorse football team will scrimmage at Midland valley on August 7. On April, 11 the team travels to Batesburg-Leesville for a four-way scrimmage with Batesburg-Leesville, Crescent, and Emer-

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ald. Barnwell will host a jamboree on August, 15 and they will play **Strom Thurmond**.

The varsity football assistants are comprised of: **Isaac Cooper**, **Jon Burdge**, **Thomas Davis**, **Alan LeRoy**, **Dwayne Garrick**, **Cody McCollum**, **Britt Pender**, **Brandon Staton**, and **Chris Donehue**.

The head middle school football coach is **William Hammonds** and his assistant is **Rokeem Williams**.

Myers takes on role as Colleton County district AD

**By David Shelton
Senior Writer**

Walterboro – While his coaching career has included several stops along the way, **Dr. Chris Myers** really never left the Colleton County community.

For many years, even while coaching at various schools, Myers ran the recreation department in Colleton County. He also coached the Colleton County High as a football assistant and junior varsity basketball coach. He also has coached at Dorchester Academy, John Paul II and Hampton County High. In addition, he was the athletic director at Dorchester Academy and assistant athletic director at John Paul II.

The opportunity to return full-time as a part of the Colleton County school district was too hard to pass up. In January, Myers began his role as the Executive Director of Athletic Operations for the school district. Essentially, he oversees all athletics at the high school and middle school levels in the district.

“I am very excited about being back in Colleton County and I look forward to the challenges ahead,” said Myers, who received his Doctorate of Education in Sports Management from the US Sports Academy. “It has been an easy transition for me since I had strong previous relationships with the coaches here. Athletic success and motivating our student-athletes to excel on and off the field is something I take very seriously.”

Superintendent **Jessica Williams** welcomes Myers to the district’s leadership team.

Colleton Prep continues growth in athletics

**By David Shelton
Senior Writer**

Walterboro - In a perfect world, Colleton Prep athletic director **Greg Langdale** would love to offer as many sports opportunities as other small private schools in SCISA.

However, to have a lot of sports you need a lot of willing participants. While Colleton Prep’s participation rate in athletics is very good, there simply is not enough student-athletes to go around. Langdale addressed the situation in an interview last summer.

“There are very few high school kids in the school that don’t play something,” said Langdale, who is also the head football coach. “The participation rate for the kids that we have is really good. We have a good many athletes who are two sport athletes and several that play three sports. We just don’t have the overall numbers to add sports.”

Langdale says adding a boys soccer program and possibly getting more involved with track and field are on the wish list. However, the turnout of players for soccer was minimal, less than enough to field a team.

“We try every year but you can’t do it with five or six boys,” Langdale said. “We have good numbers in baseball during the spring. We just don’t have enough boys in the school to spread around.”

Colleton Prep has fielded a girls soccer team in recent years, joining basketball, volleyball, tennis and softball as girls sports are offered. Cross country is another sport that has been hit or miss in terms of participation numbers. There

“The district is elated to welcome Dr. Myers to team Colleton,” said Williams. “Dr. Myers’ experience as a previous athletic director, coach, and physical education teacher aligns perfectly to support our district’s athletic programs. We are confident that he will model the way by inspiring a shared vision for our student-athletes to reach their highest potential, both on and off the field.”

Myers reports most of the coaching staff will return intact for the 2025-26 school year, with a few exceptions. A new baseball coach will be announced soon as former coach **Jermale Paige** will take on more duties as an assistant principal and assistant athletic director.

Samir Mwangi will take over as volleyball coach and **Elsie Huffman** will coach girls golf. **Chip Wiggins** will coach girls soccer.

Myers is forming a list of improvements and



District Athletic Director
Dr. Chris Myers

has been growing interest in wrestling and several wrestlers have competed well, though the roster for all weight classes is still incomplete.

One of Langdale’s primary tasks is making sure his teams have coaches. He had to hire a new boys basketball coach last year and John Caldwell will return for his second season.

Veteran coach **Belinda McCoy** directs the successful girls basketball program and she also will coach volleyball.

George Smith will return to direct the cross country program and **Mike McCoy** will coach the boys golf team. **Ladson Fishburne** heads up the successful girls tennis program in the fall.

Returning as softball coach is **Tiger Martin** while **Josh Craven** will return as the head baseball coach. Both programs are perennial playoff contenders.

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programs that he would like to see over the next few years. One major concern is practice facilities that can accommodate all the teams.

“We have to be creative and work together to make sure our teams can practice,” he said.

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Williamsburg County Feature Page

Cantrell puts together Kingstree football staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.con Associate Eitor

Kingstree – New **Kingstree High School** football head coach **Brandon Cantrell** has brought some familiar names and big names to his first coaching staff.

The biggest name is **Dr. Jerry Brown**, the Hall of Fame coach who will serve as an offensive analyst and consultant. He has won five state titles over his legendary career and is the only coach to win championships at three different schools.

“Dr. Jerry Brown is a big addition,” Cantrell said. “He will help as a consultant and an analyst for us. I played for Coach Brown at Berkeley from 1996-1999.”

The familiar names are **Jason Meyers**, **James Price**, **Antwan Brunson** and **Diallo Cooper**. Meyers, Brunson and Cooper are all Kingstree graduates while Price has been at the school for seven years.

Meyers will be the defensive coordinator, the same post he held last year at **Lamar**. He has played under and coached will Cantrell. Brunson, who has coached with Cantrell before as well, will coach wide receivers and defensive backs. Cooper will coach the offensive backs.

Price, who was the defensive coordinator last season under former head coach **Brian Smith**, will coach the defensive line this season. **Richard Montgomery** will coach both the offensive and defensive lines, while **Sharvis Graham** will coach the offensive line.

Taylor-Rae Danforth is the certified trainer, and **Nick Marcus** is the strength and conditioning coach.

Price is also the athletic director and the girls basketball head coach, having developed the program into one of the more solid ones in AA. Shawnte’ Evans returns for his second year in charge of boys basketball. Also back are Ameisha Owens, who will coach both volleyball and softball, and baseball head

coach Leonard Montgomery.

Meyers will be the boys track and field head coach, while **Christi English** will coach the girls team.

“I am super excited about the opportunity for our athletic program to grow at Kingstree High School in the 2025-26 school year,” Price said. “Not only were we able to retain great coaches from last year, but we were also able to hire some great new coaches with tons of experience. That can only help grow and develop our scholar-athletes in and out of the classroom.”

SHRINE BOWLER MYCHEAL EDWARDS-WALLACE KILLE IN DRIVE-BY

Recently graduated **Shrine Bowl** lineman **Mychael Edwards-Wallace** was killed in a drive-by shooting in **Kingstree**.

The 6-foot-1-inch, 340-pound Edwards-Wallace was slated to begin his collegiate career at **Newberry College** in the fall. He started on both sides of the football for the Blazers, at guard on offense and tackle on defense. He collected 45 tackles, 16 of them for loss, last season to go with two interceptions.

Smith, his former head coach, was stunned by Edwards-Wallace’s death, as was the community.

“Mychael was one of the gentlest, humblest people on earth,” Smith said. “He was always willing to help others. He was a leader, on the field, in the classroom and in the community. He was a singer at his church, just an awesome human being. I don’t understand why anyone would want to do him harm. He was an angelic presence on earth.”



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Laurence Manning, continued from pg. 15

ple state titles.

Other coaches who will return are **Donald Hardy** for girls golf, **Jessica Weinberg** for girls **Lee Academy**, continued from pg. 50

these guys for quite some time, and they all lobbied for me to get the job. When you have a lot of alphas you may not see eye to eye, but there is a common respect and everyone knows ultimately the head coach makes the decision. But we agree more than we disagree.”

Since Furse was also the AD at Lee, that position is having to be filled and the new AD is **Kemp DeWitt**.

Clarendon Hall, continued from pg. 49

Larrimer’s departure left an opening for a new baseball head coach. That role will be filled by **Jackie McIntosh**, a staple on the Clarendon Hall coaching staff over the years in some shape, form or fashion.

Jeffrey Bays will be back as the softball head coach. He led the Lady Saints to the AAA state championship series where they had their run of consecutive state championships stopped at three by **Pee Dee Academy**.

Rick Atkinson will again be the boys basketball head coach, while **Johnny Horton** will be in charge of the girls team again. **Shannon Corbett** will be the

Gray Collegiate, continued from pg. 38

ond year with the school.

“We’ve increased our measures to ensure that it won’t be happening again,” Heise said. “We also had a transition with our coaching staff at the time too, and that never helps the situation. You don’t

know what you don’t know. But De’Angelo is a great guy. I couldn’t be more happy with the direction he’s going. I think they’re going to have a fantastic year.”

As for the entire athletic program at Gray, Heise

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Robin Page and **Sara Welch** will share duties with the cheer program.

coach as well after a tremendous season.

Speaking of tremendous seasons, **Danny Price** will be back for his second season as the baseball head coach after leading the Cavaliers to the SCISA AA state title in his first season. **Craig Nesbit** will continue to be the softball coach, and **Lindsay Brazell** will coach cheerleading.

volleyball coach, **Whitney Phillips** will coach the bass fishing team, **Michael Earnhardt** and Lisa Earnhardt will coach the shooting team, **Kathryn Epps** will coach the school’s first cross country team, and **Danielle Tindal** will be the cheer coach.

thinks that year two in 4A will be the same.

“We’ve got a lot to build on, and I’m looking forward to seeing what we’re going to do.”



LAURENCE MANNING ACADEMY
SWAMPCATS

Noonan getting ready for first season at LMA

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Manning – It took a little bit of work, but **Jimmy Noonan** has his first staff as the football head coach at **Laurence Manning Academy** put together.

“I feel good about the staff going forward,” said Noonan, whose first year at LMA will be his 24th as a head coach. “There’s not a head coach out there that doesn’t want to strengthen his staff and keep stability. It’s an evolving process, but I like the people we have in place.”

Noonan, who has a career record of 131-133 in stops at **Spring Valley**, **Wando** and **Georgetown** high schools and **Wilson Hall**, will handle the offensive play calling. Helping Noonan out on that side of the ball are **AJ Nelson**, **Andrew White** and **Cedric Bennett**. Nelson will coach the wide receivers, White the offensive line, and Bennett, a former standout for **Manning High**, will coach the running backs.

Noah Ernest, a newcomer to Laurence Manning, will be the defensive coordinator. He had been on the staff at **West Florence**. Another newcomer is **Craig Hatcher**, a former head coach at **Central**. He will be in charge of the linebackers. **Casey Connors**, the former head coach at **Clarendon Hall**, will coach the defensive line.

Shawn McCord, a longtime coach at Laurence Manning, will be the junior varsity head coach and will be assisted by **Patrick Anderson** and **Jason Duke**. Anderson was the interim head coach for the final six games last season after **Robbie Briggs** resigned the post. The Swampcats went 1-5 under Anderson to finish 3-8 on the year.

Another Laurence Manning fixture, **Al Nelson**, will be the B team head coach. He will be assisted by **Chris Ford** and **Jackson Brunson**.

Outside of the one year at Wilson Hall, the rest of Noonan’s coaching career has come in the **South Carolina High School League**. He is having to learn the different nuances of the **South Carolina Independent School Association**.

Part of the challenge is getting used to the ins and outs of SCICA when all I’ve known is High School League,” Noonan said. “I’ve gotten great support and great backing from the board.”

Noonan has been happy with what the football team has been able to accomplish during summer workouts.

“I’m not used to not having spring, so we had to answer questions and find our what we’re about,” he said. “I think we made plenty of progress in that venture, but most of it came without pads and contact. That’s why our scrimmages will be important.”

The Swampcats will go to **Florence Christian School** for a scrimmage on August 1 before playing host to **Lake View** on August 7. Laurence Manning will then take on **East Clarendon** in a jamboree at Manning on August 15.

Laurence Manning opens its regular season on August 22 with a home game against **John Paul II**.

“Jimmy has a very structured and disciplined style and is great in the weight room with developing our players,” said Laurence Manning athletic director **Morgan Watt**. “I’m really excited for this season.”

Watt will be in his first full season as athletic director after serving as the interim AD following last year’s shakeup. He will return as the boys golf coach, a position he has held for several years.

Laurence Manning has **Buddy Truett** returning as softball coach after leading the Lady ‘Cats to their second consecutive AAAA state championship. Laurence Manning went 24-3 and swept Wilson Hall in the best-of-3 championship series.

“Buddy does a great job with our softball program, building and developing championship-level players,” Watt said. “His success speaks for itself.”

Veteran head coach **Barry Hatfield** will remain in charge of the baseball program. Hatfield has guided Laurence Manning to three state championships. The Swampcats won back-to-back state championships in 2016 and 2017 with the other coming in 2022.

Laurence Manning finished this past season with a 17-4 record, going undefeated in winning the region title. The season didn’t end the way the Swampcats had hoped for though as they dropped their final regular-season game and went 0-2 in the state playoffs.

Watt is more than happy that Hatfield is still in the fold.

“Barry has a ton of experience and knows what it takes to win,” Watt said. “He is great at developing players.”

Laurence Manning will have both of its basketball coaches coming back for their second seasons in girls coach **Lisa Ard** and Anderson, the boys coach.

Ard, a longtime successful head coach at **Crestwood High School**, led the Lady ‘Cats to a 14-13 record and a berth in the AAAA state tournament. With most of the starting lineup returning, Watt thinks big things await the girls program.

“Lisa has tons of experience and has a great, positive style,” he said. “I’m looking forward to our girls taking the next step with the players we have returning.”

Anderson led the Laurence Manning boys to a 13-15 overall record and was 6-4 in region play, tying for third with John Paul II. The Swampcats earned a berth in the AAAA state tournament but lost to **Northside**

Christian Academy 68-54 in the first round.

“Patrick brings youth and passion for the game.” Watt said. “I’m really excited to see how he builds on the success of last season.”

Veteran **Jay Atkins** will return as the bowling head coach. He has led Laurence Manning to multi-

See Laurence Manning, pg. 58

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Swampcat football: A Griffith Family Affair



Manning football staff has a little shakeup

By Dennis Brunson
Hssr.com Associate Editor
Manning – Coming off one of the best seasons in recent history, the **Manning High School** football team had a little shakeup in its coaching staff. Veteran head coach **Reggie Kennedy** is still in charge, but some have moved on, necessitating the changes.

Charlie Richards, the defensive coordinator last season, has moved on to **Richland Northeast**. **Marco Thompson**, a longtime assistant for Kennedy, has moved into the defensive coordinator role. “He has been with me for a while,” Kennedy said of Thompson, who will coach defensive backs as well. “He was with me at **Irmo** and he’s been with me here at Manning. We’re going to do a lot of the same things we did last year. It’s been a smooth transition, not only for the kids but for the staff as well.”

The Moanrchs went 11-2 last season, winning the Region 7-AA title with a 6-0 record. They advanced to the quarterfinals of the state playoffs as well.

Kennedy will again serve as the offensive coordinator. **Dontavis Miller** has assumed the role of assistant head coach. He will also be the special teams coordinator and coach linebackers. **Kevin Miller** is a new addition to the defensive staff and will coach the linemen. **Calvin McClary** will coach defensive backs.

Helping Kennedy on the offensive side of the ball are **Calvin Giles-McClary Jr.**, **Gregg King**, **Marcus Lloyd** and **King Cutter**. Giles-McClary will coach the quarterbacks, King will handle the running backs, Lloyd will coach the wide receivers, and Cutter will coach up the offensive line as he rejoins the staff.

Kennedy is pleased with the summer the Monarchs have had. Instead of focusing so much on 7-on-7 scrimmages, Kennedy said Manning has participated in more joint practices. That affords the teams the opportunity to actually play 11 on 11.

“We’ve had a pretty good summer,” he said. “We did six joint practices and I feel like that really helped us out a whole lot. It gives us the opportunity to see what our kids do well. It helped us identify what the kids do well and what positions they play well. The joint practices are a great learning tool for us.”

Manning is having to replace **Ja’Rae Mitchell** at quarterback. Kennedy let it be known that **Lovell Stevenson** is at the front of the pack for the job.)

“Stevenson was our No. 1 guy going into spring practice, he was our No. 1 guy going into summer workouts, and he’s our No. 1 guy going into the fall,” Kennedy said.

Manning only has two coaches in their first year with the school, and one of those is also coaching a brand new sport to the athletic program. **Amos Conyers** will be the head coach of the first boys volleyball team at the school.

Kennedy said the program’s start came about because of demand and supply – the male student-athletes demanded it and Kennedy and his staff supplied it.

Our girls basketball ccoach (**Justin Johnson**) coaches PE (physical education), and they were playing volleyball in the class,” Kennedy said. “Some of the boys were asking why we didn’t have a boys volleyball team. Coach Johnson spearheaded it and we had about 20 kids sign up to play. If we can have another opportunity for the kids to have something after school, then I’m all for it.”

With boys volleyball still in its infancy, there are a limited number of **South Carolina High School**

League schools participating. Because of that, Manning will compete at the AAAA level.

The only other new varsity head coach is **Deizmond Kelly-Gaskins** as the cheer coach.

Kennedy is the athletic director for **Clarendon County School District** and is the site athletic director for Manning. The assistant athletic director is Johnson. He is part of the Johnson & Johnson team in charge o the basketball programs.

While Justin Johnson is coaching the girls for a second straight season, **Dr. Shwn Johnson** – the district superintendent – is coaching the boys for a second straight year. When Dr. Johnson took over for his second tenure, he bookended four years with four different head coaches.

“That gives us a little bit of stability there going into the season,” Kennedy said.

The Monarch boys finished with a 17-6 overall record and went 9-3 in region play to finish second. Manning beat Woodland 72-66 in the first round of the state playoffs before falling to Andrew Jackson 67-55 in the second round.

The Manning girls were 5-18. All of the other head coaches are back in **Holly McCabe** as the girls tennis coach, **Kimberly Ferrari** as the boys and girls cross country coach, **Sonia Daniels** as the girls volleyball head coach, **Richard Scheider** as the wrestling coach, **Raymond Gibbs** as the baseball coach and **Catherine Mahoney** as the softball coach.

The Monarchs baseball team finished with a 10-13 overall record and went 6-6 in reigon play. That was more than enough to get Manning into the state play-offs for the first time since the 2018 season, which was also the last time it had a double-digits-win season.

Kennedy is pleased with the job Gibbs, a slick-fielding third baseman for some outstanding Manning teams under the guidance of **Rick Coker** in the late 1980s, has done in his two years in charge.

“I knew when I made the hire it was going to be in a rebuilding stage,” Kennedy said. “We wanted to get the interest back up, to where baseball is important to the community. Raymond can talk about the importance of baseball to our kids and what it used to be like. He can be a good role model for the kids playing for him, seeing that he is a product of the Manning baseball program.”

Dontavis Miller will coach the boys track an field team, while Daniels will coach the girls track team. The boys soccer coach will be **Ryan Glosson**, and **Ellese Rojas** will coach the girls soccer team. The boys golf coach is **Marion “Doc” Lewis**, who happens to be the athletic director at **Scott’s Branch**, a fellow Clarendon County School District high school.

Beth Rollins is the athletic secretary.



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Athletic Director David Rankin (left) is welcomed to Carolina Academy by Head of School Stevie Phillips upon Rankin’s hiring last March

Female sports set up for success at Carolina Academy

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Lake City – While the focus of **Carolina Academy** athletic director **David Rankin** is making sure all sports are competitive, he says the biggest opportunity for success at the school in the short term is with female sports.

Many of the female athletic teams were loaded with underclassmen last school year and many rosters will be full of underclassmen in 2025-26. Carolina Academy won state championships last school year in softball and girls tennis.

The softball team did not have a senior on the roster and has an impressive group of younger players matriculating through the program.

The girls tennis team won a title with only one senior and should be a strong contender this fall.

“At a small school it often goes in cycles and right now the cycle is a lot of really talented young female athletes coming through,” said Rankin, who also is the head football coach and head baseball coach at the school. “Some of the boys teams had a good many seniors but there will be a new crop coming along that will have a chance to be successful.”

The girls basketball team, coached by veteran **Perry Stokes**, who won more than 500 games as a public school coach, did not have a senior or junior on his 2024-25 squad. The roster also had just one sophomore and much of the playing time came from

freshmen and eighth-graders. Rankin reports that every varsity sport made the state playoffs last year.

“We’re headed in a good direction across the board,” he said.

After posting just nine wins over a three-year stretch, Rankin’s football team managed five wins in his first season. The coach has a proven record as a team-builder, guiding both Williamsburg Academy and Lee Academy (three) to state titles. He also has been state runner-up eight times with 14 region titles and 26 playoff appearances.

Rankin’s teams are known for being physical and play with great effort. Getting a strong effort has never been an issue at Carolina, regardless of the coach.

“This is a good group physically,” he said of the 2025 team. “We’re a lot stronger this year. If we can put it together mentally I think we will be improved.”

Rankin reports one change among varsity coaches for the coming year. **Trey Parker** will assume duties as head volleyball coach.

Cameron Sebuck returns as the girls tennis coach while **Patrick Hunt** will coach the girls golf team. **Rhett Long** coaches the boys golf team.

Robert Phillips returns as the boys basketball coach and **Scotty Phillips** is the softball coach. Head of school **Stevie Phillips** heads up the track and field program.

Estep officially named Lake City football coach

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

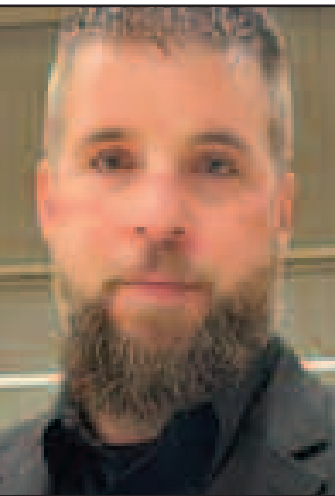
Lake City – Although he has been running the show for the past two seasons, **Jamison Estep** is now officially the football head coach for **Lake City High School**.

Estep stepped in as the interim head coach when head coach **Ronnie Baker** was seriously injured in an automobile accident in the summer of 2023 in **Orangeburg County**. Estep was in charge in 2023 and in 2024 before Baker officially stepped down earlier this year.

“The faith they have in me, I appreciated it,” said Estep, who led the Panthers to 4-7 records in both of the seasons. “Me and Coach Baker are both similar in our styles. It’s a real honor to get this opportunity.”

Lake City opens its season at home against **Myrtle Beach** on August 22. Estep said the Panthers have put in the work over the summer.

“We’ve been working the kids hard,” he said. “They’ve responded well. We’ve had good numbers, they’ve been consistent. We’ve got a good crew of seniors who have been around me, around the program. They know what lays ahead.”



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Matt Apicella is back as the athletic director and baseball head coach. **Seneca Barron** will once again be the boys basketball head coach and will now be the boys track and field head coach. **Shaquetta Cooper** is the girls basketball head coach.

Heidi Matthews returns to coach softball, while **Belita Salters** is the new volleyball coach. **Lorenzo McFadden** is the wrestling coach, **Jeuu’el McFadden** is the cheer coach, **Matt Luna** is the boys soccer coach, **Ernest Graham** is the girls track coach, **Elisabeth Emhof** is the boys and girls cross country coach, and **Thomas Bucks** is the girls soccer coach.

Attention! Coin collectors throughout the state are invited to attend the Lowcountry Coin Club’s Coin Show at the Ladson Fairgrounds in North Charleston on July 25-27!

W Williamsburg Academy

STALLIONS

Furse pleased with football staff at Williamsburg

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Kingtree – Although **Will Furse** has had a relationship with all of his assistant coaches on the **Williamsburg Academy** football staff, there is a bit of a different dynamic involved. After all, Furse is the new head coach for the Stallions, meaning he is ultimately the one in charge.

However, with a spring practice under its belt and the summer workouts now in, Furse believes his coaching staff has pulled together quite well.

“I really think we’re coming together well as a staff,” said Furse, who came to Williamsburg after one season as the head coach and athletic director at **Lee Academy**. “We’ve had a really good summer working with the athletes. We’ve all worked together in the past, either playing for someone or having coached with me in the past. Things have gone smoothly thus far.”

Furse inherits a staff in which each member coached under former head coach **Tyler Boyd**, who took the head job at his alma mater, **Lamar High School**. One of those will be **Ken Kellahan**, who will be the defensive coordinator while coaching the secondary and offensive line.

Kellahan, who won a state title as the Williamsburg head coach himself, was Furse’s head coach when Kellahan was the head coach at **Laurence Manning Academy**. Furse was also a member of Kellahan’s coaching staff at LMA.

John Floyd will be in charge of the defensive linemen and tight ends, while **Chase McFaddin** will be the junior varsity head coach and coach wide receivers. **Sam Plowden** will be in charge of the running backs, and **Britton Morris** will coach linebackers and the offensive line.

Williamsburg had high participation in the summer workouts, and that afforded the coaches the opportunity to put in a lot of work in regards to what the Stallions want to do this season.

“Our main goal is to get the kids showing up to lift weights,” Furse said. “When you have that you’re able to have more practice sessions. It’s not just lifting and running.

“Defensively, all of our base stuff is in. What we want to do in th8e passing game is in, and we’ve been able to fine tune what we want to do in the running game. When practice starts (which was on July 24), we’ll be ahead of the game.”

Williamsburg has played for a state title in each of the past four seasons, the first two under **Don Shelley** and the two most recent seasons under Boyd. The Stallions played for the SCISA AA state title the first three years, winning it in 2022. They played for the Class A crown in 2024, losing to Thomas

Heyward Academy 23-8 in the state championship game to finish with a 10-2 record.

Boyd was 22-3 in his two seasons as head coach. Furse was 3-7-1 in his one season at Lee. The Cavaliers started the season 3-1-1 before

losing their final six games. That left Furse with a career record of 22-14-1.

Furse led Laurence Manning to two AAAA state championship games in his two seasons in charge of the program. Furse was 19-7 at LMA, with four of those losses coming to now 8-time defending state champion **Hammond**.

Furse also became the athletic director at Williamsburg, and he said that transition has been a smooth one as well.

“It’s been very steady, about what I expected. We’re still having some problems with our scheduling because we had a couple of teams that dropped (from SCISA Class A) to 8-man. I’m trying to find someone to fill those spots. I think I can get one, but ideally you want 10 games.”

Furse’s first game as Williamsburg head coach will come on August 22 in a home game against **Thomas Sumter Academy**.

Another part of Furse’s AD duties is finding a new baseball head coach. Boyd was the Williamsburg head coach for 10 years.

Williamsburg will have a new head coach in softball as well as veteran **Pat Wildes** stepped down from the post. He is being replaced by **Jada Cox**, who helped him with the team this past season.

She started full time at the school last spring,” Furse said. “She played college softball (at **Columbia International University**) and is very knowledgeable. Coach Wildes was ready to step away, and he was the natural successor and is ready to roll with it.”

One of the Williamsburg head coaches with whom Furse is very familiar is **Will Epps**, who will be in his second season both as the girls basketball head coach and the volleyball head coach. Like Kellahan, Furse played for Epps and coached with him at Laurence Manning.

“Will Epps is a pehonomel coach, Furse said. “I’ve been very impressed with both the volleyball and softball workouts this summer. Those girls are committed and working hard. I’m very excited about what the season holds. I can’t wait to see them get positive results from that.”

See Williamsburg Academy, pg. 69

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Cornelius loves his East Clarendon coaching staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Turbeville – Call him crazy, but **East Clarendon High School** football head coach **Larry Cornelius** is actually considering moving his 2-year starter at quarterback to wide receiver for his senior season.

“Right now, we’re moving **Takoda (Cornelius)** to wide receiver,” Coach Cornelius said of his son. “A lot of coaches don’t think we’ll do that because why would you move a quarterback that you’ve won 13 games with in two years to wide receiver for his senior season? We feel that is going to make us a better team overall.”

Such is the thought process for Coach Cornelius, who is set to begin his third season in charge of the Wolverines. After winning five games his first season, East Clarendon catapulted to eight last year. The Wolverines came away with playoff victories each year, the first time in a very long time they had consecutive seasons with at least one playoff triumph.

Cornelius feels like the best is yet to come, and he credits the coaching staff he has built for much of that.

“I love my staff,” the head coach said. “We are all on the same page, with the same vision.”

The coaching staff is pretty much holding steady with seven of the eight assistants on last year’s staff. However, that doesn’t mean there hasn’t been some tweaking taking place.

Coach Cornelius will continue to call the offensive plays, but instead of working with the quarterbacks like the past two years, he is coaching the wide receivers this year with **BK Floyd** helping him. **Benny Knowlton**, the quarterback of the last East Clarendon team to win a playoff game prior to Cornelius’ arrival, will coach the quarterbacks.

Veteran coach **Robbie Wright**, who came to Turbeville with Cornelius from **Lakewood**, will again coach the offensive linemen. The running backs coach will be **Dawson Price**, the former **Lee Academy** football and baseball standout. Price comes to East Clarendon from **Georgetown**.

Brandon Carter returns as the defensive coordinator and will be in charge of the linebackers. **Kevin**

Graham is the defensive line coach, and **Chris Rowland** will coach the defensive backs. Rowland will also be the special teams coordinator.

Coach Cornelius said the Wolverines had a strong session of summer workouts.

“It was good, even though **Turbeville** is a little bit different,” he said.

“We have people taking multiple vacations during the summer. The big thing though is we have good communication as to who is and isn’t going to be there. We normally have very good turnout, and the kids are all working really hard.”

Going back to the quarterback situation, Coach Cornelius feels like he has three options available. As of now, sophomore **Gavin White** is the No. quarterback after being the B team starter last season. Takoda Cornelius will start at wide receiver to strengthen the wide receivers room and better showcase his talent, while junior **Blease Hardy**, who saw some time at signal caller last season, will start at running back to meet another need.

That doesn’t mean though that Cornelus or Hardy won’t have a special package with each behind center.

“Gavin is a gunslinger and we want him to be able to get the ball to Takoda some,” Coach Cornelius sid. “Blease ran the ball a lot of power reads as our quarterback so we think this utilizes his talents best. We’ve changed our playbook a little bit. We’re probably going to be pretty much 50-50 (percent) running and throwing the ball, but we haven’t had pads on yet either.”

ketball head coach in **Damian Days**. He takes over a team that went 6-16 and did not make the state playoffs

Lucinda Stukes has been a mainstay at Scott’s Branch for several years and she will be in charge of girls basketball, volleyball and softball, just like last year.

Stukes, who led the girls basketball program to a state title in 2019, helped the Eagles post a 13-10 record last year while reaching the second round of the state playoffs.

Lewis has nothing but praise for Stukes.

“Coach Stukes is the most valuable asset for Scott’s Branch and the community,” Lewis said. “On top of coaching basketball, volleyball and softball, she is also the assistant athletic director. With her guidance we are moving the athletic program upward. She is one of the finest educators and coaches that I have ever worked with.”

India Robinson is back as the cross country head coach after starting the program last year. It was a co-ed team last year, but Lewis is hopeful that there will be enough participation to have both a boys and girls team this year after the team had 10 members last year.

“the team was composed of mostly freshmen and sophomores so we are expecting a bright future for the program,” Lewis said.

Clifton Bethune will be in charge of the track and field program.

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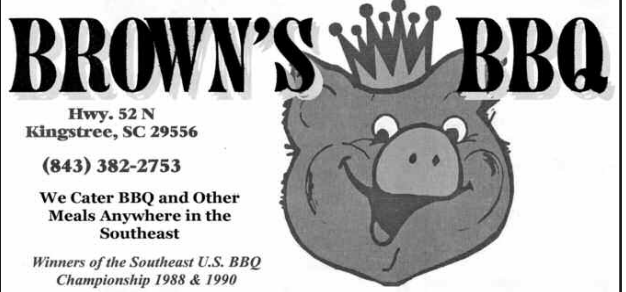
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Courtesy Superintendent Shawn Johnson and Clarendon County School District Athletic Director Reggie Kennedy

SUMMERVILLE GREENWAVE

Green Wave finds coaches for multiple programs

By Roger Lee

Special to the HSSR

Summerville – Cory Magwood, who is entering his second school year as the **Summerville Athletic Director**, didn't have to look far to find most of the coaches he sought.

Summerville has named four new head coaches for its varsity sports programs just in time for the start of the 2025-26 school year. It is still searching for a new Boys Soccer coach, but since that is a Spring sport there is some time.

Michael Jenkins, a 1995 Summerville graduate and member of the **Summerville Athletic Hall of Fame**, has been named the new head for the **Green Wave Boys Basketball** program.

"It's an honor to lead a program known for its success and dedication to high school basketball," Jenkins said. "I'm excited to be home and consider myself lucky to work with such a good group of young men."

Jenkins brings with him 17 years of experience coaching basketball, including seven successful seasons as Head Coach at **Stratford High School** (2016–2023) and eight years prior as Assistant Varsity Coach (2008–2016). He returned to his alma mater in 2023 as an Assistant Coach with the Green Wave program, helping to continue the school's tradition of excellence both on and off the court.

He replaces **David Long**, who held the position the past nine years. Long was an assistant coach for the program for four years prior to being named head coach.

"Coach Jenkins returns to where it all began, bringing a powerful combination of hometown pride, leadership, and a deep passion for developing student-athletes," Magwood said. "With high energy, strategic insight, and a strong commitment to excellence, he has already begun laying the foundation for success while focusing on confidence, skill development, and a competitive mindset that reflects the true spirit of Green Wave basketball."

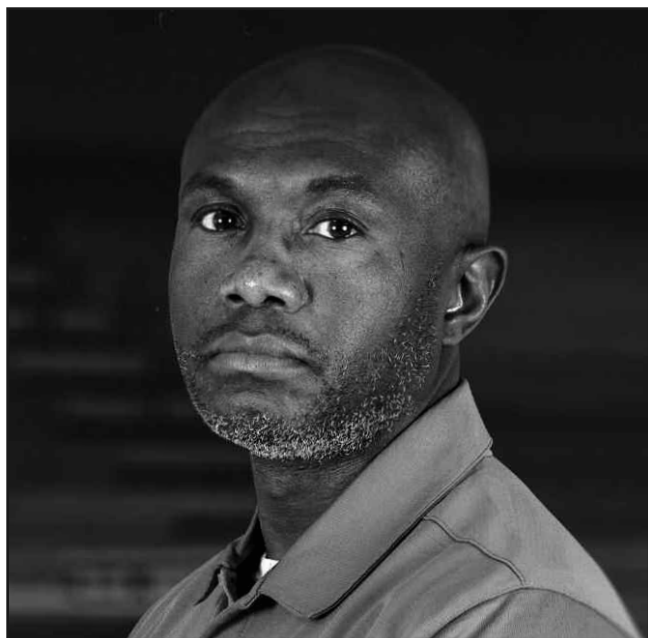
Jesse Gladis, who has been the head coach for the Boys Tennis team the last several years, is adding to his responsibilities by taking on the Boys Swimming team.

"Coach Gladis is no stranger to success or to leading young athletes with passion and purpose," Magwood said. "A familiar face in the Green Wave family, he has spent nearly a decade building one of the strongest boys' tennis programs in the region. He is one of the best when it comes to building a program from the ground up and discovering hidden talent right within our own hallways."

Lori Gladis is the new head of the Girls Swimming program.

"We're excited to welcome Lori Gladis," Magwood said. "She brings years of experience as a swim instructor in our community and has completed extensive coaching training to prepare for this new chapter. She's already made a big impact - bringing energy, organization, and leadership to the program. From day one, she's been by the team's side at early morning weight training, motivating and guiding the girls every step of the way."

Carneal Hall is the new Head Strength and Con-



Michael Jenkins is the new head coach for the Summerville Boys Basketball program.

ditioning Coach.

"Carneal brings a powerful blend of firsthand experience and proven leadership, both as a former standout athlete and as a dedicated coach and educator," Magwood said. "He was a four-year starter on the offensive line at **Chowan University** and for the past five years he's coached at his alma mater, **Silver Bluff**, where he taught PE, coached the offensive line, and led athletic development for all sports. His impact will go far beyond the weight room."

The school's other coaches are largely veteran and successful.

"I couldn't be more proud or excited about the group of coaches we have here," Magwood said. "Each one brings not only a wealth of knowledge and competitive fire to their sport, but also a deep commitment to developing our student-athletes as leaders both on and off the field of play."

Heather Tucker returns after leading the Softball team to its third straight **5A Softball State final**. Her team won two of them.

Darryl Tucker returns and has led the Wrestling team multiple Lower State championships. **Calvin Davis** led the Girls Basketball team to the **5A, Division 1 State Finals** last season.

Ian Rafferty is back to head the football program after leading the Green Wave to the **5A, Division 1 State Championship** game last season.

Other head coaches returning to Summerville include **Kelly Hazel** (Cross Country), **Kevin Bellush** (Track), **Thane Maness** (Baseball), **Scott Little** (Athletic Trainer), **Ashley Jacobs** (Cheerleading), **Amanda Holcomb** (Girls Soccer), **Scott Little** (Athletic Trainer), **Liz Yohe** (Girls Volleyball), **Steve DiPaolo** (Boys Volleyball), **Skylar Dennis** (Golf) and **Richard Schulz** (Girls Tennis).

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Spartanburg DAY SCHOOL

Home of the Griffins

Griffins athletics led by solid group of coaches

By Billy G. Baker

Publisher

Spartanburg—There is no doubt that the **Spartanburg Day School**, despite being a small SCISA athletic program, has put together a great group of coaches all focused on mentoring the student athletes they feel honored to coach.

Spartanburg Day School athletic director **Mike Cerino** tells the *HSSR*, "We are very proud of our Program Heads at Spartanburg Day School," he said. "Certainly, they have achieved a lot in their various sports, personally; that much is clear. We have a profile for sure

"We like teacher/coaches who have played their sport at a high level collegiately, and/or professionally, and who are vested in the over-all development and well-being of their players," said Coach Cerino.

"That means this team of coaches we've put together are committed to excellence across all aspects of the student experience at our school," Coach Cerino. "What are students learn from them on the field, or on the court, is amplified because they are invested in our students lives at school as well. When excellent coaches invest in excellent student athletes, we believe excellent outcomes will follow. That's why we have gone all-in in our teacher-coach model and setting up our program for sustainable and enduring success."

Coach Cerino came to Spartanburg Day after 27 years at **Limestone College** on April, 18 2023 where he served primarily as vice-president of intercollegiate athletics at the former Div. II school. In 2028 Cerino was named the Under Armour Div. II Athletic Director of the Year.

A main focus of the Griffin's athletic program is the excitement generated around the school starting a varsity football program in 2026. To that goal **Patrick Moffitt** was hired in May of 2024 to start a football "B" team comprised of around 28 sixth-8th graders. The program will elevate into a junior varsity program this Fall and already over 36 players are working out for the upcoming season.

Moffitt had previously worked at the St. Andrews School in Middleton, Del where he served as the head football coach. While at the St. Andrews School, Moffitt doubled participation, and led the school to their first play-off appearance in two decades.

Moffitt has a Master's Degree from **Norwich University**. While on the football team at **Williams College** he was a decorated quarterback who started for three years and he led his team to a 20-4 record over his tenure. He was named the NESCAC Offensive Player of the Year his senior season in college among numerous honors he earned.

This summer, two football assistants were hired to help Coach Moffitt with the expanding junior varsity program. **Chris Cormier** was the offensive coordinator at tradition rich St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Florida last year. In college Cormier was a four-year quarterback letterman at **West Virginia Wesleyan**.

The other new assistant is **Andrew Vaught**, who will coach the offensive line. He played college football at **Toledo** and **Wofford**. Vaught played on three high school state championship teams at Roanoke Catholic (Va.) and he was also voted a top Div. III VISAA offensive lineman in college.

In May, Spartanburg Day announced the hiring of head boy's and girls' basketball coaches for the upcoming season. **Elizabeth Konradi** will be the Program Head and Varsity Coach for the girls' basketball program and **Caleb Jordan** as Program Head and Varsity Coach for the boys' program. Additionally, the school welcomes **Sharon Dillon** as Coordinator of Player Development and Assistant Coach for the girls' program.



Athletic Director Mike Cerino

Coach Konradi was a stand-out forward at the **Episcopal School of Dallas** where she set the school record for blocks in a season (135) and totaled 273 blocks and 352 rebounds in her career. She was a First Team All-Southwest Preparatory Conference selection and continued her playing career at the University of the South (Sewanee). Coach J

Coach Jordan is a graduate of **Charlotte Latin School**, and he began his coaching career at his alma mater. He served as an assistant coach and played a key role in player development within one of the Southeast's most respected independent school basketball programs. As a player, Jordan was a four-year starter at **Roanoke College**, where he earned multiple All-ODAC honors.

Veteran head tennis coach **Bob Allsbrook** returns to the Griffins and he has led team to two straight SCISA state titles over highly regarded **Hilton Head Prep**.

Coach Allsbrook is a USPTR Pro 1 Tennis Professional. He has been named South Carolina Pro of the Year and has been ranked as high as #2 in the USA as a player. He was ranked on the ATP Tour and has been inducted into the Spartanburg Day School Athletic Hall of Fame, the **Appalachian State University** Athletic Hall of Fame, and the **South Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame**.

Brigid Duesterhaus returns as both the Athletic Media Coordinator along with being Swimming Program Head. She attended **Millikin University** where she competed in both NCAA swimming and NCAA triathlon. Over her 4-year collegiate career she was an All-American triathlete, Scholar All-American triathlete, and Conference Champion swimmer.

Joel Sansbury returns as the Cross-Country Program head. He has been a part of the SDS community since 2021. Sansbury is also the SDS Equipment, Transportation, and Facilities Coordinator. He coaches both Varsity and Middle School Cross Country and assists with the Track & Field team.

Gregg Nibert returns as the SDS head Varsity Boys Basketball Coach. He brought home the SCISA AA State Championship in 2022 and was also named the SCISA AA South Carolina Coach of the Year.

Prior to coming to SDS, Coach Nibert had been head basketball coach at **Presbyterian College** for 28 years, assistant Basketball Coach at **Furman** and **Rice Universities**, along with PE Teacher and Assistant Football & Basketball Coach, an Area Representative for Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Spartanburg Christian Academy.

During his coaching career, Coach Nibert has re-

Spartanburg DAY SCHOOL

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The Spartanburg Day Griffins athletic program is on the move with varsity football coming in 2026

ceived the National Association of Coaches "Guardians of the Game" Service Award, Final Four; Fellowship of Christian Athletes John Lotz Barnabas Award, Final Four; Ed Venture Children's museum "Great Friend to Kids" Award; and the Duke Energy Citizen & Service Award. He was also inducted into the "Hall of Fame" at Grove City High School in Grove City, Ohio in 2019.

Travis "Gookie" Dawkins returns as the SDS head baseball coach. Coach Dawkins graduated from Newberry High in 1997 and he selected in the 2nd round of the baseball draft by the Cincinnati Reds where he went on to play 1997-2003. Dawkins played on 10 MLB teams spanning his career, including the Cincinnati Reds, Los Angeles Dodgers, Kansas City Royals, Chicago Cubs, Detroit Tigers, Pittsburgh Pirates, Seattle Mariners, Philadelphia Phillies, Florida Marlins, and Chicago White Sox. Gookie was a member of the 1999 baseball team that won Silver at the Pan-American Games in Winnipeg, Canada, as well as being a member of the 2000 Olympic Baseball Team that won the Gold medal in Sydney, Australia.

To this day, Gookie shares his love for baseball as an instructor and business owner of Carolina Wheelhouse Academy.

Todd **White** has been hired as the new Program Head for Golf. White, a distinguished golfer and educator, began his tenure at the school on July 1.

White's is a graduate of **Furman University** where he earned All-American honors and was inducted into the Furman Athletics Hall of Fame in 2003. His impressive career in amateur golf includes competing in the 1995 United States Open, playing in 37 USGA Championships, and representing Team USA on the victorious 2013 Walker Cup team. White has also claimed victory in the United States Senior Amateur and British Senior Amateur championships.

Jennifer Spearman has been Director of College Counseling at Spartanburg Day School going on three years and she is also the Griffins head cheer coach. She enjoys working with the students as they make plans for where their journey will take them once they leave SDS.

Graham Brewer returns as the boy's head soccer coach. Coach Brewer has played soccer for 20 years, on many levels from youth soccer to high school and still continues to compete in adult leagues currently.

Graham has a deep love for the sport that he hopes to share and expand through the community. He is excited to continue to learn and grow as a coach while creating a culture in boys' soccer that reflects the values and expectations at SDS.

Emily Rossi returns to SDS as the head girls' soccer coach this season. **Coach Rossi is a former jayvee soccer coach at Broome High School** from 2008-2015. Not only has Coach Rossi been a coach for ten years, but she has been playing soccer for over thirty years.

Isaiah Michl will begin his first year as a school counselor and Track & Field Program Head. Isaiah attended **The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign** where he competed in Track & Field as a sprinter and hurdler. He competed in events such as 400m Hurdles, sprint relays, and other sprint events. Isaiah was awarded Academic All-Big Ten multiple times over his college career.



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Malcolm Long begins third season as Gaffney AD

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher

Gaffney—Former *HSSR* Mr. Football, **Malcolm Long**, established new school passing records at **Gaffney High** when he led the Indians to great success on the football field nearly 20 years ago, so he is quite at home starting his third season as the athletic director at his alma mater.

“What I stress to all our coaches at Gaffney is to be fair and consistent in their dealings with the student athletes on their teams,” said Coach Long. “I also want our coaches to be good role models and to teach our athletes good life skills, along with how to be successful citizens after they graduate.”

Coach Long said he has grown into the athletic director’s role at Gaffney High as he starts his third season, over-seeing one of the state’s top athletic programs year-end and year-out. “I have learned to be more eccentric in my relationships with coaches, the school administration, and all the student athletes in our program,” he said. “Communication is very important in all relationships.”

During his prep career at Gaffney, Long helped lead the football team to three state titles, plus two in basketball. He went on to **SC State** where he set 14 passing records and led the Bulldogs to three straight MEAC titles in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

In prior interviews, Long has told the *HSSR* he did not pursue a professional football opportunity, after college, because he was focused on becoming a minister. Today, Long serves as the Pastor of the Cedar Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Gaffney. He is married to the love of his life **Porchee** and they are the proud parents of two football and basketball playing sons, **Jamarion** (15) and **Malachi** (12).

Prior to becoming the athletic director at Gaffney, Coach Long spent six seasons on the Gaffney staff as the team’s quarterback coach.

“I want to thank Gaffney principal **Eric Blanton** for his trust in me in offering me the athletic director’s job,” said Long. “I am grateful for his support and leadership. He is also very supportive of the athletic program at Gaffney High as well.

“I also want to thank our Superintendent, **Dr. Thomas White**, and the Cherokee County School board, for budgeting for the total renovation of the baseball and softball stadiums at Gaffney High School that are presently under construction,” said Coach Long. “Both teams are getting new locker rooms, new bleachers, and it is a complete face-lift for both facilities.”

This past season two very successful head coaches (**Dan Jones** and **Mark Huff**) retired after long coaching careers at Gaffney.

“Coach Jones was the longest serving football coach in Gaffney history with 32 years of service to the team,” said Coach Long. “Coach Jones taught his players mental toughness. Maybe I should not say this but he was the first coach I ever saw hit a kid with his head without a helmet on and that got the entire team’s attention. He was a former Gaffney player who loved teaching the game of football.”

Coach Huff announced his retirement as the girls’ basketball coach at the end of this season. Huff won five boy’s state titles (2003, 04, 05, 2010, and 2012) and he was selected in to the SCACA Hall of Fame in 2014. **Julian Wright**, Huff’s top assistant last season, has been named the girls’ basketball head coach for this season.

Long time Gaffney offensive coordinator **Donnie**

Littlejohn was named the new head football coach in January of this year. “Coach Littlejohn understands the Gaffney tradition, being a former player who has been coaching in the program for 22 seasons,” said Coach Long.

“Since becoming the head coach he has been doing a very good job holding the kids accountable for things like their weight room work-outs and being on time for meetings.

“We are anticipating a very good football season and this team has a lot of potential to compete for a state title,” said Coach Long. “I consider Coach Littlejohn a player’s coach.”

Coach Littlejohn will be assisted by **Kevin Phillips** who will serve as the team’s Associate Head Coach/Linebackers/ and also as recruiting coordinator. **Ian Cooper** is the defensive coordinator while **Brad Van Horn** will serve as offensive coordinator.

Tony Smith is the strength coach. **Brennen Canupp** will coach special teams/corner backs while **Brandon Mullins** will coach safeties/DB’s. **BJ Little** will coach OLB’s and **Jordan McFadden** will work with the defensive linemen. **Brad Phillips** is the quarterback’s coach and **Dave Reams** will work with running backs.

Jeff Allen will mentor the offensive linemen while **Wayne Starks** will work with receivers. **Julian Wright** will coach TE/H-backs/OL and **Scott Simpson** will work with kickers. **Scott Farmer** will serve as director of football operations. **Andrew Hinchliffe** is the head junior varsity football coach.

Other varsity head coaches returning include **Jeff Mages** in baseball and **Maddie Pruitt** in softball. **Charles Blue** will begin his third season as the head boys’ basketball coach. **Jasmine Smith** is back as the competitive cheer coach. **Lawanda Moorer** will once again head up the boy’s and girl’s cross- country program.

Zach Bridges returns as the boy’s golf coach while **Tina Frye** is back to lead the girl’s golf team. **Scott Simmons** is back at the boys’ soccer coach and **Lily Cazel** returns to mentor the girls’ soccer team. **Neely Swofford** will be the new swim head coach for both the boys and girls swim teams.

David Reams returns as the boy’s tennis coach and **Kenny Harris** will head up the girl’s tennis program. **Jacob Bostic** is back as the head volleyball coach and **Daniel Grellman** returns as the wrestling head coach. The two athletic trainers include **Gianni Paglia** and **Aaron McCarley**.

“I also wanted to thank **Barbara Toney** who worked as an athletic secretary for 20-plus years before she retired after this schoolyear,” said Coach Long. “Barbara is succeeded by **Barbara Allison**.

“I also want to thank **Frank Giles** for his many years of being a football and basketball game announcer at Gaffney games,” said Coach Long. .



Athletic Director
Malcolm Long



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Green Acres Turf Farm Prospects Page



HSSR 2025 Top 100 Senior Football Prospects

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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. Jaylen McGill-Mountain View Prep RB-5-11,190
7. Zay Robertson-Dillon-WR-6-0,165 (4.4)-North Carolina
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. Julian Walker-Dutch Fork-DE-6-6,220- Michigan
15. Scotland Dover-Gaffney-OL-6-5,305-App State
16. Jaiden McDowell-Gaffney-RB-5-10,165-Mercer
17. Malcolm Gaston-North Augusta-OL-6-5, 330
18. Tamarion Watkins-DB-Northwestern-6-4, 200-Texas A&M
19. Jeremiah Favorite-Boiling Springs-CB-5-10,170-Michigan St.
20. Jude Hall-Christ Church-WR-6-3,185-Memphis
21. Caden Ramsey-Cross-WR-FS-6-5,200-Ga. Tech/SC Offer
22. Somad Eaddy-Riverside-Ath.-6-0,165-Wake Forest
23. Jayden Boyd-Fairfield Central-WR/DB-Duke
24. Kelton Smith-Gaffney-DT-6-5,290-East Carolina
25. Tre Aiken-Clinton-OL-6-4,265-NC State
26. Tilden “T” Riley-Orangeburg Prep-TE-6-5,203-Vandy
27. Tristian Lewis-Greenwood-QB/DB-6-4,200-SC
28. Trevor Kalisz-Ashley Ridge-QB-5-11, 215
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-
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 Prep-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 (Sleepers)
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. Keriyaon 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. Jordan Sullivan-JL Mann-LT-6-4,270-Army
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. Bryce Rainwater-Hillcrest-OL-6-4,300-
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. Deavion Griffin-Greenwood-DL-6-0,280
113. Dy’lon White-Green Sea Floyds-6-3,310

Recruiting, continued from 37

Green said he has two main goals once he gets to Florida after high school. “I want to get a good education and I hope to play early and contribute to the success of the team,” he said. “Then with those two goals accomplished I hope to make it to the NFL.”

Green’s high school coach, **Greg Wright**, shared some comments on why he thinks Green is a special football player. “He is a phenomenal kid, and he embodies everything you want in a student athlete,” said Coach Wright. “He is all about leadership, hard-work and determination. He is super smart in the class room and on the field.

“He is a film junkie and that is what any coach wants in a player,” said Coach 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.

“Desmond is always finding ways to get better,” said Coach Wright. “He is a polished young man with a great work ethic. I am thankful we have him for one more season.”

Michigan came into SEC/ACC country on July 1 and gained a commitment from highly regarded **Dutch Fork DE Julian Walker** (6-6,250) rated number 14 at the time of his commitment. Walker chose the Big Blue over **South Carolina** and **North Carolina**.

Walker announced on his social media account: “I am beyond honored for the opportunity to be a Michigan man!”

To date there has been a flurry of recruiting activity at **Gaffney High School**. Associate head coach **Kevin Phillips** gave the *HSSR* an update on numerous Indians with commitments and offers as we were going to press with this issue.

In recent weeks Gaffney 2026 linebacker **Zyon Ratchford** (6-4,200) and 2026 DL **Kelton Smith** (6-5,290) have committed to **East Carolina**. Gaffney 2026 running back **Jaiden McDowell** (5-10,165) has committed to **Mercer**. McDowell is a top 20 rated senior in South Carolina by the *HSSR* while Ratchford and Smith are both Top 50 players.

Gaffney already has 2026 quarterback **Jayvon Gilmore** (65-5,200) committed to **Arkansas** and 2026 OL Scotland Dover (6-5,305) is a commitment to **Appalachian State**. The *HSSR* rates Gilmore as the number four over-all prospect in SC while Dover is at the 15th spot coming into August drills.

In a hot scoop news matter. Former Goose Creek QB **Corey Taylor** (6-0,164) moved to the Gaffney earlier this year. Taylor is rated among the top 10 quarterbacks in the nation in the 2029 class by some services.

In the 2027 class at Gaffney four rising juniors have firm major college offers. They are LB **Kendarius (P-nut) Bailey (6-0,215)**, OL **CJ Brooks** (6-4,320), DB/RB **Kareen Shaw** (5-10,181), and DB/WR **Ayden Montgomery** (5-10,162). In the Gaffney 2028 class DB **Zion Dawkins** (5-11,182) already has seven major college offers.

There has been one unusual commitment the *HSSR* has verified through **Andrews High** head coach **Scott Durham**. On his football team information , returned to the *HSSR* recently, Coach Durham listed 2026 DE (edge rusher) **Chris Stewart** (6-4,228) as a firm commitment to **Western Michigan**. Stewart had committed to Elon back in April. .

Stewart went on a visit to **Western Michigan** in early June. His contact at WM was through a former coach from PC now on the staff at WM. Stewart had a great camp and he was officially offered but he was also asked not to go public with his commitment. His name also does not appear on the Western Michigan commitment list on their web site either. It could be that WM feels like they have found a di-



Dutch Fork’s Julian Walker (Michigan)



Carver’s Bay’s Zyon Guiles (South Carolina)

amond in the rough and they do not want the competition to find out about Stewart just yet.

As a junior Stewart had 93 tackles, 31.5 TFL, 13.5 sacks, four PBU and two FF. He earned all-state honors after producing such quality numbers.

“Chris is one of the best players I’ve coached,” said Coach Durham. “He is relentless with his effort on a football field and his motor never stops. He is long and quick and is a natural edge guy who just now growing into his body.” (Could Western Michigan be hiding the next **JJ Watt**?) Not anymore!

Coach Durham, who had a talk with a coach from WM, agreed that it was highly unusual any college would ask a player not to go public with their commitment after accepting an offer.

South Carolina, (as of July, 26) has 12 commitments in the 2026 football recruiting class, and six of them are in-state prospects.

The Gamecocks have commitments from number three rated DB **J’zavien Currence** (6-3,205) from **South Pointe**, number five rated OL **Zyon Guiles** (6-4,295) of **Carvers Bay**, number 10 rated OL **Anthony Baxter** (6-3,330) of **South Pointe**, number 11 rated WR **Sequel Patterson** (6-0,165) of **Indian Land**, number 12 rated TE **Jamel Howze** (6-3,215) of **Newberry**, and in late July the Gamecocks got their sixth in-state pledge from **Greenwood** QB/Ath **Tristen Lewis** (6-4,200) and he was offered as a DB with an upgraded player rating of 27.

As of July, 26 Clemson had 18 commitments in the 2026 recruiting class. To date, only one in-state player has committed to the Tigers. He is number 8 rated DB **Kentavious Anderson** (6-2,181) of **Dorman**. Anderson runs a 10.8 100 and is a highly rated cover athlete.

North Carolina had **Dillon** WR **Zay Robertson** (6-0,165,4.4) in camp in late June. In the morning session, an eye witness, told the *HSSR* that after **Bill Belichick** watched Robertson run two routes, with two great catches in double coverage he blew his whistle and told one of his coaches standing near him, “Get that kid in our afternoon elite group of receivers.”

Robertson must remind Belichick of former NFL **New England** great **Troy Brown**, a Blackville-Hilda graduate, who retired as the leading receiver in Patriots history. After the afternoon session Belichick offered Robertson and the rest is history. Robertson ran a 4.4 forty at several camps this summer. The *HSSR* has Robertson ranked as the top WR in the 2026 class in SC, and he is expected to exceed 1,500 yards in receptions at Dillon this season.

Throwing passes to Robertson this season will be Next Level Under Armour All-American Dillon freshman quarterback **Khayel Sam Fong-Talia** (6-1, 190). “Kel” was very impressive in the all-Amer-

ican game played in Orlando, Florida last December. The game comprised the top 80 rising freshman players in 2029 class across the nation.

“Kel” moved with his family to Dillon from Utah just before his 8th grade season on the Dillon varsity. He could have re-classified up to a freshman a year ago, but Kel declined after he had been approved academically. He grew up in Hawaii and folks in Dillon went to jayvee games last year just to check out his NFL arm.

North Carolina was able to flip Virginia Tech WR commitment **Carnell Warren** (6-4,196) of **Bluffton** in recent weeks giving the **Tar Heels two of the top receivers in the 2026 class in South Carolina**.

Other 2026 commitments include Top 30 **Orangeburg Prep** TE **Tildren Riley** (6-5,211) headed to **Vanderbilt**. Other top 25 *HSSR* rated players not mentioned earlier, include, North **Augusta** OL **Malcolm Gaston** (6-5,330) committed to **Georgia**, and **Northwestern** big play DB **Tamarion Watkins** (6-4,200) who chose **Texas A&M** recently.

Other top 25 rising seniors who have committed include **Boiling Springs** DB **Jeremiah Favorite** headed to **Michigan State**, **Christ Church** WR **Jude Hall** is headed to **Memphis**, Athlete **Somad Eaddy** (6-0,165) of **Riverside** is pledged to **Wake Forest**, **Fairfield Central** WR/DB **Jayden Boyd** (5-9,166) is committed to **Duke**, and OL **Tre Aiken** (6-4,265) of **Clinton** recently committed to **NC State** at the number 25 *HSSR* player ranking.

NC State has also picked up number 34 rated DB **Jordyn Best** (5-11,180) of **Ridge View** giving them two in-state players thus far.

Appalachian State has four 2026 in-state players committed as of July, 26 with Dover being the highest rated player at 15. The other three are between 30 and 50 on the Top 100 list with great next level potential. They are DE **Sawyer Arnold** (6-4,220) from **Oceanside Collegiate**, DL **Chris Doyle** (6-1,290) of **Bluffton** and OL **Caden Muskus** (6-5,270) of **Chapin**.

East Carolina has landed commitments from three in-state players thus far. The aforementioned Smith of Gaffney is the highest rated player at 24. Spartanburg QB **Trey Burke** (6-3,205) is at 30 and Ratchford of Gaffney is number 38.

Liberty has secured commitments from number 28 QB Jachin Davis (6-1,185) from **Stratford** and number 29 **Crescent** WR **Amiri Acker** (6-2,186).

Rounding out all major college commitments as of this issue: Number 32 DL **Chris Doyle** (6-1,290) is committed to UNC Charlotte, number 36 WR **Jaemin Pinckney** (6-5,217) of **Woodland** is committed to **South Florida**, while **Spartanburg** kicker **Will Love** (6-2,205) is committed to **Virgina Tech** in the 43rd slot.



Cavaliers football looks to build on history

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Staff Writer

Greenville – Church Christ football has a storied history as they had won five state titles and owned the states longest winning streak at 55 games in a row when **Quin Hatfield** took over the reins of the program in 2020.

After taking the team to the upper state finals in his second season at the helm. The Cavaliers won back-to-back class A state championship in 2022 and 2023 to bring their championship total to seven and move into a tie for seventh in state history.

Last season the Cav’s moved up to AAA. After a 1-4 start, the team showed the culture that coach Hatfield and his staff have established as they 5-1 in the second half of the season to finish second in region 2 AAA and move into the second round of the playoffs.

“Raising a trophy at the end of the last game of a season is extremely satisfying. There’s a definition of success that we subscribe to at Christ Church...the worthy pursuit of a worthy goal. When you are around a team that gives everything they have and lays it all on the line that’s special (satisfying) as well. The team we had last year did that,” said coach Hatfield.

Heading into his sixth with a 48-14 record coach was asked what makes CCE special, “I was a CCE parent before I coached here so seeing it from both sides you see the Christ Church community and everything it represents. The tradition of excellence in the classroom and on the field and the opportunity at a Faith based institution but what makes it special to me is that we have Christ in our name. We are Christ Church. I love that.”

Coach Hatfield will be the first to tell you that the program would not be as successful without the work that his staff puts in every day.

Christ Church moves up and still continues success at next level

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR

Greenville – Christ Church Episcopal School moved up to AAA this past season and hardly missed a bit on the field, on the pitch or on the court as they continued to excel and showed why they have one of the best athletic programs in state.

They had three state runner ups in Girls Tennis, Girls Soccer, and Boys Golf while the girls lacrosse, boys soccer, boys tennis and boys basketball all made it to the upper state championship games. The rest of the athletic teams all made the play offs.

Athletic Director **Molly Miller** has outstand-



Football coach Quin Hatfield

The staff has experience, diverse backgrounds, strong leadership skills and a wealth of knowledge. They know how to get the best out their players on and off the field.

The staff has a mixture of young and more experienced coaches with **Joel Rice** leading the way celebrating his sixth year of coaching football.

The Cav’s defensives coaches are **John Windham** as defensive coordinator/ linebackers, **Luke Piepkow** coaches the safeties , **Josh Jackson** handles the cornerbacks, and **Keon Talbert** is the defense line coach. They turned the defense around in the second half of the giving up only 7.8 points a game during the teams five game win streak.

Offensively, **Todd Cunningham** is the team’s offensive coordinator, **Larry Frost** is the quarterback coach, **Charles Shields** coaches tight ends/ H-backs, **Tim Brown** is the running backs coach, **Chetyuane Reeder** is the receiver’s coach, and **Zac Macintosh** handles to offensive line. After not scoring over 28 points in any game to start the season. The offense scored over thirty points in three games during the five-game winning streak.

Special teams is handled by **Jimmy Von Wyl** and coach Rice.

The Cavs have quality coaches with JV **Dar-**

rell coaches who believe in the core values of Christ Church and the vision statement for CCE; *Athletics is an exemplary program that develops and promotes competitive, well-balanced students, coaches, and teams who faithfully pursue excellence with integrity in sport and their community.*

The coaching staff consists of; Baseball - **Brian Simpson**, Boys Basketball – **John Butler**, Girls Basketball - **Jordan Filiatreau**, Football – **Quin Hatfield**, Boys Cross-Country - **Charlie Woodward**, Girls Cross Country - **Ana Doran**, Boys Golf - **Cody Robertson**, Girls Golf – **Dan Wilkie**, Boys Lax - **Joey Porchetta**, Boys Soccer – **Russell Shelley**,

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rell Durham, Middle School Ricky Wallace, and JR Cavs **Josh Jackson**.

Coach said about his program, “Culture can be hard to define but you can feel it and sense it. The number one thing was to establish a vision of what we would strive to be and a belief that we could make it happen. We have three core values that we will NOT compromise on: Effort, Teamwork and Passion and unwavering belief, Holding everyone to a standard, Coaching Continuity and Player Development. Our players deserve a TON of credit. They don’t back down from anything and they love to compete.”

Coach also said he has great support from the community, the administration, and athletic Director **Molly Miller**.

Girls Soccer - Jacob Rawlings, SW - Matt Jacobsen, Girls Tennis - Rae Sobocinski, T&F - Darrell Durham, Strength Coach- DJ Johnson, Boys Tennis- Wallace Adams-Riley, and Wrestling- Dan Kimball.

New coaches joining the CCE family are **Jennie Overstreet** and **Jamiyae Mattress**. Overstreet will be taking over the girls lacrosse program from Coach Miller while Mattress will be heading up the volleyball program.

Rounding out the staff are **Corrie Leonard** (Administrative Asst) and trainers **MJ Suber** and **Angie Johnson**.

Berkeley athletics hoping to continue success

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Moncks Corner – In the midst of perhaps the greatest era of success, the **Berkeley High** athletic department looks to continue its strong run in the 2025-26 school year.

For the first time in the 112-year history of the school, Berkeley captured multiple state championships in the 2024-25 school year. Berkeley won its first-ever state title in girls basketball, which also was the first state title for a female sport. Berkeley also won its second state title in three years in baseball.

The coaches of those respective teams, **Crystal Peace** in basketball and **Landy Cox** in baseball, were recognized as coach of the year by several sources. These milestones signaled a transformational shift in Berkeley’s athletic legacy. For the first 109 years, the school claimed just five state championships, all in football. Since 2022, that total has risen to eight across three sports—a powerful reflection of the culture change now defining the Stags.

Berkeley also won several region 7-AAAAA championships. Coach **Missy Loftis** led the cheer team to its first region title in school history. Coach **Kelley Dillon** guided the softball team to its eighth consecutive region title, along with a district title and a return to the Lower State finals. The boys basketball program, led by coach **Matt Mullins**, went 20-7 and reached the Lower State finals.

“Our coaching staff at Berkeley High School continues to lead with an unwavering spirit of service and purpose,” says athletic director **Brian Welch**. “They are true servant-leaders—consistently investing long, demanding hours to build programs that go well beyond wins and losses. This summer alone, many have taken their teams to premier events across the region to compete against top talent and gain critical exposure to college coaches, opening doors for our student-athletes’ futures.

“Several coaches have also stepped up to earn their CDL, sacrificing personal time to ensure our teams can travel safely and affordably to key competitions. They work tirelessly—often giving far more than is asked—with the shared goal of using sports as a vehicle to teach life lessons, build character, and mold strong, resilient young men and women.

Cane Bay returns most of varsity coaching staff

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Summerville – There was very little change in the varsity coaching roster at **Cane Bay High** for the coming 2025-26 school year.

However, the school will have a new varsity softball coach and a new girls and boys golf coach heading into this year. **Kristen Hobbs** stepped down as softball coach after the season and **Jeff Babin** gave up his spot as the head of the golf program. As of July 18, neither position had been filled but interviews of top candidates had begun.

A new principal also has been placed at the school as **Chris Buchholz** takes over the leading role of the school. He was most recently the principal at Philip Simmons High School, a fellow Berkeley County school.

Randall Tucker will return as the school’s athletic director after completing his first year on the job. His assistant, **Greg Hall**, also is back and also is the head of the track and field program.

During the last school year, Hall was selected to participate in the “Tomorrow’s 25” program, which was a first-year signature leadership program sponsored by the South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association and the SCHSL partners with the excellence in coaching project.

The program was a 10-month fellowship designed to invest in 25 coaches from across the state who have been deemed emerging leaders in high school and mid-

Whether in the weight room, on the field, or in our hallways, our coaches model what it means to be a Stag, and we are better as a school and community because of them.”

Beyond team accomplishments, athletes earned numerous All-Region honors, multiple Region Player and Coach of the Year awards, a host of All-State selections, and sent qualifiers to state championships in wrestling and golf. Nineteen student-athletes signed to continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level. Girls’ tennis and soccer made strong playoff runs, while notable progress from boys’ soccer, volleyball, and wrestling reflected continued growth across the department.

Berkeley has had very few head coaching changes in recent years. The coaching roster will have one new varsity head coach as former assistant **Courtney Salisbury** has been promoted to head coach of the girls tennis program. Salisbury is a 2000 graduate of Berkeley and was a four-year letter winner in girls tennis.

Eric Lodge will return for his third season as the head football coach. **Melissa Hicks** heads up the boys and girls cross country teams while **Courtney Shine** is the volleyball coach.

Jeremy Colley will again coach the girls golf team and Loftis returns as the cheer coach. Peace and Mullins return to their respective positions in basketball. **Thomas Ard** is the head wrestling coach.

Cox returns as baseball coach and Dillon returns as the softball coach. **Cole Faulkner** will again take on the boys golf program and **Will Chassereau** is the girls soccer coach. **Joe Harnage** returns as boys tennis coach and **William Fly** heads up the strength and conditioning program.

“Just as important as our competitive success was our impact off the field—through youth camps, community service, and leadership initiatives that truly make Moncks Corner proud. This year didn’t just raise the bar—it redefined it,” concludes Welch.

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dle school athletics. This was the first-year for the program.

“It’s been an honor to be selected for the inaugural class and the opportunity to collaborate with such an amazing group of coaches and educators really inspired me,” said Hall.

Hall is one of four members of the athletic department that have been a part of Cane Bay since the school’s inception. The school opened in the 2008-09 school year. Joining Hall is baseball coach **Shane Todd**, football coach **Russell Zehr** and head athletic trainer **Laren Siefkin**.

Other returning varsity head coaches include **Shawn McKeen** (boys basketball), **Ira Owens** (girls basketball), **Taylor D’Ambrosia** (cheer), **Spencer Nieto** (boys cross country), **Sarahna Herndon** (girls cross country), **Greg Sharpe** (boys soccer), **Taylor Poston** (girls soccer), Cole Litchfield (swimming), **Paul Brown** (boys and girls tennis), **Brian Laraviere** (girls volleyball), **Chris Latigano** (boys volleyball), **Patrick Dolan** (strength) and **Amanda Sharpe** (trainer).

Cane Bay is steadily looking for ways to improve facilities and to provide the athletes with the necessary help to be successful. Last year the track and facility was refurbished and upgraded. This spring, the baseball team received a locker room facility at the baseball stadium.

This summer, a video board was installed in the gymnasium. The school still has a wish list for a sec-

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Panthers have new athletic director in 2025-26

By Roger Lee
Special to the HSSR
Summerville – **Tae Hanna** is entering his first school year in a new role at **Pinewood Prep**.

The school announced the appointment of Hanna as the new **Athletic Director**, effective for the 2025-26 school year, in March. Formerly a high school math teacher and JV Girls Basketball coach at Pinewood, Hanna steps into the role at a significant time for the school’s athletic programs and community. He pledges to be committed to expanding opportunities for Pinewood student-athletes and enhancing their overall experience through mentorship, leadership, and positive influence.

“Over the past 20-plus years, I have learned that the most meaningful and lasting impressions come from consistency,” Hanna said. “The school environment allows me to interact with students daily, providing a stable and encouraging presence in their lives. For me, education is not just a career—it is a

calling, and I find fulfillment in making a difference.”

He takes over the AD responsibilities from **J.W. Myers**, who will remain on with the school in other roles after serving as AD the past few years.

“With beautiful new facilities and phenomenal coaching staff, **Pinewood Athletics** has grown tremendously in recent years,” **Dr. Dan Seiden**, **Pinewood’s Head of School**, said. “Tae Hanna’s leadership as Athletic Director will be a critical part of our future.”

Photo by Roger Lee
New Athletic Director Tae Hanna

See **Pinewood Prep**, pg. 70

Neighbors excited about opportunity at Porter Gaud

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Charleston – **Matt Neighbors** has spent his entire high school football coaching career learning both sides of the ball as an assistant coach. Now, the coach will get his first opportunity to take what he has learned into his first head coaching position.

Neighbors was hired earlier this spring as the head coach at **Porter-Gaud** after an extensive period as an assistant coach at several schools in Georgia. “My first opportunity as a head coach had to be the right place and Porter-Gaud is perfect for me,” Neighbors said. “It has been a long time coming but it was worth the wait. I feel like I have prepared myself for this and I am excited about our potential.”

Neighbors comes to Porter-Gaud from Flint River Academy, located in Woodbury, Georgia. Neighbors served as the assistant head coach and defensive coordinator. Flint River posted a 21-1 record over the last two seasons and Neighbors’ defensive unit allowed just 7.8 points per game in 2024.

“We are eager to have Matt lead our football program and build on the solid foundation that’s been established over the past several years,” says **Al Wilson**, Athletic Director. “Under his leadership, we will continue to foster a positive and enriching experience for our student-athletes that aligns with our school’s mission and values.”

In addition to his work as a defensive coordinator, Neighbors also served as an offensive coordina-

tor and running backs coach at three different coaching stops.

“I felt like learning as much as possible about both sides of the ball would best prepare me to be a head coach,” the coach said.

Porter-Gaud went 11-2 last season under Brad Bowles, who left the school after four seasons to accept a post in Georgia. The Cyclones’ program has been a consistent winner in the SCISA ranks so the necessary ingredients for success are in place.

“We have everything we need to win here,” Neighbors said, “The support and leadership from the administration and community is off the charts. This is a very high academic school so the athletes are smart and focused, The athletic program is very successful across the board because the athletes are dedicated to being their best at everything they do.”

Neighbors says he has retained **Josh Harpe** from the previous staff and Harpe will serve as the offensive coordinator.



Head Football Coach Matt Neighbors

Ashley Hall athletics thriving with coaching staff

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Charleston – As he takes on a more involved role within the **Ashley Hall** athletic department, **Christian Alcantara** is thankful to have the support and commitment from a strong roster of coaches.

Alcantara is the Athletic Director for Strategic Program Development and, as a former soccer coach at the school, realizes a strong coaching staff can make his job easier.

“Led by Coach **Franny Slay**, who is in her 41st year of coaching, our coaches’ key strength is experience,” he says. “Each of our coaches brings a wealth of expertise as athletes and coaches, with many having collegiate or professional backgrounds. Their diverse experiences are integral to guiding our team to success.”

As mentioned, longtime volleyball coach and athletic director Franny Slay begins her 41st year at the school. Her leadership has guided the athletic program to numerous state championships. In volleyball, Slay has coached 12 state championship teams and has 10 state runner-up finishes. She has accumu-

lated more than 850 career wins.

Ashley Hall excels in many other sports with state titles in tennis, cross country and track in recent years.

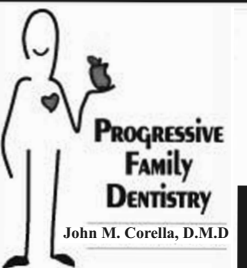
Heading up the tennis program is **Charlotte Hartsock** while **Jeff Word** is the cross country coach. **Cassidy Rindge** is the swim coach and **Sarah Schaill** directs the successful sailing program.

Cyndi Simpson is the equestrian coach and **Ellen Reiber** is the archery coach. **Oliver Vanderhoof** heads up lacrosse while **Kelly Rogers** and **Allison Andrews** serve the soccer program. **Paige Crafton** is the golf coach.

Alcantara was pleased with the overall competitiveness in athletics in the last school year and looks for even better results in the coming year.

“2024-2025 was a year marked by growth and achievement, and we’re committed to making 2025-2026 just as successful. We will remain focused on upholding the core values of Ashley Hall while striving for continuous improvement each day. As we look ahead, we embrace the challenge of a competitive region and are excited for the opportunity to

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showcase our talent, resilience, and determination,” concluded Alcantara.

Alphrin named new Dillon Christian football coach

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Dillon – Chris Alphrin is 25 years old, and he’s the new football head coach for **Dillon Christian School**. He said he owes the opportunity to **Donell Stanley**, the coach he succeeded at Dillon Christian.

“It means a lot to be in this position,” said Alphrin, who was the defensive coordinator for the Warriors. “He took this college kid and gave him his first job. I feel like this is my opportunity to repay them for taking that chance on me. I feel like I need to prove those guys right and pay something back to Dillon Christian.”

Alphrin takes over a team that went 2-6-1 in the final of two years for Stanley, the former **University of South Carolina** and **National Football League** offensive lineman. The Warriors went 5-14-1 under Stanley, who is now an assistant coach with former **Byrnes High School** head coach and South Carolina assistant **Bobby Bentley** at a **Tennessee** high school.

“I know Donell really went to bat for me,” Alphrin said. “I’m thankful that they are giving me this chance.”

Alphrin will be assisted by **Landry Collins**, **Charlie Wright**, **Jameson Stallings** and **Diaz Alexander**. Also helping out in an unofficial capacity will be **Marty McIntyre**.

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First Baptist hires new AD and football coach

David Shelton
Senior Writer

Charleston – First Baptist School has new leadership within its football program and athletic department for the coming 2025-26 school year.

Kevin Mapp was hired as the new head football coach in the early spring and **Jay Godbolt** was hired as the new athletic director at the start of the summer.

Mapp has extensive coaching experience on both the college and high school levels while also working in law enforcement. First Baptist is his first head coaching position.

Mapp last coached defensive linemen at James Island Charter High and has had coaching stints at James Madison, Hampden-Sydney, Georgetown, Marshall, Missouri State and Coastal Carolina. Mapp graduated from James Madison and was a defensive lineman on the 2004 Division I-AAA (now FCS) national championship team.

“Coaching has always been my passion,” Mapp said. “Ever since I was playing, I wanted to be a coach. I have always found a way to coach while working in law enforcement. I’ve been fortunate to have had the opportunities to do both.”

Mapp has been with the Charleston County police

Logan takes the helm for Lee Academy football

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Bishopville – Although he didn’t say it in so many words, **Justin Logan** has his dream job as a football head coach.

Logan was recently named the new head coach for his alma mater, **Lee Academy**. He had been an assistant coach under **David Rankin** at Lee for several years and was an assistant under **Will Furse** last season. He got the opportunity to be the Cavaliers head coach when Furse left to become the athletic director and head coach at **Williamsburg Academy**.

“It means a lot to me to get this chance,” said Logan, who was the head coach at **Clarendon Hall** in 2022, posting a 6-5 record. “I appreciate the op-

“He still knows more football than anybody there,” Alphrin said of McIntyre.

Alphrin is excited about being a head coach with the Warriors ready to begin their season on August 22 with a home game against **Florence Christian School**.

“The responsibility grows even more the closer we get to the season,” he said. “Where I was once over a position group, now I’m having to manage all things. I’m managing a staff that’s the greatest staff. That makes it easy for me.”

Alphrin is also serving as co-athletic director. He is sharing

See DCS, pg. 69



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department for the last 10 years. He took some time away from coaching to start a family.

“I felt like First Baptist was the perfect fit for me and my family,” Mapp says. “It’s a great opportunity at a great place. The kids here work hard and there is a lot of support from the administration. I’m excited to be the head football coach at First Baptist.”

Mapp has hired coordinators on both sides of the ball. **Will McCombs**, once the head coach of the program, will call the offensive plays. **Chris Hart** comes over from James Island as the defensive coordinator.

“Our numbers are improving and the kids are working hard,” Mapp said. “I feel like we can be a competitive team. It’s year one of the building process.”

Godbolt has been a coach and athletic director in the Charleston area for nearly two decades. As the boys basketball coach at Charleston Collegiate, Godbolt coached three state championship teams. He also has been a coach and athletic director at Low-country Leadership Academy.

Godbolt has more than 450 career victories as a head basketball coach. Current First Baptist basketball coach Antoine Saunders was Godbolt’s assistant at Charleston Collegiate.

portunity I had at Clarendon Hall, but to be back at home and to be a head coach is great.”

Logan inherits a team that went 3-7-1 and was beset by injuries. He will continue to call the offensive plays while **Will Watson** will be the defensive coordinator. **Brandon Gay** will coach the offensive line, the defensive line and the tight ends, while **Rob Brazell** will work in the weightroom and coach the wide receivers. Bryce Barrett, who quarterbacked Lee to a state championship just a few years ago, will work with the defensive backs and the quarter-backs.

Logan believes he and his staff have a good rapport. He was an assistant along with Brazell and Watson.

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Coach Greene living the dream at alma mater

By Rob Gantt
Special to the HSSR

St. Stephen – It was a dream come true for **Roger Greene** to get the keys to the **Timberland High School** girls basketball program prior to last season.

Greene is still living the dream. This winter, the Lady Wolves will have quite an experienced roster for Greene’s second campaign at his alma mater.

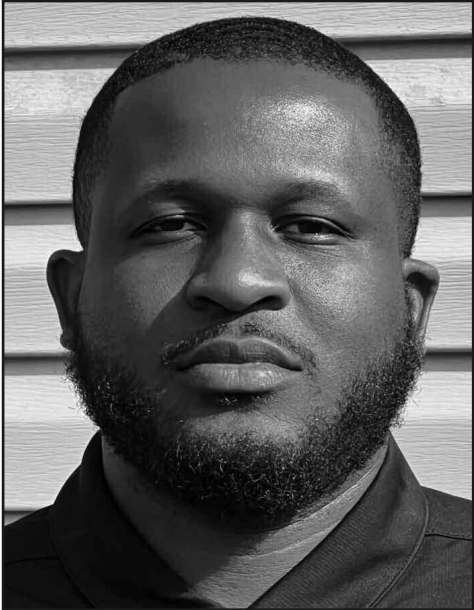
“It’s still a dream,” said Greene, a 2007 THS graduate. “It still doesn’t feel real sometimes. When I was in high school, everything was about sports because I played sports. The next best thing is to be able to go into coaching and pour into kids, not just help them become better at basketball but also help them grow as people. At some point the basketball stops bouncing and they have to be ready for the real world. It makes it sweeter that my first job is pouring into the kids here.”

Greene’s first squad in 2024-25 got the most out of its talent. Really with only four or five varsity-ready players, the Lady Wolves shared the region title with Burke High School. The Lady Wolves finished 9-1 in league play.

“Pretty much nobody gave us a chance at that,” said Greene, who took over for Allen Gethers in the spring of 2024 after serving seven years as an assistant. “With us losing five seniors off a team that lost in the first round (in 2023), nobody’s expecting much if you’re being honest. I think this speaks to the drive they have.”

Green emphasizes competition. He drives his players to not just show up and be dialed in on game days. He gets them to compete in practice, the weight room and the classroom.

This summer, the Lady Wolves began building the foundation for the 2025-26 season with 10



**Girls Basketball Coach
Roger Greene**



**New Athletic Director
Michael Wilkerson**

scrimmage games during five play dates at Williamsburg Academy, Hunter-Kinard-Tyler, Lexington, Brookland-Cayce and Philip Simmons. They went 7-3 against some tough competition.

“The biggest thing was us getting better offensively,” Greene said. “We have too much fire power, speed and girls who can do good things for us to only score 40 points a game. We want to be in good shape and play good defense, but you’ve got to be able to put it in the hoop. We had opportunities to beat teams by more last year or win games we lost, but we struggled on the offensive end of the court. The times we got it right it looked really good.”

Rising seniors **G China Greene**, **G Zion Prioleau** and **F Samara Scott** will be multi-year starters along with rising junior **F Kennahdi Murrell**. That group led the Lady Wolves in every statistical category in 2024-25.

Greene is filled with optimism about the 2025-26 campaign.

“The opportunity to coach at my alma mater is a dream, really,” Greene said. “There’s no better way to start your coaching career than at home. I’m honored. I know the history of the program and the coaches who came before me. It’s a dream come true.”

Welch and football staff have Cavs on right path

us football players, but as young men.”

On the field coach Welch and his staff put in a spread offense that relay’s heavily on RPO’s but stressing the run game. Defensively, the one thing the Cav’s struggle with his size along the defensive front so they play with three down linemen with the rest of the defensive made up of athletic players that can get the football.

Returning to coach Welch’s staff are **Matthew Myers** and **Stephen Billiot**. Myers handles the offensive and defensive lines and brings a wealth of experience to Cavaliers.

Billiot is in his third year at SJCA and is the team’s defensive coordinator and running back’s coach.

Ryan Jackson and **Christopher Oliver** will be in there first year at SJCA. Jackson will coach the wide receivers and the defensive backs while Oliver will handle the quarterbacks as well as help with the receivers and the defensive backs.

“We stress to our kids discipline conditioning and getting better every day. Each week we must get better as we make it to our region into our playoff run, of course the first few games matter, but we

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want to progress every week. We have a veteran group returning so we are expecting a good season but we have a lot of work to do before the season starts,” coach Welch said.

Hawks volleyball program under new leadership

By Rob Gantt
Special to the HSSR
Hanahan – The **Hanahan High School** girls volleyball program has a winning culture in place as it begins a new era this fall under first-year volleyball coach **Jaime Koch**, who has moved up from the junior varsity to take over for former coach **Sheena Lanham**.

First official practices for fall sports teams is July 31, with squads picked in early August. Regular season games begin August 15.

“I am beyond excited,” Koch said. “I have moved up from the little ones at the rec center. I’ve done middle school. I was able to take over JV and to be able to work my way up to varsity is a dream come true. The seniors graduating this year are like my babies.”

With seven players moving on after the 2024 season, so much playing time is up for grabs this upcoming fall. The younger players in the pipeline, though, have become accustomed to winning and understand the varsity squad has reached at least the second round of the playoffs three straight seasons.

Koch and company took full advantage of open season during the summer.

“We’re only going to have about four seniors, but these girls are hungry,” Koch said. “They’re fired up. They’re eager. We’re all excited. They’re supportive of each other. Team chemistry is there. They are scrappy. They’re all in.”

Senior middle hitter **Olivia-Ryan Brace** headlines the group of returning players. She was third on the team in kills last season behind a pair of all-region seniors and second in blocks. More lettermen return-

ing are senior **Eva Schutz**, senior twins **Olivia Brooks** and **Maggie Brooks** and junior setter **Juliette Owens**. Schutz and both twins are competing for time at outside hitter or right-side hitter for the 2025 season. Schutz was fifth on the team in kills in 2024 and is the lone player coming back who made a somewhat significant contribution in digs and serve receive.

“Good news is we have a great group of players coming up,” Koch said.

Sophomore **Caitlyn Manus** is going to get a long look at setter, a position where the Lady Hawks also lost everybody. Junior **Ella Spagnolia**, who got pulled up late last year, is in the conversation for significant playing time at outside hitter. Eighth-grader **Makenna Gallus**, who was also pulled up near the end in 2024, will be in the mix at middle hitter. On the back row, sophomore **Cydnie Murray**, sophomore **Payton Bellew** and junior **Rayne Stoll** have potential to start, too.

Wright selects co-defensive coordinators

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Cross – Under head coach **Shaun Wright**, the **Cross High** football program has become one of the top programs in Class A.

The Trojans played for the Class A state championship last season, winning 12 games. Cross has won 34 games over the last three seasons.

One of the strengths of the program has been Wright’s ability to build and maintain a strong coaching staff.

Wright had to make two new hires to his varsity staff for the coming year. He promoted returning linebackers coach **Michael McHoney** to a co-defensive coordinator position. He also brought in **Marcus McCollum** as the co-defensive coordinator.

McHoney is a **Macedonia High** graduate and has coached at several Lowcountry programs and maintains a career outside of teaching in the school.

McCollum is a former all-state player at **Marlboro County High School**.

Returning to coach the outside linebackers will be **Jack Hamilton**, who came to Cross last season. Returning as the line coach will be **Jeffrey Whisenhunt**.

Coaching stability key to JCHS athletic success

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
James Island – When you have a good thing going, the key is no to mess it up. Right now, **James Island Charter** has a lot of good happening and athletic director **Jeremy Holland** is making sure the boat isn’t rocked.

James Island was a successful program when they competed in Class AAAA but there were concerns when the South Carolina High School League realigned James Island to Class AAAAA. Not only did they get bumped up in class but they were placed in Division I of AAAAA so essentially they were bumped up two classifications.

Holland expressed his initial concerns about the jump but was not going to make excuses if the athletic program slipped. Well, it didn’t slip. James Island was very competitive across the board, contending for region titles and having solid success in postseason play.

“I told the coaches no excuses,” Holland said. “We have great people here and they are very competitive. We kind of put a chip on our shoulder and just went to work. Our athletes responded great to the challenge of their coaches. We had a very solid year overall and we feel like that can continue.”

James Island has had very little turnover among



*New Volleyball Coach
Jaime Koch*

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Hydrick promoted to AD, head football coach

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Holly Hill – Since his playing days at Calhoun Academy, **Stradford Hydrick** has wanted to be a high school coach.

After graduating from South Carolina, Hydrick tried sales for a year but the burning desire to coach never went away. He was able to get involved as a line coach at **Holly Hill Academy** in 2021. Earlier this spring, he was named the head football coach and athletic director at the school.

“I’ve been very fortunate to have worked here under two great head coaches who have prepared me for this opportunity,” Hydrick said. “It’s a big undertaking and there are many challenges, but this is what I’ve always wanted to do. I’m taking it head-on.”

Hydrick came to Holly Hill as a junior varsity assistant and became a varsity assistant under coach **Michael Nelson**. Holly Hill won three straight SCISA 8-man football titles in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Andy Palmer was the head coach for the past two seasons with Hydrick coaching the offensive and defensive linemen.

“This is a winning program so the expectations around here are pretty high,” Hydrick said. “I want that because I have high expectations as well. We’re going to be younger in some spots than we were the last two years but we have great kids who are ready for their chance. We will work hard to be competitive and we won’t make excuses.”

The transition to a new head coach has been made easier because of Hydrick’s relationships

with the current players, many of whom he coached on the junior varsity level.

“They know me and what I’m about and I know them pretty well,” Hydrick said. “It’s been a good transition. We’re all on the same page.”

Adding the role of athletic director has kept Hydrick busier this summer than in past years.

“Been kind of a whirlwind, learning the ins and outs and making sure we are ready for the school year,” he said. It was a little stressful early on but I feel good about where we are. There was definitely a learning curve, being the guy in charge, but I have always wanted to someday be an athletic director so this is all good.”



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Stradford Hydrick*

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Shane Wallace ready for first year with Saints

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Summerton – For **Shane Wallace**, there is no doubt in his mind that him ending up as the head football coach and athletic director at **Clarendon Hall** was through divine intervention.

“To me it’s a God thing,” said Wallace, who will begin his first season on August 22 when the Saints play host to **Spartanburg Christian Academy**. “I came down here for another job (from **North Carolina**) and it didn’t work out. I thought I would be completely out of football and education, but this one opened up or me. That’s why I felt like it was a God thing.”

Wallace takes over both posts that were left vacant by the resignation of **Todd Larrimer**, who is now on the staff at **Calhoun Academy**. Wallace has 17 years of experience coaching at private schools in North Carolina, **Texas** and **Alabama** and has been an athletic director for 15 years.

His last coaching position was at **Harnett Central High School** in **Angier**, North Carolina, serving as the defensive coordinator.

Wallace will have **Ed Manlove**, who most recently coached at **Laurence Manning Academy**, serving as his offensive coordinator. Longtime Clarendon Hall assistant **Stewart Price** will again be the defensive coordinator.

Trey Bagnal will return to coach the offensive line, while **Randy Bass** will coach the defensive

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See Clarendon Hall, pg, 58

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Hammond’s formula for success continues

By **WORTHY EVANS**
Staff Writer
Columbia - As another athletic season at **Hammond** dawns, the school continues with the formula that has worked for decades.
“We keep high standards for all of our student athletes and coaches, and maintain those standards in the classroom and in the community,” Athletic Director **Jeff Barnes** said.

Barnes often refers to the formula—hard work, accountability for actions being the foundation for the athletic programs, a formula that has its roots in academics and in community work. It may sound like a generic idea were it not for the fact that every Hammond coach and student buys in, knowing that the school has won 161 state championships in its history, with the most to come.

By far the most successful program has been on the gridiron. **Jon Wheeler**, going into his fifth year as head coach of the Skyhawks, led the team to another SCISA 4A state championship last fall with a 28-21 victory over Porter-Gaud. It was the team’s eighth straight state championship, fourth straight for Wheeler as head coach, and 22nd in school history.

They’ll take the field in a few weeks as the favorite in SCISA to win it all again, but this fall they’ll be much younger—just three players, all offensive linemen, return on an offense that averaged 45.1 points per game. Five players return on defense.

With an array of younger players contending for the starting positions, Hammond will certainly rely on that foundation of discipline and hard work, and with an experienced coaching staff that includes Barnes as the offensive line coach, defensive coordinator **Hamp Smith**, and second-year offensive coordinator and former **Heathwood Hall** and **Porter-Gaud** coach **Rick Reetz**, to teach the new players the finer points of starting at the varsity level.

The most visible hire over the past few months was that of head girls soccer coach **Ryan Brewer**. Brewer, a former **University of South Carolina** football standout in the **Lou Holtz** Era who was

most notable in the team’s 2001 victory over Ohio State in the Outback Bowl, volunteered for the girls soccer coaching job when head coach **Rafael Marquez** stepped down just before the 2025 season. Brewer had two daughters on the team, **Elle Brewer**, who graduated and now plays for Winthrop, and rising junior **Brooks Brewer**.

The Skyhawks under Ryan Brewer last spring won the Region 1-4A championship. Hammond reached the state championship game, only to fall 6-0 to Porter-Gaud. Five of the Cyclones’ goals came after a controversial decision by the officials to red-card senior goalkeeper **Maxine Palisin** after an illegal touch.

While the season ended on a sour note, and while Brewer’s time as head coach may have been perceived as an interim effort, Barnes said that his former roommate at USC

“It started off that way (as a temporary hire), but Ryan enjoyed it so much that we’re trying to get some support around him,” Barnes said. “I think because his daughter’s a junior and she’ll be a part of the team for two more years and a college prospect at that, he may want to stay on at least until she graduates.”

The Hammond swim team has a new coach in **Randi Vogel**. Vogel, a longtime assistant at USC as well as at **Missouri** and **Cincinnati**. She also the Gamecock Swim Camp director from 2012-2016. As an athlete, she earned a scholarship to swim for **Tennessee** before transferring to Cincinnati.

Hammond girls basketball, which went 1-16 last spring after a 15-6 run in the 2023-2024 season, also has a new coach with a familiar background. Long-time boys assistant **Mark Goddard** will take over the girls program.

Hammond has made many facility improvements over the past three years, such as installing turf on the football field that is marked for soccer and lacrosse, a new track and a new throwing area for track and field events, and new tennis courts. More recent improvements are a student athlete congregation area beside the tennis courts that includes lockers and a shaded area for cooling down.

Wilson Hall has no changes on varsity staff

By **Dennis Brunson**
Hssr.com Associate Editor
Sumter – **Wilson Hall** athletic director **Glen Rector** lives the life of Riley when it comes to putting together a coaching staff. He has very little work to do.

Wilson Hall will be making no changes to its varsity head coaching staff after only having two changes last season.

“Stability and consistency is what I think of concerning our coaching staff,” Rector said. “Many of our primary coaches have been on our staff 10 years plus and that gives our program stability. Often coaches are looking for the next best job, better athletes or to move up the coaching ladder. Our coaches are committed to building from our middle school and junior varsity programs to complement our varsity programs. Our goal is to be the best we can be with the people, athletes, facilities and financial resources available.”

Rector is the epitome of stability and consistency. Rector will be starting his 21st season as the girls basketball head coach at Wilson Hall. Rector will also be the boys golf coach for the second straight season.

Adam Jarecki is wet behind the ears compared to Rector when it comes to tenure at Wilson Hall. Jarecki is set for his 11th season as the football head coach. He led the Barons to an 11-2 record last season and to a spot in the SCISA AAA state champi-

onship game for the second consecutive season. Jarecki will return as the baseball head coach for the second year.

Jarecki is one of two assistant athletic directors along with **Rip Ripley**. Ripley has been the head coach for both the boys and girls track and field teams and the volleyball team for several years. He will be in charge of the boys basketball team for the fourth season. He led the girls track team to the Division I state title this past season.

Teresa Alexander will return to coach the softball program, which got back in the AAAA championship series after missing out on it the year before. **Brent Hiott** returns as the head coach of the ultra-successful shooting sports teams, **Curtis Helms** returns as the head coach of the bowling teams and **Jason Bartlett** is back as the boys soccer head coach.

The husband-and-wife team of **Katherine Schwartz** and **Reid Schwartz** will once again coach the boys and girls cross country teams while **Ryan Dutcher** will coach the girls golf team, **Jeanna Mahr** the boys and girls swim teams, **Emily Anne Beasley** the equestrian team and **Frances James** the cheerleading team.

The tennis programs will once again **Julia Sorrells** coaching the girls team and **Luke Whiteside** the boys. They were Rector’s two new hires last year.

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Osterman has turned Knights baseball into winner

By **Rob Gantt**
Special to the HSSR
Goose Creek – **Stratford High School** baseball coach **Tony Osterman** has turned around the program relatively quickly.

The Knights have made steady strides under Osterman and are coming off a special season on the diamond. This past spring, Stratford won region and postseason district titles for the first time since 2008 and played for the Lower State championship before falling to eventual state champion James Island. The Knights finished 22-6-2.

“I think going into 2025-26, we’re going to be successful again,” said Osterman, who just finished his third season on Crowfield Boulevard. “The culture and mentality has changed. You can see we’re more of a team. Everybody gets along. They do things together. It’s about playing for each other. Now they know they can win instead of playing not to lose. Kids know they’ve got to do certain things and be committed. Our seniors set a high standard for the kids coming behind them. Our older players put in the time, and the younger kids saw how it paid off.”

Before Stratford, Osterman also spent time in the dugouts at Pinewood Prep, Summerville and Ocean-side Collegiate. He was the first hire for then new Stratford athletic director Mathis Burnette back in 2022.

“Just getting to Lower State was a good experience for our younger guys, and it was special to our older guys who had never been there before,” said Osterman, who won a state championship as a basketball player at Chicora in the 1970s.

As for next spring, the Knights can bring back several key players to build around, including rising senior pitcher **Jarrett Wagner**. Wagner capped the campaign 8-1 on the bump with a 1.077 earned-run average to earn all-state honors, striking out 72 batters in 52 innings. He also played corner infield spots and batted .338 with 17 RBIs.

Rising junior third baseman **Jameson Lee** batted .337 with 22 RBIs. Rising senior outfielder **JQ**

Gators’ Hall has built consistent winner in hoops

By **Rob Gantt**
Special to the HSSR
Goose Creek – The boys basketball program at Goose Creek High School has been under the leadership of **Blake Hall** since the 2012-13 season and a consistent winner over the years. Opponents know they’re in a battle against Hall-coached teams.

This past winter, the Gators captured a Lower State championship for the second time in three seasons before falling to Greenville in double overtime. The Gators ended the campaign with a 25-4 record and were state runners-up for the fourth time since 2006.

The Gators under Hall are known for their tenacity and getting after opponents for four quarters or however long it takes.

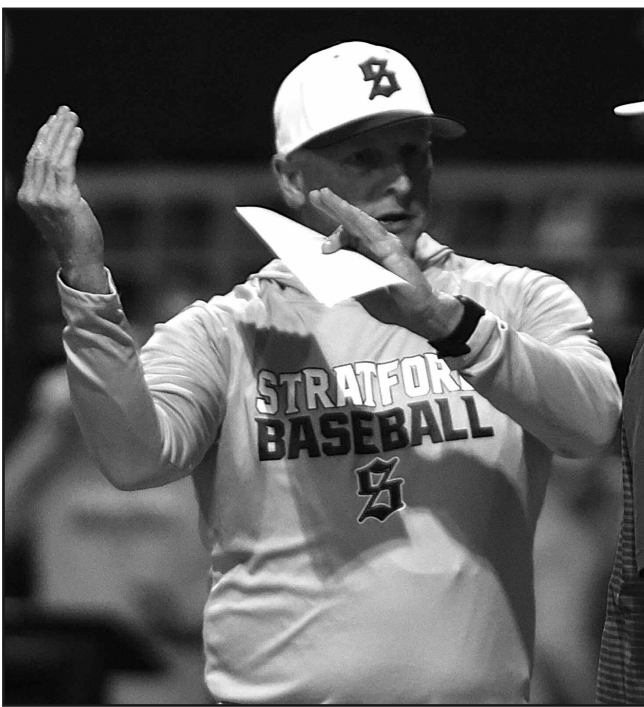
“Our guys work really hard and maybe I run them a little too much, but I think you have to have that will not to give in late when you get tired,” Hall said.

The 2023-24 team was the type of squad Hall builds every winter.

“I was proud of them before the game even started,” he said after the championship loss. “... I love these guys. The result of a game doesn’t change that they’re champions in how they act and behave in the community and on campus. It’s a little disappointing, but that’s life.”

The contest was the last for several seniors, including all-state guard **Shane Potts**.

“They’re all great young men,” Hall said. “You don’t win at a high level without character people.



Baseball Coach Tony Osterman

Crosby hit .304 with a team-high 30 RBIs and 23 runs scored. Rising junior infielder **Dom Longello** batted .317 with 13 RBIs. And catcher **Caleb Lott** was just in the eighth grade this past spring.

Osterman heaped praise on the nine players who played their final games for the Knights.

“They raised the bar for our community and got us back on the map,” said Osterman, a cancer survivor. “Without them, I don’t think we would have been so successful. Our seniors believed in our coaching style and bought in. We’re going to miss them.”

The Knights will have two new varsity head coaches this fall. **Ryan Lyles** takes the keys to the girls golf program and the girls tennis team will be led by **Taylor Propst**.

Lyles was an assistant to **Chris Wood** last fall when the Lady Knights advanced to the Class 5A Div. I state tournament. Stratford placed fourth at the Lower State qualifier and just outside the top 10 in the state tournament.



Boys Basketball coach Blake Hall

They’re the epitome. I truly believe if you don’t have good people, you’re not going to win at a high level. They will be missed, but the relationship goes on. I look forward to watching them get out into the real world and do great things.”

Goose Creek brings back several key pieces from that squad for the 2025-26 season and should be in the bull’s eye again next winter. They’re still looking for their first state crown since 2009. Returning all-state guard **Ja’Quell Brown** will lead the way. Brown scored 27 points in the title game and forced

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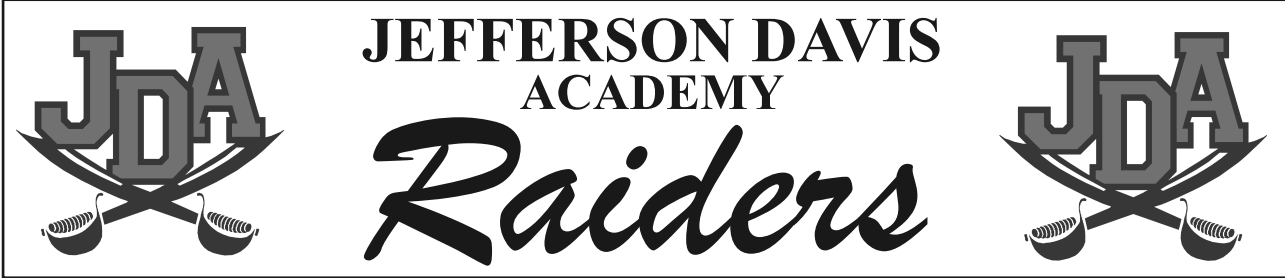
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the first overtime with an off-balance 3-pointer from the wing at the horn to tie it 58-58.
In addition to being named all-state, Brown earned the region’s player of the year honor.
Hall’s first squad on Redbank Road also capped the season in the state championship game after he guided North Charleston to its first state crown since 1997.



Jefferson Davis holds steady with coaching staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Blackville – **Anthony Reitenour** is preparing for his fourth season as the athletic director at **Jefferson Davis Academy**. This will be the first season in which he will have no new varsity head coaches or new assistant coaches for football, of which he is the head coach.

That suits Reitenour quite well.

“I feel like we all have a great relationship with each other,” said Reitenour, who will be entering his fourth season as the football head coach as well as the boys basketball head coach. “I feel like we do a good job working together, trying to get the kids to different practices and workouts. We have a strong group of coaches, with different personalities across the board. It takes hard work. We have same the principals and foundations in what we teach the kids.”

Returning to Jefferson Davis’ football staff are defensive coordinator **Matt Lightsey**, **Johnny Calloway** and **Mitchell Webster**. Reitenour will be calling the plays on offense.

Having that continuity will be a big plus, according to Reitenour.

“It always helps having a good group of coaches,” Reitenour said. “Lightsey (who was Reitenour’s predecessor as head coach), me and him meshed from Day 1. Calloway, I knew him from his coaching at Holy Hill and Dorchester, plus it is fun coaching with an old high school teammate.”

“Mitchell Webster, he’s young and learning from us. He’s improving every year. He’s still young, but he’s getting better at it. We all have things that we’re better at, but I feel like we complement each other really well.”

The Raiders have been ultra successful in Reitenour’s tenure, gong 31-9. They were 8-5 in his first season before going 12-2 and winning the 8-man state championship in 2023. Jefferson Davis was 11-2 last year, losing in the semifinals of the state playoffs.

The Raiders lost nine seniors from last year’s team, and the high school classes do not have a lot of boys in them. That has an obvious effect on numbers for football, with Reitenour saying he’s had 17 players for varsity and 11 for junior varsity for summer workouts.

That being said, Reitenour is happy with how the summer has gone.

“Things are not going bad,” he said. “We’re showing a lot of progress. We’re having to go back to the drawing board and work a little bit harder, but we’ve had to do that before. We’ve still got some unknowns, some things we need to work out, but these kids know how to win.”

Jefferson Davis will be breaking in a brand new offensive backfield, and whoever it is will have some mighty big shoes to fill. Gone are **Colson Loadholt**, **Nasir Void** and **James Grubbs**.

Grubbs rushed for 1,120 yards and 11 touchdowns, Void had 1,079 yards and 15 touchdowns, and Loadholt had 769 yards and 15 touchdowns as the quarterback. That’s 2,968 yards and 41 touchdowns.

The Raiders will open their season with a Week Zero game on August 15 against **Providence Athletic Club** in Columbia.

Reitenour led the boys basketball team to a 12-9 record and a share of the Region 2-Class A regular-season title with eventual state runner-up **Curtis Baptist**.

Veteran Jefferson Davis coach **Bart Owens** will return as the head coach for both volleyball and softball.

Owens led the volleyball team to a 15-4 record and its second straight region championship. That happened to be the second region title in program history as well.

The softball team won the 2024 Class A state championship under his tutelage.

Reitenour has the utmost respect for Owens.

Bart’s Bart,” Reitenour said. “You’re really not a part of SCISA if you don’t know who he is. He’s so passionate, and he loves the kids. Where a lot of coaches seem to hit a wall at a certain point, that’s not him. Bart seems to improve every year. He does so many things at JDA beyond coaching.”

Mannie Wright will return for his third season as the baseball head coach. After guiding Jefferson Davis to an 11-11 record in his first season, Wright helped it post a 13-9 record this past season. The Raiders reached the semifinals of the Class A state playoffs. The Raiders swept **Wardlaw Academy** in the best-of-3 quarterfinal series before being swept by then defending state champion **Richard Winn Academy** in the semifinals.

“Mannie’s great,” said Reitenour, who hired Wright as the athletic director. “He loves the kids. He creates a relationship with the kids even though he can be hard on them at times. He knows the game well, teaches the game well. This will be his third season, and I’ve seen progress every year. I’m happy to have him back again.”

Larry Johnson will be the girls head coach for the second straight year. He’s had other tenures as head coach, but his time at JDA has been interrupted by his military commitment.

“It’s been a flip-flop thing with him and Shawn (Howze), so we’re happy to have him for a second consecutive season,” Reitenour said. “The girls had a pretty decent year last year, and he has a pretty good group coming back. I know he’s excited for next year, taking it a little further. He’s consistent and does a good job.”

Jefferson Davis finished the season with a 7-12 record, losing to **Holly Hill Academy** 40-27 in the quarterfinals of the state tournament. They will return two All-Region performers in rising sophomores **Rileigh York** and **Riley Williams**.

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Radford to take over Camden volleyball program

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Camden – **Tristany Radford** knows that she has some big shoes to fill. Fortunately for her, she has spent the past decade studying and learning how to fill those shoes.

Radford is taking over the **Camden High School** volleyball program following the retirement of legendary head coach **Paige Wilson**, who she served as an assistant coach for 10 years.

“I was her right-hand man the last 10 years, and I was with her as her No. 2, helping to train me to move me into this position,” Radford said.

Wilson was the head coach for 32 years and led the Bulldogs to the state playoffs in 30 of those seasons. Camden played for the lower state championship on eight different occasions, winning five of those to advance to the state championship match. Wilson coached Camden to two state titles.

While wanting to maintain what Wilson has built over the decades, Radford is hoping to take the program to another level.

“I’m excited to start a fresh era of Camden volleyball,” Radford said. “I’ve got big shoes to fill, and I hope to bring a fresh air to honor everything she’s done. I’m looking forward to being able to bring a new, competitive edge to the program.

“I’ve coached big clubs in Columiba. My coaching staff, some of them have played college volleyball, so they know what the next level looks like. We kind of know how to help get them there. The game has developed and changed. We’ll be bringing a more up-to-date game style. I want to build uniformity in the program.”

There will be four other new varsity head coaches on the staff this season. **Nolan Hunter** will be the new softball coach, taking over for **Lynn Looney**.

Emma Morrison will take over the girls and boys swim teams, and **Austin Spolski** will be the girls cross country coach. The boys and girls track and field coach will be **Joey Hendrix**. Camden is still in the process of securing someone to coach both the boys and girls tennis programs.

Brian Rimpf will be back as the athletic director and football head coach. Rimpf has had to reshuffle his staff a bit with some of his assistants moving on.

The most noteworthy change will be at offensive coordinator. **Louis Clyburn** is now the head coach at **Brookland-Cayce**, so **Savionn Wingate** is the new OC and will continue to coach the running backs.

Josh Council will coach the quarterbacks, while veteran **Calvin McRoy** will handle the tight ends. **Roland Matthews** will coach the offensive line, and newcomer **Davea Cauthen** will coach the wide receivers.

Joey Hendrix is back as the defensive coordinator. Also returning to the staff are co-defensive coordinator and cornerbacks coach **Cedrick Malone**, defensive ends coach **Denny Beckley**, inside linebackers coach **PJ Davis**, defensive tackle coach **Marshall Minich** and outside linebackers coach **Demarius Alexander**. Newcomers to the staff are **Lamar Keitt**, who will assist with the cornerbacks, and **Quan Morris**, who will assist with the safeties.

Beckley will be back as the baseball coach. He guided Camden to the playoffs for the 22nd time in 25 seasons.

Sterling Council is returning for his fifth season as boys basketball head coach, while **Lewis Mungo** is back for his second year heading up girls basketball. **William Connell** will be back for his fourth



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season in charge of the wrestling program.

Matt Spolski returns as the boys cross country coach, while Matt McCarley will again be the girls golf head coach. Clayton Daniels will coach the boys.

Tiffany Ellis and Hannah Braddock will be in charge of the competitive cheer team, Jerry Jones will be the boys soccer coach, and Paul Ahern will be the girls soccer head coach.

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Fidler takes charge as White Knoll athletic director

By WORTHY EVANS
Staff Writer
Lexington -White Knoll High School has seen an uplift in athletics under the helm of head football coach and athletic director Nick Pelham over the past five years. This past spring Pelham passed the torch to Shane Fidler, former Airport athletic director and head football coach.

The 5A classification is an area Fidler, who was 5A Ashley Ridge’s football coach before coming to Airport in 2023.

“I’m very familiar with the teams and coaches and the administrators from around the state at this level and I’m excited to get back where I think I belong.”

Before Ashley Ridge, Fidler was head football coach and assistant AD at Waccamaw and before that was a football assistant at Colleton County and Eau Claire.

Fidler had split time between Airport and White Knoll until July 1, when he became a full-time AD at White Knoll.

Pelham, who has been the Timberwolves head football coach since 2021, remains in his position as coach. Pelham took the Timberwolves from a winless record in 2020 to a 14-1 record and the school’s first ever football state championship appearance in 2023.

Fidler has high praise for what White Knoll has been working toward under Pelham’s tenure as AD and the school’s principal, Nicholas Pearson.

“It’s been a clear ascension of White Knoll athletics right now and it’s directly attributed to the work that Nicholas Pearson and Nick Pelham have done for the past few years. They put a lot of work in building for that success. Now It’s my job to take it to the next level if we can.”

With Pelham working with the football team to improve on last year’s 8-6 and 1-4 mark in the tough Region 4-5A, Fidler has seen to a couple of strong hires and some immediate facility improvements.

Top on the list is the hiring of University of South Carolina Hall-of-Famer and former WNBA player Shaunzinski Gortman as head coach of the

New Chapin AD looks to carry on Eagles traditions

By WORTHY EVANS
Staff Writer
Chapin - With the retirement of longtime AD Ronnie Wessinger, Chapin looked from within to find his successor in Billie Williams.

Williams, the assistant cheerleading coach to Vicki Williams, her mother, has taught at Chapin for the been at Chapin for the past 16 years and served in many capacities. In addition to teaching social studies, she has also served as the student activities coordinator, student government sponsor and Key Club sponsor. Now she will put her effort into continuing make Chapin a great place for student

Leaver helping manage 17 athletic programs

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Summerville—Northwood Academy athletic director Ryan Leaver is both an assistant Principal and athletic director with the Chargers, and it was a bit surprising to discover that the SCISA AAAA school will sponsor 17 varsity sports during the 2025-2026 school year including Archery and Fishing.

“There is certainly a lot to keep up with but good communication and organization are key factors in making everything run smoothly,” said Coach Leaver. “Also having Grinnell Curtis as my assistant athletic director is huge and she and I went to the same high school together in Apex, NC so we have

girls basketball team.

The Timberwolves, who went 17-10 last year under first-year head coach Coretta Scott-Ferguson, lost four seniors but have a solid core to build on. Scott-Ferguson took the head coaching job at Irmo last spring.

Gortman, a Keenan High graduate who played for USC from 1998-2002, coached the Fairfield Central girls to 34 wins in three seasons and three straight postseason appearances.

“She’s a USC hall of famer, a WNBA player, and she did an incredible job coaching at Fairfield Central,” Fidler said. “We’re excited for what she’s going to bring to the program.”

White Knoll also welcomes track and field coaches Jackie Robinson and Trelvis Miller, both of whom coached Gray Collegiate Academy’s girls track and field team to a 2A state championship in 2024 and a 4A state title last spring.

“They’ve done an amazing job at Gray and they’ll be aiming to do the same at White Knoll,” Fidler said.

While many facility improvements are in the works, including installing turf on the football field that will be marked for soccer and lacrosse, one job that got done quickly was painting the tennis courts in the school’s colors.

“That was the first thing we did, improving the tennis courts,” Fidler said. “Patrick McManus, who coaches the girls and boys teams, is a great coach and I’m looking forward to seeing him grow his program.”

Most of all Fidler looks forward to making sure the coaches and players have what they need to be successful, and ensuring the community is invested in the school’s success.

“The best thing we have are the coaches and players,” he said. “They’re the most important part of anything when it comes to building success on and off the field. The White Knoll attendance zone has always been a big part of that success. The students, parents and fans we have around here right now have been great and we need to continue to capture that for many years to come.”

athletes.

“High school athletics have always held a special place in my heart because of the unique opportunity they provide to create lasting, positive experiences for students,” Williams said. “I felt called to take this next step so I could dedicate my full energy to enhancing the Athletic experience for both our student-athletes and our coaching staff.”

At the top of the list is evaluating facility needs across all programs and building new systems for communication, support, and recognition.

“That includes a renewed partnership with our amazing Chapin Eagle Club, an enhanced social

known each other for a long time.

Coach Leaver has been at Northwood Academy for 18 years. He explained the school’s challenges when they moved from their original campus in North Charleston to their new school located at Carnes Cross Roads in Berkeley County a few years ago.

“We knew the move might cause us to lose some kids, and at the same time, the move would also help us grow,” said Coach Leaver. “The Carnes Crossroads community has really grown and our school has increased in enrolment to where we are now a 4-A SCISA school across the board.

“A few years back we were winning state cham-

See Northwood , pg. 70

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media presence, and consistent recognition of both athletes and coaches,” Williams said.

See Chapin, pg. 70

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ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY WARRIORS

Palmer positive about success ahead at AJA

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Ehrhardt-Andy Palmer begins his first year as the athletic director and head football coach at Andrew Jackson Academy as he begins his 34th season in coaching with prior head football coaching jobs at Edisto, Orangeburg Prep, and Holly Hill Academy spanning over 20 years.

Athletic Director and Football Coach
Andy Palmer

Baseball Coach
Jason Mathys

Coach Palmer feels like it could be a highly successful year for the Warriors athletic teams. “We are in a great position as our boys’ basketball coach and baseball teams played for state championships this past year,” said Coach Palmer. “Our volleyball team is ready to push for region and state recognition. Our football team has had a great summer in the weight room and is looking to put the “Pride” back into Warrior football.”

Coach Palmer told the HSSR in an earlier interview, “As a full-time employee of the school I will be able to communicate with all the student athletes on a regular basis,” he said. “I am available to assist our student athletes in any way I can.

“Since I first arrived at Andrew Jackson Academy the community has been very supportive of myself and my family,” said Coach Palmer. “I do not live but 9 or 10 miles from the school so it was a good move for me.”

Coach Palmer’s top assistant on the football team will be Cade Wiles, who played for him at Orangeburg Prep. Gene Sease will also help out where he is needed.

Zack Boltin, recently engaged, returns to coach the varsity volleyball team. The volleyball team went to a team camp for the second straight year at Wofford College in early July and this has helped the team develop better ball handling skills on the court. The head jayvee and B team volleyball coach is once again in the capable hands of Carmen Mixon who excelled in the sport at Wade Hampton High back in the day.

Coach Boltin also returns as the head girls’ basketball coach after leading the team to the most wins they had in a season last year in quite some time.

Josh Barnes, who stepped from being the athletic director after last season, continues on as the boy’s head basketball coach. He coached the Warriors to the state finals last year and he will be entering his 15th season as the head coach this year.

This summer Coach Barnes took his AJA team to a summer tournament hosted by Cathedral Academy.

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DJ Kelly is new Marion athletic director

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Marion – There has been a shakeup at the top of the **Marion High School** athletic department. **Brian Hennecy**, who has served as both the athletic director and football head coach for the past few seasons, is no longer the AD. That position now belongs to **DJ Kelly**, who will continue as the boys basketball head coach. Hennecy will continue as the football coach as well.

“Having the opportunity serve the community of Marion, the coaches of Swamp Fox athletics and the student-athletes of Marion High School is an honor and an assignment that I will not take lightly,” Kelly said. “I am beyond grateful for the blessing that God has bestowed upon me.”

An immediate chore for Kelly is to find a new girls basketball head coach as **Chris Sanders** will not return. Kelly is also in search of a girls tennis coach.

The rest of the coaches are returnees. **Kenosha Hyman** is back as the softball coach, while **Hal Lambert** is doing baseball again. **Camilla Jones** is the volleyball coach, **Michael Steinbar** the wrestling coach, **Marty Shelley** the boys soccer coach, **Randall State** the boys golf coach, and **Leroy Bell** is both the boys and girls cross country and track and field head coaches.

“The staff is strategically assembled and hungry for the greatness ahead,” Kelly said. “We will get to work immediately to enhance all athletic programs and to inspire our student-athletes that there is a

pathway to your dreams right here in Marion, South Carolina.”

In football, after a run of several successful seasons, Marion finished with a 1-9 mark last season. That led to some changes on the coaching staff, the most notable being **Matt Caulder** taking over as the offensive coordinator.

“Coach Caulder brings a much better, fast-paced ball movement attack to this offense,” Hennecy said. ““That is something that is needed in this offense. He has great experience as on offensive coordinator from his previous position at Latta. He has coached in Marion previously and wants to be part of our program.”

Randall State will be the defensive coordinator for the second straight year. State is Hennecy’s predecessor, having coached the Swam Foxes to the

See Marion, pg. 69



Head Football Coach
Brian Hennecy

Lowery happy with summer work at Mullins

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Mullins – As Auctioneers football head coach **Marc Lowery** prepares for his third season in charge, he is pleased with the the summer his student-athletes have put together.

“The 7-on-7 scrimmages have been very productive for us this season,” said Lowery, who guided Mullins to a 7-4 record and a berth in the AA state playoffs last season after it went winless in his first year. “Starting their third season under a new system, it has been very evident that they have a better understanding of what is expected of them, their assignments, and techniques. This has allowed them to play with more confidence.”

The 7-on-7 work should have benefitted the passing game in particular, which is the focal point of what Lowery okes to do offensively. Senior Ka’-nazzion Bethea is back for his third season as the starting quarterback. He completed 82 of 195 passes for 1,284 yards and 15 touchdowns against 10 interceptions last season. He also rushed for 481 yards.

Three of Bethea’s top four pass catchers are back in seniors **Justin Reaves Jr.** and **Amir Lee** and junior **Anthony Campbell**. Reaves, who caught a lot of short passes on jet sweeps, had 26 receptions for 339 yards. Campbell had 14 catches for 98 yards, and Lee had eight catches for 187 yards.

coaching line-backers and running backs. **Jonathan Elliott** will be the junior varsity head coach for the second consecutive season. **Tarell Davis** will be in his second season of assisting the junior varsity program.

Kamrone McAlister is a first-year coach who will handle the defensive backs.

Lowery was still looking for an assistant coach to focus on the offensive linemen.

Mullins opens its season at home against **Hemingway** on August 22.

The Auctioneers hope for a more consistent campaign. Last year, they won their first six games before dropping four of their last five.



Head Football Coach
Marc Lowery

GERALD OUT AS ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Lowery has a veteran coaching staff with most of the members having deep ties to Mullins football.

While Lowery will be calling the offensive plays, **Donald Brown** returns for his eighth season at Mullins. He coaches the wide receivers and is close to former Auctioneer and Carolina Panthers wide receiver **Xavier Legette**.

Tony Nelson is the defensive backs coach, and he has been coaching for 20 years, all with Mullins. The defensive line coach is **Aykelle Cross**, who is in fourth year with the Auctioneers, while **Jeremy Oxendine** will be back for his second season. He is

Myron Gerald, the longtime athletic director and girls basketball head coach for **Mullins High School**, is no longer in the athletic director position, according to multiple sources.

Also, according to those same sources, no one had yet been named to replace him as athletic director as of *High School Sports Report’s* publication date.

There is also no confirmation as to whether Gerald is still the girls basketball head coach. He has not responded to several texts and telephone calls.

Gerald coached the Auctioneers to the 2017 AA state championship.

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Rogers officially becomes Latta softball coach

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Latta – **Anna Rogers** won a state title as a softball head coach before she officially became a softball head coach.

Rogers led **Latta High School** to the Class A state championship after taking over on an interim basis just one week prior to the start of the state playoffs. Rogers had the interim tag dropped from her title recently.

Latta finished the season with a 23-6 record. The swept the best-of-3 championship series against defending state champion **Lewisville**. The Vikings won the opening game 3-0 and closed out the series with a 5-2 triumph.

Rogers had served as the junior varsity head coach as well as a varsity assistant since 2019. Rogers will also be the girls and boys cross country head coach for the second year.

Genesis Anderson returns to run the volleyball program, while **Chris Page** is back for his third season as boys basketball head coach, and **Bobby Richardson** is back for his second year in charge of the girls program.

The Latta volleyball team went 17-8 this past season, finishing second in Region 6. The Vikings reached the quarterfinal round of the playoffs.

The Latta boys basketball team went just 11-14 overall but had an 8-4 region mark, good for second. They reached the second round of the playoffs.

The Latta girls went 19-7 in Richardson’s first season, finishing 10-2 and in second in Region 6. The Vikings reached the quarterfinals of the playoffs

where they fell to eventual state champion **Military Magnet Academy**.

Robbie Brown is back as the baseball head coach as well as the athletic director, and **Brandon Iseman** is the veteran football head coach.

Iseman will have two new coordinators this year with **Sport Sawyer** in charge of the offense and **Michael Donald** handling the play calling for the defense.

Brown will coach the offensive linemen, **Brandon Page** will handle the defensive tackles and Chris Page will coach the running backs. Richardson will handle the wide receivers.

Clint Brown will be the junior varsity head coach, and **Tony McRae** will be a varsity assistant.

The baseball team finished with a 20-10 record and finished first in region play. The Vikings lost to Lake View in the championship round of their district tournament.

The football team went 5-6 and reached the state playoffs.

Sandra Gomillion will serve as the boys golf coach for the second year. Sawyer is the boys and girls track and field coach, and **Peyton Walsh** is the cheer coach.

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Lackey happy with Fox Creek coaching staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

North Augusta – **Lemuel Lackey** is set to begin his sixth season as the football head coach at **Fox Creek High School**. He has yet to post a winning season, but after the Predators went 4-6 last season, Lackey feels they are close.

And why does he feel that way? Because of his coaching staff and the work it has put in during summer workouts.

“I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for having the opportunity to work with some of

the best coaches and amily men in **South Carolina**,” Lackey said. “Their dedication and commitment to our plyers this summer hve been exceptional. They have invested countless hours teaching and sharing their football knowledge, which has been invaluable to our team’s development.

“As a coaching staff, we have a clear vision for our future and are eager to take the next step with our football program. The foundation built this summer will certainly pave the way for our ongoing success.”

Fox Creek returns both of its defensive coordina-

Chesterfield alum hired as head football coach

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Chesterfield – Looking for more stability in what has been a revolving door, **Chesterfield High** has hired a former player and alum to head up its football program.

Nick Dixon, a 2007 graduate and former quarterback in the Rams program, was hired earlier this spring to bring a consistent voice for the program. Dixon is the third head coach in four years and while others left for greener pastures, Dixon plans to be in it for the long haul.

“This is home for me, whether I’m the head coach or not, this is home,” said Dixon, who has been an assistant in the program since 2018. “I am so thankful to be given this opportunity to lead this program. We are going to give everything we’ve got to make us as competitive as we can be.”

Dixon played quarterback for the 2006 Chesterfield team that advanced to the state finals under coach **Steve Taneyhill**. A one-point loss ended that season and the Rams went on to win three consecutive state championships over the next three years.

“Me and the other seniors on that 2006 team laid the foundation for the next group so I am very proud to have been a part of that success,” Dixon said.

After attending Newberry College as a quarterback, Dixon finished as an outside linebacker, which

allowed him to learn about the defensive side of football. The experience gained as both an offensive and defensive player set the stage for his eventual coaching career.

Dixon also had previous coaching stops at McBee and Hannah-Pamlico before matriculating back to Chesterfield.

“This is where I always hoped I would be,” he said. “I’ve learned a lot from a lot of great coaches along the way and I’m excited to put my spin on things.”

Dixon feels strongly that relationships with the community and families will be the foundation for success.

“It is some important that our community is proud of their football program and I want to bring our players and community together,” Dixon said. “If we can do things to make our community proud, they will give us all the support that we need to be successful.

Dixon has brought in several other former players, both as volunteers and paid, to serve the program in some capacity. He says about 14 of the 17 coaches are Chesterfield graduates.

“I felt it was important to have guys that played here and have the same love for the program as I do,” Dixon said. “Our kids can relate to these guys and our coaches can relay what it takes to win to

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New OP head coach Brooks Smith likes first staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Orangeburg – As **Brooks Smith** prepares for his first season as the football head coach at **Orangeburg Preparatory School**, he is happy with where he and his coaching staff are with the start of the 2025 season fast approaching.

“I think we’re working well together,” said Smith, who was named the Indians head coach after **Don Shelley** stepped down after two seasons in charge. “We’ve all coached together so they know what I expect. I’m glad we were able to maintain as many people off of Coach Shelley’s staff because the continuity is good for the athletes. They are a good group of guys who are great leaders of young men. They are good Christian men who will guide them the right way.”

Smith was the offensive coordinator last season and was on the staff with four of his six assistant coaches this year. Returning to work with Smith are **Richard Phillips**, **Ley Pickens**, **Grant Axson** and **Spencer Troutman**. Phillips will coach inside linebackers and running backs, Pickens and Axson will both coach wide receivers and defensive backs, and Troutman will be working with both the offensive line and defensive line.

Smith will be bringing veteran SCISA coach **Michael Heath** as the defensive coordinator. Heath was the longtime defensive coordinator for **Thomas Heyward Academy** before spending the past two years at **Northwood Academy**.

Smith said he came upon hiring Heath almost by word of mouth..

“I’ve known Coach Heath from coaching over the years, and we had some mutual friends who knew I was looking for someone to bring on the staff,” said Smith, who is taking over a team that went 5-6 last season. “We talked and it worked out well.

“I’m excited about it and I think he is too. We had an opportunity to get a proven defensive coordinator who has been on several championship staffs. I said this is someone I’d like to get so let’s make it happen. This is a big win for us to get someone of his caliber.”

Smith said Heath’s base defense is the 3-4, which is what Orangeburg Prep operated out of last year. However, the Indians are going to be more of an attack-oriented defense this year, according to Smith.

“We’re going to be really aggressive on defense,” Smith said. “We’re going to be disguising our looks, our pressure, our coverage, things like that. We’re staying with the 3-4 so we don’t have to completely overhaul our system. We’re just going to be a little more aggressive than what we’ve been.”

The final member of the staff is **Ryan McNair**. While he hasn’t coached on the varsity level yet, McNair has worked with Smith, who was the junior varsity head coach for Orangeburg Prep. McNair will help with the offensive line and the outside linebackers.

Orangeburg Prep opens its season on August 22

at home against Wilson Hall.

SMITH THE ONLY NEW VARSITY HEAD COACH

Smith, who is a graduate of Orangeburg Prep, is the only new varsity head coach this season. Everyone else is back, including the boys and girls track and field head coach who just happens to be Smith. It is something that Smith has been quite successful at, having led the girls team to five consecutive state championships. They captured the Division II championship in May. He led both the boys and girls to Division II titles in 2024.

The athletic program is led by athletic director and longtime girls basketball head coach **Jan Stoudenmire**. She led the Lady Indians to the championship round of the AAA state tournament this past season. She is returning to the sidelines for her 27th year as the Orangeburg Prep head coach.

Veteran **Tate Jameson** will return as the baseball head coach after guiding the Indians to their best season in over two decades. They reached the AAA best-of-3 state championship series before losing to **Hilton Head Prep** in three games. It was the first time Orangeburg Prep, which finished with a 27-5 overall record, had played for a baseball state title since 2003.

Back for his second year as the boys basketball head coach is **Michael Delaney**. He had a memorable first year, leading the Indians to an 18-5 overall record and reaching the tournament semifinals for the first time in years. After getting a first-round bye, the Indians beat **Greenwood Christian School** 73-68 in the quarterfinals before falling to eventual 3-time defending state champion **Hilton Head Prep** 76-45 in the semis.

Shaniya Thomas will be back for her second season in charge of the softball program. Orangeburg Prep went 15-10 and lost in the championship round of their bracket in the AAA state tournament.

Marji Albergotti is back as the girls tennis coach and **Rebekkah Brailsford** is back as the cheerleading head coach. **Katherine Smith** will be the volleyball coach, **Rachael Fleming** is the boys and girls cross country head coach, **Harry Mims Jr.** and **Colin Weaver** share the boys golf head job, and **Josh Shurtleff** is in charge of the bowling program.

TILDEN “T” RILEY COMMITS TO VANDERBILT

OP wide receiver **Tilden “T” Riley** has committed to play college football for **Vanderbilt**. Riley, who had multiple **Football Bowl Subdivision** offers, chose the Commodores from a final three of Virginia Tech and **South Carolina**.

Riley plans to sign with Vanderbilt in November, graduate early and enroll for the 2026 spring semester.

The 6-foot-5-inch, 220-pound Riley, who is

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projected as a tight end at the collegiate level, caught 49 passes for 903 yards and 13 touchdowns last season while rushing for more than 200 yards.

“He’s obviously a special football player,” Coach Brooks Smith said. “He has great body control, and he can go up and get the football. When he’s up in the air he makes adjustments.

“He’s a special person. He’s a good leader, a good role model for the younger players. He works hard in the weightroom and is willing to help get the younger players there.”

Changes coming to Pee Dee varsity coaching staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Mullins – The Pee Dee Academy softball team actually played its first game of the 2025 season before it had its first practice of the 2025 season.

Because many of the softball players were helping PDA win a SCISA AAA basketball title on Saturday, March 1, and a school holiday on Monday, March 3, kept the 3-time defending state championship team from practicing, the Golden Eagles’ game against **Clarendon Hall** on Tuesday, March 4, was the first time they did anything together.

They won the game and had their first practice the next day. The late start didn’t deter Pee Dee as it won its fourth straight state title. It beat the same Clarendon Hall team with a sweep of the best-of-3 AAA championship series.

“It’s pretty incredible,” said PDA head coach **Will Eskridge**, who led the team to a 26-1 record. “It’s unbelievable. You start the season and really try not to talk about winning the state championship with the team. You worry the girls might take it for granted.”

Being able to send junior **Maddie Coward** to the circle to pitch alleviates some of that worry. The left-hander has pitched the Eagles to three of those titles and was stopped by a mid-season injury in her freshman year from making it four.

Coward was selected as the Region 3-AAA Player of the Year for her work in the circle as well as her .557 batting average.

“It sure starts in the circle,” Eskridge said. “She’s a leader on this team. Shes been a leader since way back in the eighth grade. If she was intimidated by the older kids she never let it show.

“You always feel confident she’s going to get it done. I can’t think of a pitcher I’d rather have in the

circle. She’s a competitor who believes in herself.” Coward was joined on the All-Region team by catcher **Leah Nettles**, first baseman **Katie Estes**, second baseman **Anna Cooke**, third baseman **Azeleigh Arnette**, shortstop **Addison Hasty**, center-fielder **Claire Eskridge** and rightfielder **Savanna Baker**.

DAVIS STEPS DOWN AS PEE DEE BASEBALL COACH

Brian Davis, who guided the Pee Dee baseball program to four state championships, stepped down after the just completed season.

“There’s nothing wrong or anything like that,” Davis said. “It was just **something** I needed to do for my family.”

Davis was the head coach for nine years, winning titles his first two years in 2017 and 2018. The Eagles went back-to-back again in ’22 and ’23.

Pee Dee was 142-41 during his tenure and won seven region titles.

One of Davis’ assistants, **Danny Barker**, is the new head coach.

Davis’ final team was led by senior left-handed pitcher **Colby Richardson**, who will play collegiately for **Coastal Carolina**. Richardson was selected as the Region Player of the Year.

Joining him on the All-Region team were **Miles Trussell**, **Jamison Rogers** and **Bennett Causey**.

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By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR

Andrews – **Joy Weisner** will begin her fourth year at Andrews High School and her third as the head coach of both the volleyball and softball teams after taking both teams to the class AA playoffs this past year she has set the foundation for each program to continue to be successful.

Between them, Volleyball and Softball have made 10 state championship game appearances coming away with five state championships. In fact, Andrews won the first two class AA softball state championships in 1980 and 81. Their last state championships was in softball in 2018. Coach Weisner is looking to get her teams back to that level.

“We finished 3rd in our region for volleyball and won the region in softball. We are getting stronger and faster. We have the mindset of getting better every day and we are working towards that, so I feel like we have the potential to go further in the playoffs for both volleyball and softball this coming year. We have been young the past couple of years so we have gained valuable experience on the court and on the diamond,” coach said.

Coach continued, “The foundation for both programs is pretty much the same. We work hard, have good sportsmanship, athletes with good coachable attitudes. We instill these things in the athletes early on, and I have been fortunate to have athletes who want to work and get better.”

The one thing about being at a small school is

a lot of the same players play both sports so they get used to coaches styles and expectations, which coach says is the easy part of coaching.

“The main difference in the sports is strategy and pace of the game. Volleyball plays at a quicker pace while softball may be slower but you have to be quick,” said coach.

Of course, you also have to have good assistant coaches as well for your programs to continue to grow. In volleyball **Zanavia Deas** will begin her first season as assistant coach. She has coached the JV the past two seasons.

Coach said, “Zanavia brings experience in teaching fundamentals and offensive strategies that will give our hitters more opportunities to become more explosive on the front row.”

Varsity softball assistants coaches **Art Strong** and **Nora Penn** have been with coach Weisner since she took over the softball program. They both bring knowledge of the game and the teaching of fundamentals to our program. Coach Strong has over 30 years of experience while Coach Penn is a former college softball player.



Softball and Volleyball coach Joy Weisner

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Central hires two new head coaches for 2025-26

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Pageland – **Central High School** will have two new head coaches on its varsity staff for the 2025-26 school year, but neither will be a new-comer to the school.

Hannah Kirkley was recently hired as the volleyball head coach, and **Jarvis McManus** will take over the girls basketball program. “We welcome Hannah Kirkley and Jarvis McManus into their new roles at Central,” said Eagles athletic director **Mitch Leaird**. “Neither are strangers to Central High School. Hannah has taught English for the past five years at Central but was just recently introduced as our new head varsity volleyball coach. Jarvis has been the head JV (junior varsity) boys basketball coach the past five years before recently being named our head varsity girls basketball coach.” Kirkley owns some varsity head coaching experience. She was in charge of the **Andrew Jackson High** program for two years. “I am looking forward to working with our student-athletes, and I am excited for all of the opportunities to come with our volleyball program,” Kirkley said. **Jonathan Eason** returns for his second season as the football head coach. Eason’s first go-around at his alma mater was pretty good. The Eagles finished with a 10-3 record and reached the quarterfinals of the AA state playoffs.

Eason is a 2006 graduate of Central. His coaching career began at Central, where he was from 2011 through 2015. He was the offensive coordinator as well as the offensive line coach during that time. He was the head coach at **Chesterfield** before returning to Central.

Myrtle Beach adds on to varsity coaching staff

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Myrtle Beach – For the most part, the varsity sports head coaching roster at **Myrtle Beach High** will return intact for the 2025-26 school year. However, two varsity sports will have new leaders when the new year begins as athletic director **John Cahill** hires new head coaches in volleyball and girls soccer. Taking over the girls volleyball program will be **Emma Ann Lay**, a former all-region performer and recent graduate of Winthrop University, where she was a member of the volleyball program.

In girls soccer, the new head coach will be **Levi Gray**, who brings a wealth of experience as a club coach and player development director. As for the rest of the varsity staff, returning coaches will again take the reins of their respective programs. **Mickey Wilson** is set to return for his 17th season as the head football coach. Wilson has guided the Seahawks to three state championships (2010, 2013, 2018) and two state runner-up finishes (2009, 2019). Wilson has averaged 10 wins per season and 2022 was his first losing season as the Seahawks finished with a 5-7 record. Myrtle Beach has won 10 or more games nine times under Wilson’s guidance.

Eason has his two coordinators back in **Kyle Pollard** and **JD Sellers**. Pollard is the defensive coordinator and the strength coach, while Sellers will handle the offense while coaching the quarterbacks and the running backs. The other varsity assistants are defensive line coach **Cornelius Chambers**, linebackers coach **Trent Stickland**, and offensive line/special teams coach **BR Hatcher**. **Paul Tomberlin** is the only newcomer to the staff even though he has coached at Central previously. He will handle the defensive backs. **Dion Mason** is the JV head coach and will help coach defensive backs on the varsity level. **Darius Gladden** will call the defense for the JV and help with the varsity defensive line, and **Jacob Aldridge** will be the JV defensive coordinator and coach wide receivers and tight ends for the varsity. All of the other head coaches will remain the same. **Desmond Sowell** is again the boys basketball coach. He guided the Eagles to am 18-11 record as they reached the quarterfinals of the state playoffs. Strickland is the baseball coach, **Steve Middleton** the softball coach, **Chris Rollings** the boys golf coach and **Billy Blakeney** the boys track and field head coach. **Joel Dale** is the girls track coach and the boys and girls cross country coach. **Stephanie Rivers** is the cheerleading coach. “I am very excited that most of our coaching staff returns from last year,” Leaird said. “We certainly have one of the best coaching staffs in the entire state and our student-athletes will certainly agree with that. Great things are in store for Central High School athletics for the 2025-2026 school year.” The most successful athletic program, in terms of state championships, at Myrtle Beach is the boys tennis program. The Seahawks won the 2023 state title, going back-to-back with championships. Their bid for a three-peat came up short in a finals loss to Riverside last spring but the Seahawks bounced back with a state title in AAAAA Division II this spring. It was the 13th state championship for the program. **Jeremy Howard** is the head coach of the boys tennis team, **Susan Sparks** is set to return as the girls tennis coach this fall while **Meredith Jiorle** returns as the girls cross country coach. Jiorle also is the varsity softball coach in the spring. Also in the fall, **Katherine Detlaff** returns to head up the boys swim program while **Kaitlyn Holmes** will again coach the girls swim team. **Lowell Counce** will again coach the girls golf team in the fall as well as the boys golf team in the spring. In basketball, **Jennifer Dennison** returns as the girls varsity coach, and **Eric Lyons** returns for his fourth season as the boys coach. Veteran **Ken MacIver** will continue his efforts with the wrestling program. Veteran **Tim Christy** is set to return as the head baseball coach next spring. **Jason Himmelsbach** heads up the boys soccer team. **Stephen Nickerson** is the boys lacrosse coach.

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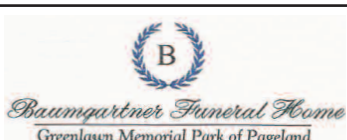
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John Sedeska (boys) and Leandra Walcott (girls) will handle track and field.

Hurricanes girls' running sports fueled by love

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR
Varnville – In the two years that Hampton County has been a school, the Hurricanes girls cross country and track and field teams have finished in the top ten at the Class AA state meets under the leadership of head coach **Myrriah Hanna**. Before the merger of Estill and Wade Hampton coach Hanna was the girls head cross country and track and field coach at Wade Hampton. Where she won several region championships in both sports. The success coach has enjoyed is because she has a basic philosophy when it comes to finding the right athletes for her program, “I want my athletes to love the sport of running. Running is hard and if you can develop the love for running it will last a lifetime. I believe that mental toughness is as important as physical fitness. As a runner we have to embrace discomfort and push through fatigue with purpose,” said coach. Coach continued, “I believe in starting them young! Many of my athletes start in middle school. If I can build that love at a young age, they are more likely to stick with it and excel at it.” While the cross-country team is made up of former Red Devil’s who have been in the program and know what coach Hanna expects. It is

the track and field team that has seen the former Estill Gators have had the biggest impact, particularly in the sprinting events. The Hurricanes finished third at the state meet this past season (25) which was their best finish since winning the AA state championship in 1999. “We gained a few strong athletes from Estill that have helped our program. We really did not have any difficulties. They bought into our program very quickly and loved having more tools that were available to help them be successful,” said coach. Coach Hanna coach’s the cross-country team on her own at the moment but in track and field she has two excellent assistant coaches in **Marshall Paul** and **Wendall Johnson**. Johnson works with the throwers in the field events while Paul works with runners teaching correct running mechanics. “Coach Paul and coach Johnson do a great job and the girls really respond to what they are teaching,” coach said. “I love the structure that running provides for our athletes in our area. Running is not a sport that most people enjoy doing. I love that we have athletes that are committed and dedicated to both sport,” said coach.

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Kelsey Swaim named new PHA athletic director

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Estill – **Kelsey Swaim** will be the new athletic director for **Patrick Henry Academy** for the 2025-26 school year. She is hoping one of the late hires she’ll be able to make is herself – as the softball head coach. That was to be Swaim’s job last year, but PHA didn’t have enough players to field a team. “I’m hoping that we have enough,” said Swaim, who was named the athletic director after **Justin Scott** stepped down. “I’m sure that we have enough to get things going on the middle school level.” Swaim’s going to be looking to hire a new baseball head coach after **Cary Harriott** stepped down. **Kristen Wemes** will coach volleyball and be the assistant athletic director, while **Mike Mathis** will coach the girls soccer team and **Ronaldo Gonzales** the boys soccer coach. **Joe Gray Peebles** is back for his fourth season as the football head coach. After leading the Patriots to the SCISA Class A state title in 2023, the Patriots went 4-7 last season. **Jackson Wiggins** is the assistant head coach and offensive coordinator and has been with Peebles all three years. **Joe Sobey** will be the defensive coordinator and coach the linebackers. **Brodie Gibson** will coach the offensive skill position players and the defensive backs. **Hunter Turner** will coach the tight ends and will handle



Athletic Director Kelsey Swaim

the strength and conditioning program. “He’s an integral part of getting our kids stronger and keeping them in shape,” Peebles said of Turner.

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Bryan set to continue winning tradition at THA

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Ridgeland – It is not uncommon for small community schools to promote from within when there is an opening in the coaching ranks. And, often times, the new head coach is a product of the program as a former player.

Thomas Heyward Academy had a late opening for its head football coaching position when former coach Taylor Malphrus accepted a position at another school. Hired as his replacement is former player and assistant coach **Daniel Bryan**. Bryan is a 2002 graduate of Thomas Heyward. As an offensive lineman, Bryan was named the SCISA player of the year for the 2001 season. He is still believed to be the first and only offensive lineman to win the award in SCISA.

Bryan played collegiately at Mars Hill and spent some time in the arena football league before giving up his playing days.

Bryan, who works for the Dixie crystal plant in Georgia, spent some time as an assistant under Nic Shuford over a decade ago but got of coaching when he started his family. Bryan returned as an assistant midway through last season.

“I know the school, the community and the program very well,” Bryan said. “It’s a winning program (won the state championship in SCISA class A

in 2024) and the support from the community and administration is very strong. We have great kids here and we are looking forward to the season.”

Bryan was a late candidate for the job as he wasn’t particularly looking to be the head coach. He got the job just before the end of school and has been playing catch up with the players this summer.

Thomas Heyward will again be one of the favorites in class A. Bryan was able to keep several of the team’s top players in the program. Among those is star running back **Tony O’bannon**, considered one of the top players in all of SCISA.

“There was a lot of talk that several kids were transferring when everything was in limbo but they’re all staying,” Bryan said. “We will have seven seniors leading the way.”

Athletic director **Logan Thomas** is very comfortable with Bryan as coach. The hope is that the new coach can bring some consistency to the program as he is the fourth coach in four years.

“We are very excited to have coach Bryan as our head football coach,” said Thomas, also a new athletic director. “He also knows our culture and our community and he knows our players. Coach Bryan will continue our winning tradition.”



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Beaufort adds two new varsity head coaches

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Beaufort – Coaching changes happen, especially on the high school level. Whether it be coaches leaving for other opportunities or athletic directors make a change they feel will improve the program.

Regardless of the reason, change is inevitable and **Beaufort High School’s** athletic program will have two new varsity head coaches for the coming 2025-26 school year.

Athletic director **Bradley Adams** recently reported changes at the top of the school’s volleyball and girls tennis programs. The new head coach of the varsity girls volleyball team is **Bill Crumrine**, who comes over from nearby Cross School in Bluffton.

Rocco Russo has been named the new varsity girls tennis coach. Adams is in the process of hiring a new girls lacrosse coach.

Adams reports that all of the other varsity coaches are expected to return for the coming year. **Bryce Lybrand** returns as the head football coach while **Andrew Titman** will coach the boys volley-

ball team. Colonel **Robert Jones** leads the cross country program and **Jeff Abrams** is the girls golf coach. **Julie Jones** is the swim coach and **Hillary Savarese** heads up the cheerleading program.

In the winter, **Reggie Jones** will return as the varsity girls basketball coach and **Jeremy Huff** returns to coach the varsity boys basketball team. **Coby Peeler** returns as the head wrestling coach.

Heading up the baseball program is **Adam Mullen** while **Scott Rast** is the head softball coach. **Jonathan Caratella** coaches the boys soccer team and **Jessica Porter** is the varsity girls soccer coach.

One of the state’s top track and field coaches, **Herbert Glaze**, returns as the girls track coach while Jones heads up the boys track team. **William Dixon** is the boys golf coach and **Joe Garry** is the boys lacrosse coach.

Adams offers high praise for all of the Beaufort High coaching staff,

“Our coaches are excellent leaders who implement plans to increase participation and help prepare our athletes for the future by providing strong and dedicated leadership,” he said. “We emphasize the

her JV team won “The Game Day Experience” state championship.

Sara Turriago leads the Equestrian team while **Trey Campbell** (Boys) and **Tom Crick** (Girls) coach the golf teams

Soccer coaches are **Arturo Suarez** (Boys) and **Alex Fritts** (Girls). Suarez’s team made the playoffs this past season.

Rounding out the coaching staff are baseball coach **Curtis Ramsey**; boys Tennis coaches

conduct a game like scrimmage at home with **Batesburg-Leesville**.

Woodland will begin the regular season on Au-

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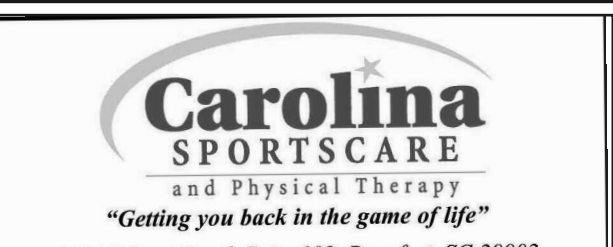
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Brittany and Jonathan Hoffman and girls’ tennis coach is **Pam Kraft**.

New coaches are **David Moore** is the new head coach for Varsity football coach and **John Harris** is the new Varsity Boys Basketball head coach.

“Our coaches work hard to try make things fun, build team comradery and

letting the kids know that they are more than just athletes. We want them to teach life lessons through the use of sports,” coach Hoover said.

gust, 29 with a game against **Colleton County**.

Heilbronn excited about future of NMB athletics

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Little River – Entering year five of his tenure as the athletic director at **North Myrtle Beach High**, **Anthony Heilbronn** feels his program is on the verge of big things.

Recent facility improvements have inspired strong commitment from the athletes and a strong group of coaches is making the most of their opportunities to compete at the highest level.

“I think the coaching staff we have is one of the best in the Grand Strand area,” Heilbronn said. “Collectively, I would put them up against any other staff as they work hard and do the best they can to bring out the best in our kids. I love our coaches and am excited to see what they can do this upcoming season.”

There will be a new wrestling coach this winter but that person has not been named yet. The rest of the coaching staff should return intact.

Girls volleyball head coach **Jenn Loeswick** guided her program to a state title in her first season as head coach. Loeswick is a former assistant in the program. **Greg Hill** is back for his fourth season as head football coach.

Brian Alderson is returns as the varsity baseball coach. Alderson led the Chiefs to back-to-back appearances in the AAAA Lower State finals om 2023 and 2024. **Krystal Mante** is back for her second season as the head softball coach.

Ryan Walker is set to return as the varsity boys basketball coach while **Heather Kearney** will return for year three with the girls basketball program. The Lady Chiefs advanced to the state finals this past season.

Alex Booth coaches cross country and track and **Miranda Ruppe** coaches cross country as well. **Ryan Dinnant** will coach boys track in the spring. **Kyle Cavallini** will be the boys golf coach and **Wendy Hilburn** coaches the girls golf team.

Zach Lytle (boys) and **Danielle Lowrimore** (girls) will coach the lacrosse teams. **Joel Schmaltz** and **Kristen Henley** are the swim coaches and **Brian Patterson** is the coach in boys and girls tennis. **Dru Brooks** coaches the boys volleyball team. **Zach Brittain** is the boys soccer coach and

Hite focused on athlete development at Emerald

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Greenwood—Emerald athletic director **Mack White** is proud to welcome five new head varsity coaches to the Viking’s athletic program for the 2025-26 school year.

The new coaches include **Emily Shirley** to the swim program, **Jonathan Bass** is the new girls’ soccer coach, **Hayden Lawter** takes over wrestling, **Lauren Boyd** is the new tennis coach, and **Garrett Jones** is the new girls’ basketball coach.

“I am excited about all these new head coaches for Emerald,” said Coach Hite. “They bring about expectations and energy that will help build on the great tradition of Emerald athletics.”

Coach Hite defines his responsibilities as athletic director at Emerald High in the following six categories: 1. Program oversight & development 2. Athletic Eligibility & Advancement 3. Compliance & Communication 4. Event management 5. Budgeting and Fundraising along with 6. Student-Athlete Development.

“I most enjoy number 6, creating an environment that athletes can have the tools they need to reach their dreams and become the best version of themselves before they take on the real world after

Kelsey Winkler is the girls soccer coach.

Overall, the athletic department has seen significant upgrades in facilities over the last few years.

Thanks to the Horry County school district, North Myrtle Beach has had about two million dollars of facility improvement, namely the football stadium and track since 2022. The district, as part of a county-wide upgrade of area schools facilities, refurbished the track and installed artificial turf on the football field. The track was completed in the spring of 2022 and the football field was ready by the start of that season. The turf cost is estimated at \$1.2 million while the track upgrade cost about \$800,000 dollars.

The stadium also has a new lighting system and also has a new video board.

The softball and baseball facilities have the best playing surfaces around and new scoreboards.

“It’s a joy to work here with so many great people,” said Heilbronn. “A lot of great things have happened over the last few years and we continue to make improvements where we can. We had a good year overall in terms of our teams competing in the region and getting playoff opportunities, Now, the goal is to do even better.”

With the reclassification of schools by the South Carolina High School League last winter, North Myrtle Beach moved up from AAAA to Class AAAAA for the 2024-26 school year. They also now compete placed in a new region with the region comprised of Horry County schools. Once the state playoffs begin, all Chiefs teams compete in the Division II-AAAAA state playoffs with schools closer to their own enrollment figures.

The larger classification did not adversely affect the success rate for North Myrtle Beach, according to Heilbronn

“The past season was a successful one for us as we one two state championships (girls volleyball and individual girls shot put) and seven region championships in our first year in AAAAA, Heilbronn said. “We put a lot of kids on the all-region and all-state teams that come back (this year), so hopefully we can build upon last year’s successes and push even farther this year.”

high school,” said Coach Hite.

Two returning head coaches to the school with the most coaching experience are head football coach **Tad Dubose** who has 33 years of service in coaching and head basketball coach **John Mark Scruggs** who is well over 20 years.

Other returning head coaches to the Emerald for the 2025 26 school year include **David Payne** with boy’s and girl’s cross country, **David Moody** with boy’s golf and **Kayla Beale** is back to coach girl’s golf. **Tiara Agnew** is back to head coach softball and Coach Hite will continue coaching baseball.

Other returning head varsity coaches include: **Nicole Shearin**-boy’s & girl’s swimming, **David Windham**-boy’s tennis, **Michael Peak** is the head trainer, **Patricia Wirszyk** returns with volleyball, and **Willie Rayford** is back with the wrestling program and **Jake Jenkins** will be back at the boys’ volleyball coach.

Rounding out the varsity head coaches are Spirit cheer coaches **Sidnei Nickles**, **Cason Wright**, and **Dominque Wooders**.

Coach Dubose has seven hard-working assistant coaches helping him with the Viking’s varsity football team. **Thomas Dubose** is the defensive coordinator who works with linebackers and **Garrett**

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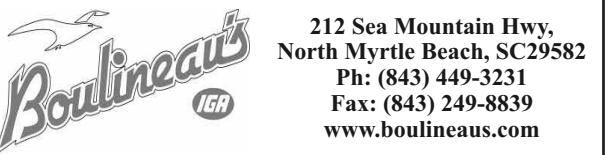
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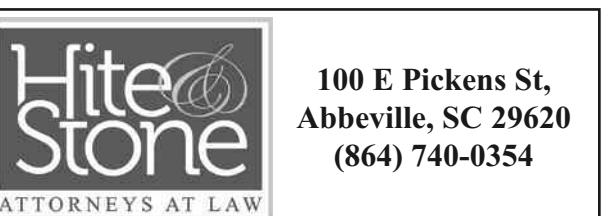
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Jones is the offensive coordinator who works with quarterbacks.

The remaining varsity assistants are Coach Hite with receivers, **Barry Kinard** coaches running backs, **Austin Sargent** is with the offensive line and **Carson Smith** focuses on the defensive line. Coach Dubose works with defensive backs. **Cody Cockrell** mentors the defensive line.

Coach Dubose commented, “We have a great mix of good senior leadership and some talented underclassmen so we are expecting an exciting season,” he said. “Loving each other!”



Cribb likes direction of Johnsonville athletics

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Johnsonville – Johnsonville High’s athletic success is well-known among Class A schools in South Carolina.

Not every team can win a state championship but being competitive in the region and getting a playoff opportunity is a good measure of success.

Johnsonville has long been an athletic program that competes well. There have state champions in various sports and nearly every varsity team at Johnsonville is in the mix from year-to-year.

Ken Cribb is the school’s athletic director and also is the head football coach. His own football program won Lower State championships in 2022 and 2023 before losing in the state championship game in each season.

Cribb came to Johnsonville in the 2018-19 school year, inheriting a football program that had struggled to post wins for several seasons. His first two seasons netted just four total wins. But the Flashes have become a strong program, winning 39 games over the last seven years with the seasons of 2020 and 2021 cut short due to Covid-19.

While football is obviously a major focus of Cribb, being the athletic director is something he takes seriously. His goal is for every team to get rewarded for their hard work and commitment.

“I thought we had a good year last year and we are looking to build on that,” Cribb said. “Our kids work hard. They take athletics seriously. A lot of them play more than one sport and some play three sports. They love to compete. Our community is very supportive also. The people here want to see our kids do well.”

In a perfect world, every athletic team would have the very best facilities, the best uniforms, the best culture. Cribb says Johnsonville is solid in every area and says the coaching staff at the school takes full advantage of what they have instead of complaining about what they don’t have.

“Our coaches do a good job working with what they have,” Cribb said. “We try to give them what they lead to be competitive and suc-



Athletic Director / Head Football Coach
Ken Cribb

cessful. Some of our coaches coach more than one sport so they are very dedicated to doing right by the kids.

“Our coaches are good role models. We stress that it’s more than just wins and losses. We want to win but we want to build character in our athletes. It’s more important they leave here ready to contribute to our community. Working hard in sports, being a part of a team, helps to develop that in our athletes.”

Avoiding major turnover in the coaching ranks is vital to building a strong athletic program. Johnsonville may have coaches leave occasionally but most stay and build. The only new varsity coaches on the staff this year are in cheerleading where **Shanda Poston** and **Paige Hayes** will team up as the coaches.

Walter Clark is expected back as the head softball coach with **Sally Coker** being a key assistant. Coker also assists in volleyball with head coach Latima Hannah.

Casey Geter is the boys basketball coach and works with the track team in the spring. **Carson Carroll** is the head baseball coach and a football assistant coach.

Jakob Marlowe and **Joedy Cook** assist with the football team while **Peyton Hill** assists in football, basketball and baseball.

Kacey Lambert heads up cross country and girls track while **Brian Welch** coaches girls

and four touchdowns.

Oceanside did graduate 17 seniors. They will return seven starters this season. They will have a strong defensive front led by Appalachian State defensive end verbal commitment **Sawyer Arnold** (6-4,220) and **Mike Jones**. Arnold finished with over 20 sacks, and Jones, who also flips to the offensive line had nearly the same.

The Sharks were coached by interim head coach **John Patterson** and he had no desire to continue on after the season. **Brent LaPrad**, who had been

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tennis in the fall and boys golf in the spring. Former boys basketball coach **Harris Avant**, though retired, does assist with the football program as the b-team head coach. **MD Coleman** also is a football assistant.

coaching the defense was named the head coach in January.

After being named the head coach, Coach LaPrad shared his elation. “This is the best high school football coaching job in the state of South Carolina, and it truly is my dream job,” said Coach LaPrad. “I want my 8-year-old son SJ o one day play for the Landsharks and graduate from Oceanside Collegiate Academy. I can’t wait to get to work and continue building something special at OCA, on and off the field.”

Dorchester Academy returns alumni coaches

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
St. George – Dorchester Academy had a pretty good run in all of its sports during the 2024-25 school year. With all of the varsity head coaches returning, the Raiders are looking for another big year for ’25-26.

“We’re returning a veteran varsity coaching staff across all of Raider athletics who understand teaching and coaching the entire-student athlete,” said Dorchester athletic director and football head coach **Michael Nelson**. “Our coaches get to know our student-athletes on a deeper level that allows them to develop our athletes as better people as well as athletes.

“We are fortunate to have a group of coaches who understand our kids and truly maximize their potentials. It’s going to be a great year across the board for DA athletics.”

Nelson returns for his third season at Dorchester. He led the Raiders to an 8-3 record last year as they reached the semifinals of the SCISA Class A state playoffs.

Returning to assist Nelson are **Lance Brownlee**, **Austin Mizzell**, **Brady Cook** and **Nick Chinnners**. The newcomer to the staff is **Larry Windham**.

Justin McClure will return for his second year as softball head coach. There is only one way for the Raiders to top his first season and that is by winning

Palmetto Christian moving up in classification

By Neill Kirkpatrick
Special to the HSSR
Mt. Pleasant – The 2023/24 athletic year for Palmetto Christian Academy was a solid one as several teams qualified for the playoffs with girls’ basketball and volleyball both making deep runs in their respective tournaments and boys swimming and x-country placing second and third at their respective state AAA meets.

“It has been exciting to see our student/athletes and coaches putting together good seasons. It shows how our programs are growing and getting better. We are excited to add wrestling this coming year,” said Athletic Director **Dale Hoover**.

Success in athletics can help in a lot of ways for SCISA schools and one way is larger enrollment but that also can change your classification, PCA will moving up to AAAA in every sport but football and boys’ soccer.

Coach Hoover on moving, “ It will likely be our toughest year in a while as we are moving up to 4A in all sports except football and boys’ soccer

Florence Area, continued from pg. 12

The rest of the staff includes offensive line coach **Harrison Terry**, defensive line coach **Maliek Samuel**, linebackers coach **Andrew Bethea**, defensive backs coach Lindsey Robertson, wide receivers coach **Jalin Dixon** and running backs coach **Justin Evans**. Dixon and Robertson are the only holdovers.

“Our staff is a strong mix of youthful energy and veteran experience,” Coach Wilson said. “While we are mostly a young coaching staff, we also have a few older coaches who bring valuable experience and leadership to the team. Impressively, all but one member of our staff has collegiate playing experi-

Lamar, continued from pg.12

last competition-type thing. The kids have been showing up and getting after it. Everyone is excited and everything is going good so far.”

Lamar opens its season on the road against **Darlington** on August 22.

Boyd is the only newcomer to the Lamar head coaching staff. **Carlos Burgess** returns as the ath-

the state title.

The Raiders reached the best-of-3 AA state championship series. They were swept by **Carolina Academy**, losing 7-6 and 5-2. Still, Dorchester finished with a 19-6 overall record and return most of its starting lineup for the upcoming year.

Dorchester reached the championship series by rolling through its bracket in the state tournament. The Raiders defeated **Andrew Jackson Academy** 15-0, **The King’s Academy** 5-1 and **Lee Academy** 15-5.

Brent Jackson returns as the baseball head coach after leading the Raiders to the semifinals o the AA state playoffs.

Longtime girls basketball head coach **Callie McClure** returns as does boys basketball head coach **Nick McAlhany**.

The Dorchester girls just missed out on playing for the AA state title. The Raiders lost to **Laurens Academy** 44-43 in overtime in the semifinals. Dorchester finished with an 18-8 record.

The boys team went 10-13 and earned a berth in the playoffs.

Elizabeth Huff is back for her second year leading the volleyball program.

Dorchester will offer a new sport in the fall in cross country. **Jason Britt** will be the head coach. **Leah Owens** is the cheer coach.

where we will stay at AAA. There will be a learning curve but I believe our kids and coaches will adapt. It may take us a while to enjoy the success we had at our former classifications but we will work hard to make the transition as quickly as possible.”

“I expect us to give great effort and to compete at a high level as we continue to grow as an athletic program. It is all about getting to the heart behind the jersey and our coaches do a great job of getting the most from our athletes,” Hoover continued.

Coach Hoover also coaches the schools cross-country and the Track and Field teams. His boys x-country team brought home the bronze medal from the AAA state meet while the boys track and field team finished seventh at the state meet. The girls placed 16th.

Head girls coach **Raygon Hendrix** led her to their best finish yet as they advanced into the second round of the AAA tournament. Unfortunately, they ran into six-time state champion Hilton Head Christian in the semis. They finished the year at 16-
See Palmetto Christian, pg. 42

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AAA Feature, continued from pg. 6

hands also catching 22 passes for 379 yards and seven touchdowns.

After beating Dillon in the AAA playoffs last season, **Oceanside Collegiate** went on to win a state title with an impressive 35-17 win over **BHP** at South Carolina State University.

The Sharks will also be a contender in AAA this year as long as they keep very talented junior quarterback **Aiden Manavian** (6-0,185) healthy. In the championship game last December Manavian was lights out completing 21-of-26 passes for 326 yards

post early in the ’24 season.

He takes over for **Jody Jenerette**, who announced his retirement following last season’s 5-6 campaign.

Dave Moore will be the Knights’ offensive coordinator while Mike Jones will be the defensive coordinator. **Andrew Neimeyer** will be the junior varsity head coach and will work with running backs on the varsity level.

The other assistants will be **Layton Ricker**, **JD Rice** and **Ty Sutherland**.

wrestling and Wilks will be the boys golf coach.

Burgess has yet to hire a boys and girls track and field coach.



Beckwith, Sibert focused on continued success

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Dorchester—Jeff Beckwith is one of the few Superintendents in the state of South Carolina who also serves as the head soccer coach at **Woodland High School** located within Dorchester Four School District in rural Dorchester County.

“Our coaches are an integral part of our high school and district because of the life changing impact they are able to have on our student athletes at Woodland High School,” said Superintendent Beckwith. “Coaches at Woodland High are second to none in their dedication and determination in developing young men and women aren’t just great at sports but also great in the game of life,” said Coach Beckwith.

“As important as our coaches are, our athletic director (**Ty Sibert**) is just as important, modeling his expectations for his coaches through his own drive and commitment for the students of Woodland High School and Dorchester Four,” said Superintendent Bestwick. “Coach Sibert, is pivotal in providing our coaches and programming with direction and the appropriate support and resources for everyone in our athletic programs to experience success.”

Ty Sibert is the athletic director at Woodland High and he has worked in the program for 18 years. In addition, to being a hard- working athletic director he also serves as the defensive coordinator on the football team. Coach Sibert is also a past honoree of the *HSSR* School Administrator of the Year Award.

“One of my roles as athletic director is to take as

Star receiver Jaemin Pinckney commits to play football at South Florida

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher
Dorchester—Many prep football players aspire to be major college scholarship football players, but very few, by percentage, ever get the opportunity, so it is was quite a big moment for **Woodland High** outside linebacker **Jaemin Pinckney** (6-4,217) to commit to the South Florida Bulls football program in late June.

“The South Florida coaches told me that they evaluated a lot of outside linebackers in the state of South Carolin and by far Jaemin was the most talented player at the position they saw in the state,” said Woodland head coach **Eddie Ford**. “I certainly agree with them.

“Jaemin went to a camp at South Florida in early June and that experience verified what the South Florida coaches had seen on film,” said Coach Ford. “They extended an official visit to Jaemin at the end of June and it was on that visit he was offered by South Florida and he accepted the offer.

“Jaemin is so athletic, and he has great length with excellent lateral movement a linebacker needs,” said Coach Ford. “He has been a starter in our program since mid-way through his freshman season. He is still growing into his body. He has a very high football I-Q. He is projected to be 6-6 and 245 pounds before he finishes his college career.

“Jaemin’s senior leadership is needed in order for this team to win a region title and make a deep run in the play-offs,” said Coach Ford. “I also hope

much work off the plates of my coaches, so they can focus on coaching and helping lead their players in the right way,” said Coach Sibert. “Helping our student athletes develop on and off the field is very important here at Woodland High.”

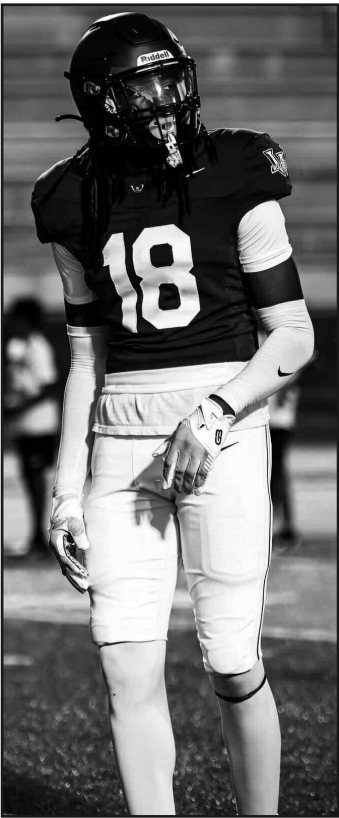
Coach Sibert has recently announced the hiring of two ne head varsity coaches for the 2025-26 school. **Isabella Wendler** will be the new girls’ soccer coach. Also, **Henry Berry**, who spent the last seven seasons as a high school basketball coach in Georgia will be the new boys’ varsity basketball coach at Woodland High.

“We are pleased to add Coach Wendler and Coach Berry to our coaching family at Woodland High,” said Coach Sibert. “They both bring a lot of experience to share with our athletes.”

Returning varsity head coaches include football coach **Eddie Ford**, starting his 23rd season in coaching. Baseball coach **Keith Lowman** returns and the **Stratford** graduate has close to a decade of working with baseball players at the school. **Austin Jefferies** is also back as the head girls’ basketball coach.

Softball coach **Kim Reaves** returns after having a very successful season in 2025, winning a region title, and making a good showing in the AA softball paly-offs. Colleen Martin returns to manage the boy’s and girls’ cross-country program. Supt. **Jeff Beckwith** returns to keep building the boys’ soccer program and **Andrew Stanley** is back as the head girls’ soccer coach.

Vic Simon is back as the boy’s tennis coach and



Jaemin Pinckney

he gets chosen for the Shrine Bowl because he has worked hard and he deserves the opportunity.”

The *HSSR* caught up with Pinckney to ask him about his decision to take his talents to South Florida. “First of all, it feels great to get the opportunity to play at the next level,” he said. “Over the years I have put in a lot of work. I need to thank my Uncle BJ who worked me out a lot and also thanks to Coach Ford and Coach Sibert for pushing me so hard.

“They helped me not only to be a better football player, but a better person, even a better man,” said Pinckney. “I am very grateful for their support and encouragement.”

Pinckney has strong goals for his senior season at Woodland High. “I want to help my team win a region title, and after that I want to help them keep winning all the way to a state championship,” he said. “I can’t think of a better way to finish my high school career.

“I chose South Florida because the coaches had a genuine interest in me and I think they will help develop not only into a better football player but also a better person, and a better man,” said Pinckney. “I think I will have a good chance to play early also.”

Last year Pinckney had 87 tackles, 9 TFL, three fumble recoveries and he had one defensive touchdown.

Pinckney is a versatile athlete. He also spots start on offense and he will be moved from wide receiver to tight end this season while still starting at linebacker. He is also a key member of the Woodland High track team. He is a long jumper, triple jumper, ran a leg on the 4X100 relay team and he is also a 200- meter sprinter.

Two other rising seniors at Woodland High are receiving college interest at this time. **Lamonte Furray** (5-9,165) is a speedy corner back who was invited to camps at **James Madison** and **Wofford** over the summer. Furray had 45 tackles, five interceptions, and he scored one defensive touchdown last season.

The other rising senior getting college looks is offensive lineman **Tyreon Summerland** (6-2,315) and he will be a three-year starter for the Wolverines. **SC State** and **Mercer** are two schools keeping in contact with him.

The Woodland football team will participate in a four-way scrimmage with Hilton Head, Silver Bluff, and Saluda on August, 7. N August, 15 the Wolver-



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Gladys Summers will once again head coach girl’s tennis. **Sommer Troutman** is back to coach boy’s and girl’s track. **Wylie McCall** is back as the head volleyball coach and she also serves as the assistant athletic director. **Tabria Cochran** is the athletic trainer.

The football team assistant coaches include of-fensive coordinator **Brooks Burnett** who is also the strength coach for the Wolverines. Former **Calhoun Falls** star **Kelly Bryant** coaches’ quarter-backs and **Jermine Downing** mentors the offensive line.

Austin Jefferies works with running backs, **Keith Lowman** coaches’ wide receivers, **Roger Gant** works with the defensive line, while **Calvin Lining** handles linebackers. **Seth Patrick** is the assistant for outside linebackers and **Quincy Clark** is the defensive backs coach. **Josh Coley** works with video.

Michael White is the Principal of Woodland High School.

Hannah-Pamplico athletics continue to compete

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Pamplico – As is the case with many small high school athletic programs, sharing athletes is a necessity in order to compete across the board.

Often, athletes at small schools play multiple sports. Many will play two sports and some will participate in three sports.

Hannah-Pamplico is able to compete as a Class A athletics program because many of the athletes play on more than one athletic team during the school year. Athletic director **Trey Woodberry** credits those athletes will shouldering the load in terms of athletics.

“We have a good many boys and girls that play three sports and quite a few that play at least two sports,” said Woodberry, who is also the head football and baseball coach at the school. “As a whole, our teams compete very well and a major reason is that our best athletes play more than one sport. We have great kids here, kids that love sports and love to compete.”

Another big reason for athletic success is stability within the varsity coach staff. And, those coaches are constantly working to improve their program.

“Our coaches work really hard and do the best they can for our athletes,” Woodberry said.

Batesburg-Leesville returns entire football staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Batesburg-Leesville – When **Greg Lawson** took over as the football head coach at **Batesburg-Leesville High School** four years ago, his goal was to get a staff in place that was completely bought into the program.

He may have just done that as he returns all of his assistant coaches from last year’s team that went 12-1 and did not lose until the quarterfinal round of the AA state playoffs.

“I learned from some pretty good coaches that it’s best for the program when you hire coaches that it means something to them,” Lawson said. “Most of my coaches played here, went to school here, it meant something to them. They have a stake in it. When they come to work, they enjoy coming to work. They love the kids.

“I’ve been blessed with a special group. None of them want to leave and they are happy here. There is a sense of community pride with most of them being in the community for a long time. They have a lot of knowledge of the kids in the community.”

Rob Bouknight, who led the Panthers baseball team to the AA state championship last year, is back as the offensive coordinator. **Gary Adams** is the defensive coordinator.

The other offensive coaches are **Brandon Cumbee** and **Bryan Cotney** with the line, and **David Prince** with the wide receivers.

Defensively, **Arromus Harris** is coaching the line, **Andy Harris** the linebackers, and **Jake Getson** and **Shane Bryant** the defensive backs.

“They are not only good coaches but they’re good people. They are good examples for our athletes to learn from.”

Woodberry reports the hiring of two new head coaches for the coming year. **Michael Manning** will assume the duties as varsity girls basketball coach. Manning is a former head boys coach at Lake City High and was a boys assistant last season at Hannah-Pamplico.

Adam Brown has been hired as the cross country coach and will head up both the boys and girls teams.

Also new to the staff is **Will Jeffords**, who head up the b-team football program and serve as an assistant on the varsity. Jeffords is a Hannah-Pamplico graduate.

The other varsity teams will have returning head coaches. **Jimmy Williams** will coach varsity boys basketball and track. **Rusty Turner** heads up the boys and girls tennis teams and **Jay Watson** is the boys golf coach.

Dawn Burgoyne is the volleyball coach and **Amber Knight** is the softball coach. The softball team won a state title three years ago and is a perennial state contender. The boys basketball team also has been a successful playoff team, along with baseball and football.

The boys golf team finished as the Class A state runner-up this past spring.

Chris Whitt is a volunteer assistant.

The Panthers have a veteran roster with 23 seniors and have a lot of major pieces returning. However, they are looking for someone to replace **Tanner Watkins**, who was a 3-year starter at quarterback.

“The kids have done a good job showing up this summer,” Lawson said. “We’re just going to see how things go at quarterback.”

Perhaps Prince’s most significant role is as the head of the strength and conditioning program for the entire athletic department. It is his second year in charge.

Amber Hartley returns as the softball coach, while Adams returns for his second season as the girls soccer head coach. Charles Holloway will be in his first year leading the boys soccer team.

Eric Gambrell returns as the athletic director and will also be in charge of the girls track and field team. Lawson will be the boys golf coach.

The cross country teams will have new head coaches. **Johnell Bell** will be in charge of the boys, while **Heather Eargle** will be the girls head coach.

Erick Shick is back for his second season as volleyball head coach. **Nicole Yaworski** returns as the girls tennis coach.

In the winter sports, both of the basketball coaches return. **William Ash** led the Panthers boys to a deep run in the AA state playoffs, and **DeVeto Johnson** returns for his second season leading the girls program.

Zach Howerton is back after starting up the wrestling program last season. He’ll be the boys

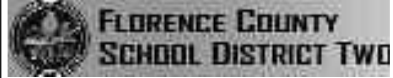
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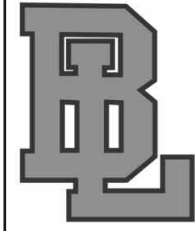

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head coach while Brian **Hall** will be in charge of the boys program.

Alex Richardson will hold down two spots as the head coach for archery and clay shooting.

Ashley Fort is the head of the competition cheer and the football cheer programs.

The athletic trainer is **Kayla Cotney**.

Positions are still open for boys tennis and boys track and field.

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Hilton Head Prep set for more athletic success

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Hilton Head – There are few athletic departments in South Carolina better than the one at Hilton Head Prep.

While participating in the SCISA ranks, Hilton Head Prep is consistently contending for state championships across the board.

Athletic director **Shon Hardy** credits the coaching staff for a lot of the success.

“I believe we have an exceptional coaching staff at every level. They continue to impress with their professionalism, preparation, and commitment to our student-athletes,” Hardy reports. “As a department, we’ve experienced a great deal of success. Our message remains consistent: build authentic relationships with student-athletes, commit to continuous growth and improvement as a coach, and foster a positive playing experience—one rooted in individual development, team unity, and the life lessons learned through sport.

“Each year, Prep Athletics begins with the same core emphasis and expectations for our coaches and student-athletes: work hard, be prepared, compete with enthusiasm, and give your best when called upon.”

This mindset helped the Dolphins achieve another remarkable year, highlighted by five team state championships, four team state runner-up finishes, two relay team state titles, and five individual state champions in various sports.

Consistency among the coaching staff fosters success. Prep has experienced very little head coaching turnover in recent years. There will be, however, new coaches in the sport of basketball. Taking over the highly successful boys program

will be **Michael Strickland**. The boys program has won three consecutive state titles. Johnny Campbell will step in as the varsity girls coach.

Chris Wells is set to return as the baseball coach after winning a state title this past spring. Hardy will head up the growing cross country program and **Doug McFadden** returns as the head football coach.

Chris Trembly is the boys golf coach and **Kyle Putkonen** is the girls golf coach. **Meredith DiMuzio** heads up the cheerleading program.

Mark Newman directs the sailing program and **Jeff Rehling** returns as the softball coach. **Risa McMillan** is the girls soccer coach and **Lukas O’Grady** is the boys soccer coach. The girls program has won three consecutive state titles.

Cass Tokarski is the swim coach and **Michael Arnold** coaches boys and girls tennis. **Amber Swisher** is the head volleyball coach.

While winning is the ultimate goal in any sports competition, Hardy stresses the importance of overall growth and development of the student/athletes.

“Even more meaningful than the trophies, however, was witnessing our athletes come together across all sports—forming bonds, building team spirit, and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Hardy expects the winning to continue this coming year.

“Next year promises to be an exciting one as many of our younger athletes step into more prominent and leadership roles,” he said. “We expect to remain strong in several sports and highly competitive in others. I’m looking forward to watching the continued growth of our

been successful. We continue to strive to be better and work on things that we are not as strong as we’d like to be. We don’t want to take those things for granted.”

Smith and Berkner are two of the three coordinators working for Peduzzi. Berkner is the special teams coordinator, while Smith is the defensive coordinator and the assistant head coach. The offensive coordinator is **John Haupt**, who also serves as the quarterbacks coach and the strength coach.

The rest of the staff is made up of **Shatone Powers**, **Ronnie Coolbaugh** and **Luke Guess**. Powers will coach both the defensive secondary and the wide receivers, Coolbaugh will coach both the offensive linemen and defensive linemen, and Guess will be helping with the offensive line.

What Peduzzi really likes about his assistant coaches is what they represent off of the field.

“We are hard-working men of faith, solid people, husbands and fathers,” he said.

After losing 17 seniors from the 2023 championship team, Hilton Head Christian had to retool a

assistant **Peyton Watson**.

“We have a great group of men on our football staff,” Minton said. “It has been a loyal and faithful group to our school, church (**Florence Baptist Temple**), team and community. “Five of the assistants played here, three of them played for me, so there is a lot of continuity and respect for our program.

“They are good, Godly men who set the example we want for our kids at Florence Christian School.”

Florence Christian, continued from pg. 12

The Eagles football team went 6-5 last season, losing in the first round of the SCISA AAAA state playoffs.

Minton is being assisted by defensive coordinator **Chris Coker** with **Mark Drummond** the offensive line coach, **Garrett Coker** the quarterback and wide receivers coach, **Michael Smith** the defensive line coach and **Jarrett Vernon** the defensive backs coach. The only newcomer to the staff is offensive

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bit last year. After starting the year with a 3-3 record, the Eagles won four straight games before falling to **Wilson Hall** 21-9 in the semifinals of the AAA state playoffs.

Hilton Head Christian has a lot of experienced

See HHCA, pg. 71

Minton guided the girls basketball team to a 15-10 record and a share of the Region III-AAA title with eventual state champion **Pee Dee Academy**. Florence Christian won its first-round game in the state tournament before falling to **Hilton Head Prep** in the quarterfinals.

Woerner preps for first season as football coach

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor
Saluda – **Greg Woerner** began to play tackle football when he was in the fourth grade. Pretty much from that initial crack of the pads, there is one thing he has wanted to do: become a football head coach.

Woerner has seen that dream come to fruition in the last few months. He is now the head coach at **Saluda High School** and his first game is at home against Crescent on August 22.

“It means a lot to me, that’s for sure,” said Woerner, who became the head coach after longtime Tigers head coach **Stewart Young** took the **Lexington** job. “I’ve been around game my whole life and this is a life-long goal. To finally see it come true, that’s a blessing for sure.”

Woerner was the offensive coordinator under Young, and he will have his own offensive coordinator in **Thomas Coleman**. Woerner will coach the quarterbacks and running backs, while Coleman will coach the offensive linemen. **Ed Chariker** will be coaching the offensive line as well. **Daniel Stone** is coaching the wide receivers, and **Drew Towery** is the tight end coach.

Daryl Smith broke in as the Tigers’ defensive coordinator last season as well, and Woerner has retained him to run the unit this season. **Reggie Phillips** will coach the defensive backs, **Mark Minchew** and **Raquon Hartley** will both coach the linebackers, and **Tommy Strickland** will coach the defensive linemen.

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Oceanside athletic program is tops in the state

By David Shelton
Senior Writer
Mt. Pleasant – A lot of factors go into being the top high school program in the state and **Oceanside Collegiate** has a lot of those winning factors.

The South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association recently released the winners of the Carlisle Cup, which recognizes the top athletic programs in each of the six classifications statewide. Points are accumulated through success in state playoff competition with state championships accounting for 100 points.

Oceanside Collegiate was the top performing program among all classifications, winning eight state championships with three state runner-up finishes. OCA also is ranked No.1 in the Maxpreps Cup rankings.

“I think our school model gives us an opportunity to have quality coaches who are not teachers, allowing teachers to teach and coaches to coach,” said OCA athletic director **Mark Meyer**, who also is the varsity girls soccer coach. “We are able to hire the best coaches because we don’t have to fill teaching positions. And our coaches are very dedicated to the kids.

“Another huge factor is the dedication and commitment by our student/athletes. Our kids, in all sports, work hard, They take their sport very seri-

The only newcomers to the staff are Hartley and Minchew. Hartley is a recent college graduate who played at Saluda, while Minchew came to Saluda from **Gilbert**.

Woerner, who is 38 years old and in his 14th season as a coach, feels like the transition to being a head coach is going well.

Woerner knows he is following an outstanding coach in Young, who guided Saluda to the 2019 AA state title. However, he isn’t going to allow that to be his focus.

“I have big shoes to fill, that’s for sure,” Woerner said. “It’s like I tell everybody, ‘I can only control what I can control.’ That’s the message I give to my players.

“I’ve learned a lot from Coach Young. My goal is to build on his success that he started. I’m looking forward to it.”

Jeannette Wilder returns in her dual role as athletic director and girls basketball head coach. Saluda is coming off a 15-5 season in which it won the Region 2-AA title.

Hannah Towery will be back as the softball head coach after guiding the Tigers to the AA state championship series. They were swept by **East Clarendon** in the best-of-3 series.

Jimmy Kinard returns for his fifth season as the boys basketball coach. The Tigers finished the season with a 15-9 record and were third in the region with a 7-4 record.

Meredith Wertz returns as the volleyball head See Saluda, pg. 69

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ously and you can see that by their involvement in the various club and travel off-season programs.”

Oceanside Collegiate also employs a full-time strength and conditioning coach who works with athletes in all sports. **Brian Coleman** holds that position.

“We are very fortunate to have one coach that handles all of our athletes, every sport,” Meyer said. “The kids are always working to become the best conditioned athletes. The weight room is always full.”

Consistency among the coaching ranks is another strength. Meyers took over as athletic director five years ago and has had very little change since then.

“We had several new coaches in that first year but we’ve had very few over the last four years,” Meyer said. “Our athletes know who their coach is going to be and our coaches work hard to build the culture in their own programs.”

The coaching staff should return intact for the 2025-26 school year. **Alecia Robinson** is the softball coach and **Britt Reames** is the head baseball coach. **Quinton Hollis** is the varsity boys basketball coach while **Brent LaPrad** is set to begin his first season as the head football coach. **Mandy Harrison** coaches the girls basketball team.

Courtney Beauch directs the swimming pro-

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gram and **Rocky Catalano** coaches the golf teams. **Jennifer Fort** is the girls volleyball coach and **Shawn Harris** is the tennis coach. **Tom Harris** handles boys lacrosse and **Ashley McCulloch** is the girls lacrosse coach. **Doug Smith** is the boys volleyball coach.

Collin Phillips is the boys soccer coach and **Tracy Yancey** coaches cross country and track and field.

Strong coaching, community leads to success

By David Shelton
Senior Writer

Abbeville – As one of the more rabid fan bases in the state of high school sports, **Abbeville High** athletics has as much community support as any school in the state.

It truly is all about the “A” when it comes to supporting the Panthers. The school’s athletic director, **Maggie Jameson**, is well aware of that support and says it plays a major role in the overall athletic success.

“Abbeville has the most supportive fans who come out to events by the bus load and are always there to support out athletes in every way possible,” says Jameson, who is entering her fourth year as athletic director. “Without the community, the fans, the businesses, we could not run our athletic department.”

Along with community support, Jameson sees a coaching staff that works extra hard to give their athletes the best opportunity to compete and win championships. And, coaching at Abbeville is about more than wins and losses.

“Our coaches do a phenomenal job of not only coaching our athletes in their respective sports, but also coaching them in the game of life,” she says. “They work so hard to ensure that we succeed on the

field, on the court, on the mat, and in our community.”

Jameson says the ability to maintain the varsity head coaching roster also plays a key role in success. The longer a coach can be in the program, the better opportunity to establish a winning culture.

“Abbeville High School is proud to welcome back the majority of our outstanding coaching staff for the upcoming year,” she said. “We’re also excited to introduce a few new and returning faces who will strengthen our athletic program.

“With the dedication of our returning coaches and the fresh energy from our new additions, we look forward to continuing the strong tradition of excellence in Abbeville athletics.”

Abbeville will have two new varsity head coaches for the 2025-26 school year. Former volleyball coach **Anne Marie New** will take over as the girls tennis coach this fall. Taking over the cross country and track and field program will be **Jeremiah Boyd**, who

See **Abbeville**, pg. 58



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Gray Collegiate looks forward to 2025-26 season

By WORTHY EVANS
Staff Writer

Columbia - One year into **Gray Collegiate Academy**’s move from the 2A classification to 4A, the transition process is in the rear-view mirror.

Last year was also **Kevin Heise**’s first full year as athletic director, and while the soccer and cross country coach had the challenge of taking on yet another job for the school, he and the school finished the year on a strong note.

“It was a great learning experience for me as a full-time AD. I’m certainly a better AD than I was a year ago at this time,” he said. “We had a very good year going from 2A to 4A. Regardless of classifications, we were sixth overall in the Carlisle Cup in Class 4A, and that speaks volumes for our coaching staff, student athletes, and our commitment to the process.”

The Carlisle Cup is awarded to the most outstanding athletic program in each classification. Gray Collegiate finished second in its final year as a 2A school.

Gray’s high finish despite its football team receiving a postseason ban for fielding an ineligible player is telling of the strength of the school’s other programs.

“That our football team did not get to participate in the playoffs, but if they had our finish would have been a little higher,” Heise said. “It is what it is. We learned a few things that set ups back, but we’re willing to soldier forward.”

The school’s boys and girls basketball teams both finished second in Region 4-4A and both reached the third round of the playoffs. Girls head coach **Brandon Wallace**, who won a state championship in 2023, returns. Boys head coach **Carlos Powell** was recently let go to make way for a familiar face.

Dion Bethea, Gray Collegiate’s first boys basket-

ball coach in the school’s history, returns to the program.

Bethea led the program before Gray joined the High School League for the 2014-2015 school year. Since being eligible for the postseason in 2016-2017, Bethea led the team to 273 wins and six Class 2A state championships, including three in a row from 2022-2024.

Bethea, who spent the 2024-2025 season as an assistant at Georgia Southern, replaces Powell, a former USC standout who coached at **Wilson** for four seasons before succeeding Bethea. Powell led the War Eagles to a 19-8 record.

“Anytime you get a coach who won the way he did and wants to come back in the program, you take him,” Heise said. “When he took the job at **Georgia Southern** he had been scratching an itch. He had always wanted to get into college, but his family stayed in Columbia and I guess it was homesickness. It couldn’t have been a better time for us and a better time for us. He put the mark of excellence on the program.”

Gray Collegiate ended the year strong, with the softball team winning its second state championship in three years and first at the 4A level. The girls track and field team won its second straight state title.

Heise’s boys soccer team (24-4) won the region title and reached the lower state final. Heise, a 34-year coaching veteran, also won his 600th soccer game this year.

Heise’s wife, **Emily Heise**, won her 100th soccer game last year and led the War Eagles to a 22-3 record, a region title and a second-round appearance in the state playoffs.

As for the football program, Heise said the team is in good hands with **De’Angelo Bryant** in his sec-

See **Gray Collegiate**, pg. 58

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Wardlaw coaches announced for 2025-26 year

By: Gerald Doolittle
Staff Writer

Johnston, S.C. – **Wardlaw Academy** Athletic Director **Kathy James** has announced the Patriot coaching slots for the 2025-26 school year.

Mark Rodgers will return for his 14th year to head the Varsity Football team. His coaching record at Wardlaw stands at 103-45. His **Patriot** teams brought home the **Championship** trophy in 2012, 2016 and 2017. Rodgers will be assisted by **Will Padgett, Lang Rodgers and Mason Burgess**.

Lauren Williams Givens and **Lexi Quarles** will coach the **Varsity Volleyball** teams.

W.W. King coaching slots named for 2025-26

BY: Gerald Doolittle
Staff Writer

Batesburg-Leesville, S.C. – The coaching roster at **W.W. King Academy** for the 2025-26 school year has been announced by Athletic Director, **Kathy Gibson**.

The big change coming will be the **Varsity football** slot. **Brian Kneee**, who is an alum, will replace **Zach Matthews** who had been head coach since 2013. Kneee will also be the **Varsity Baseball** coach in 2026.

Scott Buzhardt will be the head coach for **Middle School football, basketball and baseball**.

Laurens Academy returns entire coaching staff

By Dennis Brunson
hssr.com Associate Editor

Laurens – **Laurens Academy** returns all of its head coaches for the 2025-26 school year and why not? The Crusaders won one state championship, were the runners-up in two other sports and were highly competitive across the board.

“We had a very good year all around,” said athletic director and boys basketball head coach **Travis Plowden**, positions he has held for the past 14 years. “Our coaches are a veteran group and most of them have been here or been coaching for a long time. Having continuity is very important in an athletic department. The professionalism our coaches show and the amount of time they put in is unbelievable.”

Shannon McGee will be back for her 10th season as the volleyball head coach. The Crusaders made history last season, becoming the first girls team in school history to win three consecutive state championships. They will go for four in a row this season after not being deterred by the move from SCISA Class A to AA last season.

The Lauens Academy football team will try to build off of its surprising run to the 8-man state championship game. The Crusaders finished 9-4 under **Jolly Doolittle**, who will be in his third year

The Cheer team will be coached by **Ashleigh Forrest** and the **Cross Country** by **Amber Weaghtington**.

The **Girls Basketball** teams will be coached by **Kristina Graves** and assisted by **LeAnne Hillk**. The Lady Patriots were **SCISA Class A** runners-up last season. The **Boys Basketball** teams will be coached by **Austin Spurlock**.

The **Softball** program will be coached by **Katie Yonce**. Her assisted coaches will be **David Hill, Taylor Rodgers and Gracie Kervin**. **Morgan Burgess** will coach **Baseball**.

Kathy Gibson will be the **Varsity Volleyball** coach for the second straight season. She has yet to announce the Middle School coach.

Jessica Anderson will return for her second year as **Varsity** and **Middle School Girls Basketball**.

Dennis Gibson will be the head coach for **Varsity Boys basketball**.

Allen Guy will return to coach the **Varsity Softball** team. His **Lady Knights** were the **SCISA Class A** runners-up last season.

Doug Massey will again coach the **Middle School softball** team.

as head coach. Laurens upset defending state champion **Jefferson Davis Academy** 34-28 in the semifinals before losing to **Richard Winn** in the state title game.

“We got to the championship game for the first time in almost 15 years,” Plowden said. “That semifinal win over Jefferson Davis was one of the more spectacular wins in a long time.”

The girls basketball team was the other LA team to reach the championship round. **Jason Marlett** will try to get them there again and hopefully hoist the championship trophy this time around. The Crusaders went 18-8 under Marlett, who will be in his 12th season as head coach. He led the Crusaders to consecutive state championships in 2018 and 2019.

The boys basketball team went 7-18 under Plowden but did enough to reach the AA state playoffs. He coached LA to a state crown in 2015.

Frankie Dunaway will be back for his second season in charge of the softball program. He led the Crusaders to a 5-11 overall record and they went 1-2 in the AA state tournament.

Darryl Halbert will be returning for his 12th season as baseball head coach, having won one state title. **Tiffany Tarver** will be in her fifth season as the cheerleading coach.



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Seawell’s Midlands Feature Page

Midlands football teams to watch when fall begins

By WORTHY EVANS
Special to the HSSR

Columbia - Summer vacation

draws to a close, and with it comes the opening of preseason football camps across the state. In the Midlands two schools immediately come to mind when it comes to football: 5A Division I power **Dutch Fork** and SCISA 4A favorite **Hammond**.

Between those two teams are 31 state championships—22 for the Skyhawks (16 since 2006) and 9 for Dutch Fork (all since 2013). While both Hammond and Dutch Fork have firmly established winning traditions, both schools face the challenge of replenishing rosters following the loss of many senior starters and playmakers.

Plenty of teams besides Dutch Fork and Hammond will be interesting to watch this fall.

Irmo played for the 5A Division II state championship and while it loses phenomenal quarterback A.J. Brand to graduation, the Yellow Jackets still have plenty of weapons to remain a force in Midlands football.

Two other 5A schools, **River Bluff** and **Ridge View**, look to improve on their successful 2024 efforts, as will 4A schools **A.C. Flora** and **Gilbert**. On the 2A level **Fairfield Central** fell two scores short of playing for the 2A state championship, and **Batesburg-Leesville** rediscovered its football tradition with a great regular season and a decent run in the playoffs.

For now, the greatest promise this time of year has to offer is that every team in the Midlands is 0-0, and from that point forward everything is up for grabs, and any team could well grab it, no matter what they did the year before.

Dutch Fork (13-0, 5-0 Region 4-5A)

The Silver Foxes’ 35-21 victory over Summerville in the 5A Division I state championship game was the school’s third straight state title and ninth since head coach **Tom Knotts** took over the team in 2010.

“The climb to the top of the mountain is much easier than staying on the top. Trust me on that,” Knotts said after the win. “We’ve got to find ways to innovate, keep them working, keep them motivated. I’ve said many times that success is a double-edged sword. It can give you a lot of confidence but it can also destroy work ethic.”

Knotts touched on a critical time in 2023, when a senior-depleted team struggled in the early season but eventually came together and defeated Region 5A rival White Knoll for the state championship.

Dutch Fork may be in a similar position this fall. The Silver Foxes lost 30 seniors and lose up to nine starters on offense and up to seven starters on

defense. Quarterback **Ethan Offing** (2,974 passing yards, 24 TDs; 451 rushing yards, 8 TDs) returns, as does a core of experienced offensive linemen, but the Silver Foxes will have to find successors for running back **Maurice Anderson** (159 1,177 yards, 22 TDs; 40 catches, 521 yards, 3 TDs), three tight ends and four wide receivers, including wideout **Boykin Bickley** (60 catches, 1,160 yards, 9 TDs).

Linebacker **Raleigh Salters** (83 tackles, 15 TFLs, 4 sacks, 2 INTs) returns along with defensive end **Julian Walker** (50 tackles, 19 TFLs, 11 sacks), but Dutch Fork will have to find new talent along the defensive line and in the secondary, which lost **Elgin Sessions** (43 tackles, 4 TFLs, 3 INTs, 14 PBUs) but returns **Mario Anderson** (49 tackles, 2 TFLs, 1 INT, 8 PBUs).

Hammond (13-0, 7-0 SCISA Region 1-4A)

The Skyhawks won its eighth straight state championship, and **Jon Wheeler** won his fourth straight state title as a head coach. The Skyhawks, needed some serious veteran leadership in beating Porter-Gaud 28-21.

With the game tied at 21 late in the game, **Porter-Gaud** had the ball inside the 20-yard line, but the veteran defense pushed the Cyclones back to the Hammond 38-yard line and forced Porter-Gaud to punt.

The Skyhawks seasoned offense cranked out a clock-melting 80-yard

Midlands Football
Preseason Top Ten

Dutch Fork (13-0, 5-0 Region 4-5A)
Irmo (12-2, 4-1 Region 4-5A)
River Bluff (10-3, 3-2 Region 4-5A)
Ridge View (8-5, 5-1 Region 5-5A)
Camden (9-4, 4-2 Region 3-4A)
AC Flora (8-4, 4-2 Region 3-4A)
Hammond (13-0, 7-0 SCISA Region 1-4A)
Fairfield Central (12-2, 4-0 Region 3-2A)
Batesburg-Leesville (12-1, 5-0 Region 2-2A)
White Knoll (8-6, 1-4 Region 4-5A)

scoring drive, capped with yet another game-winning **Andrew Turner**-to-**Michael Tyler** touchdown pass with 45-seconds left. The defense came back on the field and secured the win for Hammond.

“Just so proud of this group, their resilience, their fight,” Wheeler said after the game. “We’ve been down at halftime in three of our last four state championship games. This team is battle-tested and they rise to the occasion.”

Hammond averaged 45.1 points per game last year in extending their winning streak to 23 games dating back to Sept. 8, 2023.

The Skyhawks take the field in a few weeks as the favorite in SCISA to win it all again, but this fall they’ll be much younger—just three players, all offensive linemen, return on offense. Five players return on defense.

With an array of younger players contending for the starting positions, Hammond will certainly rely on that foundation of discipline and hard work, and with an experienced coaching staff that includes athletic director

Jeff Barnes as the offensive line coach, defensive coordinator **Hamp Smith**, and second-year offensive coordinator and former Heathwood Hall and Porter-Gaud coach **Rick Reetz**, to teach the new players the finer points of starting at the varsity level.

Irmo (12-2, 4-1 Region 4-5A)

The Yellow Jackets, who went 25-3 over the past two seasons, fell to Dutch Fork in the region championship game last fall but reached the 5A Division 2 state final, their first state championship appearance since 2006. Irmo lost 34-31 in the final game as **Northwestern’s Matthew Fish** hit a 27-yard field goal as time expired.

Seventh-year head coach **Aaron Brand** returns while his son, **A.J. Brand** is beginning his college career at **Virginia Tech**. The younger Brand led the Yellow Jackets with 2,600 passing yards and 30 touchdowns, and rushed for 2,029 yards and 27 touchdowns. Replacing Brand’s production will be Irmo’s biggest challenge, but with junior running backs **Amire White** (118 carries, 942 yards, 7 TDs) and **Maleek Miller** (21 carries, 330 yards, 3 TDs), and with wide receiver **Donovan Murph** (96 catches, 1,328 yards, 12 TDs) all returning, the Yellow Jackets’ offense may be in good shape.

Behind Dutch Fork, Hammond and Irmo, there is no shortage of teams who could improve upon last year. Below are just a few teams who

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HSSR SC 2026

Rising Senior Top 50 Prospect List

(Nominate A Player: hsreport@aol.com)

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-S. Carolina
4. Jayvon Gilmore-Gaffney—QB-6-5,200- Arkansas
5. Zyon Guiles-Carvers Bay-OL-6-4,295-South Carolina
6. Jaylen McGill-Mountain View Prep RB-5-11,190
7. Zay Robertson-Dillon-WR-6-0,165 (4.4)-North Carolina
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-S. Carolina
11. Sequel Patterson- Indian Land-WR-6-0,165-S. Carolina
12. Jamel Howze-Newberry-TE-6-3,215-South Carolina
13. Michael Boulware-Gray Collegiate-MLB-6-2,205- STUD
14. Julian Walker-Dutch Fork-DE-6-6,220- Michigan
15. Scotland Dover-Gaffney-OL 6-5,305-App State
16. Jaiden McDowell-Gaffney-RB-5-10,165-Mercer
17. Malcolm Gaston-North Augusta-OL-6-5, 330
18. Tamarion Watkins-DB-N’western-6-4, 200-Texas A&M
19. Jeremiah Favorite-Boiling Springs-CB-5-10,170-Michigan St.
20. Jude Hall-Christ Church-WR-6-3,185-Memphis
21. Caden Ramsey-Cross-WR-FS-6-5,200-Ga. Tech/SC Offer
22. Somad Eaddy-Riverside-Ath.-6-0,165-Wake Forest
23. Jayden Boyd-Fairfield Central-WR/DB-Duke
24. Kelton Smith-Gaffney-DT-6-5,290-East Carolina
25. Tre Aiken-Clinton-OL-6-4,265-NC State
26. Tilden “T” Riley-Orangeburg Prep-TE-6-5,203-Vandy
27. Tristian Lewis-Greenwood-QB/DB-6-4,200-SC
28. Trevor Kalisz-Ashley Ridge-QB-5-11, 215
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-
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 Prep-WR-6-1,161-Charlotte
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
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
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-Charlotte
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-Charlotte



Dillon’s Zay Robertson
(North Carolina)



Timberland’s Desmond Green
(Florida)

As of July 26, SC has 30 in-state football players committed to major college programs

By Billy G. Baker
Publisher

Moncks Corner—Coming into the annual SCACA Clinic (July, 27) there are 30 football players from the 2026 class in South Carolina who have committed to major college football programs to date, a 10 player increase over this exact time a year ago.

As always, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to **Mark Grainger**, and the fine folks at *Modern Turf*, in Irmo and Rembert, for sponsoring our monthly recruiting feature page.

One thing that might be helping the numbers increase, via more players being offered, is the fact that major colleges now have a total allotment of 105 scholarships, when in the past it was 85. Last year the state of South Carolina produced 40 major college football signees from within the state, with 8 to 10 players firming up offers into December and early January.

The *HSSR* attended the announcement of **Timberland** offensive lineman **Desmond Green** (6-

5,348), rated at number one by the *HSSR* based on 21 confirmed major college offers, on June, 26 in the gym at his high school.

At his announcement ceremony, Green told the *HSSR*, in the end, he chose Florida from a final-five list that also included **South Carolina, Virginia Tech, Oklahoma, and Georgia**

Green, a straight A student, shared just why he chose Florida. “I just fell in love with everything down there in Gainesville,” said Green. “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.

“I wanted to make a decision now, so I can focus on helping my high school team have a successful season my senior year,” said Green. “I also want to focus on my academics as well.”

Green said he is still developing as a player and realizes he still has work to do to reach his ultimate goal of one day playing in the NFL. Green will major in Business once he gets to college.

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