

PREP PREVIEW 2021

# FOOTBALL



## LOOMING LARGE

**BIG PLAYERS CAN LEAD TO BIG POSSIBILITIES  
ON THE FIELD THIS SEASON > INSIDE**

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# LOOMING LARGE



**RAHZIK CRUTCHER (l-r), Matt Searls, Max Roth, Jacob Benjamin, Jr., Vince Himebaugh and Luke Montgomery are ready to take to the field and hit the big time. With several players of exceptional size this year, expect the Trojan to make some huge waves.**

ZACH BAKER / The Courier

## Big players can lead to big possibilities on the field this season

By **DAVE HANNEMAN**  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

With a folder full of scholarship offers in hand, including several from some of the elite college football programs in the country, you could say Luke Montgomery is the biggest thing

in a Findlay High football uniform since, well, since Big Ben.

This year, though, Findlay High is taking “big” to whole new heights.

Montgomery, ranked by several recruiting services among the top ten linemen in the graduating class of

2023, checks in at 6-foot-5 and 257 pounds.

On Findlay High’s offensive line this year, he’s third on the big guy list.

Topping the charts is senior Rahzik “Zeke” Crutcher. He stands 6-foot-9. He weighs in at 306 pounds.

Lining up next to Crutcher will be Matt Searls. He’s 6-foot-8, 305.

Seeing those three get off the bus is bound to have an impact.

“Intimidation factor, for sure,” Montgomery said with a chuckle. “We think that might help us right out

of the gate.”

Findlay High offensive line coach Phil Gunder was listed at 6-4, 270 when he was starting on the University of Findlay line in the early 2000s.

“I am not a small person,” said Gunder, who was with FHS coach Stefan Adams at Riverdale last season before returning to Findlay when Adams took

the Trojans head coaching job in February.

“It’s always funny to me when I have to look up at my linemen. That’s not normal for me.

“Then to have two guys that are 6-8, 6-9, then obviously have Luke .... Wow. It’s a treat. It’s exciting. It’s fun.”

See **LARGE**, T 3

**Cont from LARGE, T2**

Montgomery has been on everybody's radar since he was playing AAU basketball with LeBron James' son Bron. A big kid with above average athletic abilities, he not only stood out at college camps, he excelled.

And not by chance. "I have never seen anyone quite like Luke in regards to someone as big, as physical, as hard a worker and as good a kid, but then as athletic and able to move as well as he does," Gunder said.

"This is his first year playing offensive line — ever. But he's done a great job taking coaching, learning on his own, but also feeling he needs to take control of our group up front and be a leader."

Despite all the hype and hoopla about where he may end up, Montgomery focuses on where he and his teammates are right now.

"We're bigger and stronger than most kids and we're going to use that to our advantage," he said.

"We want to do well in the TRAC (Three Rivers Athletic Conference), so we're going to go out there, play hard and do our best."

All-Ohio as a defensive lineman as a freshman and again last year, Montgomery has whittled a list of 32 scholarship offer down to his top 12. Six of the 12 — Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma and Georgia — were ranked among the top 11 college football programs in the country in the final 2020 poll.

As big of an impact as Montgomery can make on the field, Gunder says he is just as influential with the example he sets in the weight room, on the practice field and during a game.

"Absolutely," Gunder said.

getting a lot of attention. What he does takes talent. But he just works hard, and there's a direct correlation between seeing someone working hard and getting better and then others wanting to do the same thing."

When it came to hard work and sacrifice, Searls, who was listed on Findlay's 2020 roster as weighing 348 pounds, went above and beyond.

"Actually toward the end of the year, I was probably around 360," Searls said.

"But coach (Avery) Lane was in the weight room all the time and we just kept working and working and working, every day just giving it our all. I knew I needed to lose weight to get quicker, more movement and more flexibility. It meant we were all getting stronger."

"When coach Adams and I got here and got in the weight room, I think around January, Matt tipped the scales at 350," Gunder said.

"I knew Matt from the last time I was here at Findlay, so I had a conversation with him and basically said for you to play at the level we want, you need to transform your body into something it's never been before."

"I give that kid all the credit in the world. He's worked harder than anyone I've seen to take what he had and turn it into something different. He never lacked the intelligence. He never lacked the want-to. It just took time for him to grow — as weird as this sounds — into his body."

"One of the things I told him the other day at practice, I jokingly told him that last year he would not have been able to do some of the things he'd just done, and he agreed. He knows the steps he's taken to be able to play

**See LARGE, T15**



ZACH BAKER / The Courier

**NEW FINDLAY HIGH head football coach Stefan Adams (center) and his staff are seen here at Donnell Stadium.**

# Findlay High football coaches: a short history

By **DAVE HANNEMAN**  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

Findlay High begins its 123rd year of football when Stefan Adams leads the Trojans onto the Donnell Stadium turf for their Aug. 20 opener with Perrysburg.

Adams is the 36th head coach if FHS football history, and the program's third in three years. Mark Ritzler stepped down in 2019 after amassing a school-record 74 career wins. Matt Pees replaced him last season, but could not pass up the opportunity to rejoin his father Dean when the elder Pees was tabbed to be the defensive coordinator for the Atlanta Falcons.

In the early years of Findlay football, coaches rarely stayed on more than a season or two. Others couldn't stay away, with Fred Ross coaching the team from 1905 through 1907, again in 1910 and 1911, and coming back for yet a third stint as head coach in 1917 and 1918. Though not a continuous career, Ross did win 39 games and is tied with Hal Paul for the fourth most career wins on the FHS all-time coaching list.

Here's a rundown of the coaches throughout FHS history, ranked historically

### COACH YEARS RECORD

Matt Pees	2020	3-2
Mark Ritzler	2006-2019	74-68
Cliff Hite	1996-2005	68-40
Jim Caserta	1990-1995	23-37
Jerry Buti	1989	6-4

Dick Cromwell	1985-1988	17-23
Dan Evans	1983-1984	13-8
Bill Jones	1973-1982	64-36-1
Bob Bockrath	1968-1972	21-29
Hal Paul	1960-1967	39-33-8
Neil Schmidt	1955-1959	16-17-1
Bob Harter	1953-5194	4-13-1
Howard Yawberg	1945-1952	33-38-2
Carl Bachman	1942-1944	14-11-2
Walter 'Pinky' Wilson	1938-1941	32-12-1
Harold Dierenfield	1935-1936	8-7-3
J.J. Winters	1931-1934	24-11-3
Robert Knode	1928-1930	22-9-2
Wilbur Scantlebury	1926-1927	11-10
Jim Aiken	1924-1925	13-3-3
Bob Fletcher	1921-1923	22-7
Fremont Shull	1920	3-7
George Crane	1919	2-4-1
L.M. Harper	1919	1-0
Fred Ross	1917-1918	12-1-2
Dwight Ginn	1916	2-5
Dean Richmond	1914-1915	12-3-1
Ben Barton	1913	2-3
Fred Ross	1910-1911	9-3
H.R. Vaughn	1908-1909	7-6-2
Fred Ross	1905-1907	18-8
John Kwis	1904	5-0-1
William Sweet	1903	1-4
Harold Hamnett	1902	4-3
William R.R. Rhoades	1900-1901	11-2-1
Carl Zeller	1899	4-1
Tom Priddy	1898	0-1

*NOTES: Findlay did not field a high school team in 1912*

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## 2021 REDSKIN ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
10	Trenton Martinez	Jr.	5-10	145	15	Caleb Rader	Sr.	5-10	175	28	Jacob Preble	So.	5-9	135	56	Brady Conine	Sr.	6-2	180
11	Logan Crawford	Sr.	5-7	140	22	Owen Rader	Fr.	5-10	135	32	Koen Harris	So.	5-8	135	61	Ryland Ernest	Jr.	6-2	185
12	Collin Yoakam	Sr.	5-11	175	23	Thomas Keefe	Jr.	5-10	175	37	Zander Geren	Jr.	5-6	125	75	Nate Jones	Jr.	6-1	195
13	Josh Cassell	Sr.	6-1	165	24	Brayden Stoner	Jr.	5-8	195	52	Nick Meyer	Fr.	5-6	175	78	Kyle Rinker	So.	6-1	240
14	Adam Emerich	So.	5-9	145	25	Kyle Seem	Fr.	5-9	145	54	Will Phelps	Fr.	5-8	195	85	Brycen Lucius	Fr.	5-9	165

# Arcadia thinking about a playoff run

By ZACH BAKER

ZACHBAKER@THECOURIER.COM

ARCADIA – Over the years, Arcadia's football program has had difficulty sustaining success.

Redskins coach Ethan Percer has started to change that. After going 2-8 in 2018, Arcadia has won five games in each of the last two seasons.

"Hadn't been done in 40 years," Percer said. "If we win five more here (for the third-straight year), I think it's 60 years it hasn't been done."

But Arcadia's expectations go beyond a simple win total. Its players and staff want – and expect – to be a playoff team in 2021.

"I feel like all these kids, with the expansion of the playoffs, it's playoffs or... we've not accomplished our goal this year," Percer said. "The kids have bought in. The 21 kids, they're busting their butt. They want to be in the playoffs. They think they deserve a spot. They're a scrappy bunch."

Theoretically, the expanded playoffs – with 16 teams in each region qualifying for postseason – will make accomplishing that goal easier for Percer's team.

But there are challenges. Arcadia graduated nine seniors off a squad that went 5-3, and brought in a small freshman class. The result was a roster with just

21 names on it.

So depth will be an issue.

But Percer is optimistic. And he said his team is ready to go.

"I think the biggest thing is actually having all the fans there (this season)," he said. "It's nice to have the community at all the games, and I think that will be a big difference for us. Players' mentality is, six games, 10 games, we'll play whatever they give us."

Arcadia has a competition at its quarterback spot, with junior Trenton Martinez and seniors Josh Cassell and Collin Yoakam all vying to lead the multiple set offense.

"Yoakam and Cassell probably got the same build," Percer said. "They get out of the pocket, they run a little bit, and then Martinez is more in the pocket."

The Redskins have some returning talent at running back.

Caleb Rader only saw action in four games last year, but averaged more than 126 yards a game – a Blanchard Valley Conference best -- on the ground. Joining him in the backfield is Tommy Keefe.

"They'll be carrying the load; we've seen good things out of them. So, hopefully that will continue to happen for us. I think we've got a chance to do something special with

those guys."

At receiver, Cassell will play there if he doesn't win the QB job. He'll be joined by another senior, Logan Crawford.

"It should be a very good season for both of them," Percer said.

Owen Rader – Caleb's brother – also is expected to see time at receiver. Percer said he hopes the freshman can help add "explosiveness" to the position.

Percer said he really likes what the Redskins have up front.

"I think we should be fairly solid; I think that's our strongest point this year," he said. "We have on the line three returners, three guys who actually have played and started all three years together."

Brady Conine will be entering his fourth year as a starter, and he will be joined by two-year starters Ryland Ernest and Nate Jones.

"Should be a nice group to throw behind and run behind, for sure," Percer said.

Rounding out the line will be freshman Nick Meyer, who will occupy the center spot, and sophomore Kyle Rinker, who will handle guard.

The coach said there are some things, specifically, he wants from the Arcadia offense.

"Basic expectation is

control the ball as much as possible," Percer said. "Limit the turnovers we had. Last year, we were kinda fumble-heavy; we fumbled way too much. I wasn't very happy with that."

On defense, the Redskins will use a 3-3 (three down linemen, three linebackers) or a 4-2 (four down linemen, two linebackers). Whatever the front, Percer wants the unit to be aggressive.

"Defense, it'll be young this year," he said. "But, we've got some aggressive kids that want to tackle. I think that'll be huge for us."

Just like on the offensive side, the Redskins return three starters on the defensive line. Jones will play the nose guard, while Ernest and Conine will occupy the ends.

Tommy Keefe and Brycen Lucius will see time at the inside linebacker position.

Percer said he was very impressed with Lucius.

"A very aggressive kid, very dedicated," Percer said. "He was at all the weight liftings all summer, he didn't miss anything. We're super-excited to see what he's gonna bring to the table."

The outside linebacker spot, which also can flex to safety – Percer calls the players there "dogs" – will be occupied by Martinez and another player, who

**"I feel like all these kids, with the expansion of the playoffs, it's playoffs or... we've not accomplished our goal this year. The kids have bought in. The 21 kids, they're busting their butt. They want to be in the playoffs. They think they deserve a spot. They're a scrappy bunch."**

ETHAN PERCER,  
ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL COACH

hasn't been decided on.

Cassell, who had a league-leading six interceptions last season, returns at free safety.

"We hope to see good things out of him again," Percer said. "He's a hell of a free safety."

Crawford will play one corner spot, Caleb Rader will be at the other. Owen Rader also could be in the mix.

Percer puts a strong emphasis on special teams, and the team returns Brayden Stoner at kicker

and Josh Cassell as punter.

Cassell also has shined in the return game, which is something Percer has come to expect from his players.

"The guys buy into it; I think that's the biggest thing on the return game," he said. "We got guys that have bought into what we do, and they know it's going to work. They've seen the success, and they know what the outcome is."

Arcadia is certainly hoping for another positive outcome in 2021.



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**2021 SCHEDULE**

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Hardin Northern	A
	27	Waynesfield-Goshen	H
Sept.	3	Van Buren	A*
	10	Pandora-Gilboa	H*
	17	North Baltimore	A*
	24	Arlington	H*
Oct.	1	Cory-Rawson	A*
	8	Vanlue	H*
	15	Liberty-Benton	H*
	22	Riverdale	A*

# Arcadia

## REDSKINS



**2020 RESULTS**

Liberty-Benton	3-33	North Baltimore	43-6
Van Buren	20-33	Edon	7-34
Vanlue	47-14	Waynesfield-Goshen	36-32
Cory-Rawson	53-6		
Riverdale	43-15		

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	5-3	2015	1-9
2019	5-5	2014	2-8
2018	2-8	2013	3-7
2017	2-8	2012	4-6
2016	0-10	2011	7-4

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## 2021 RED DEVIL ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Jake Vermillion	Jr.	NA	127	12	Brady Griggs	Fr.	NA	136	33	Lucas Fenstermaker	Jr.	NA	159	67	Ty Kessler	Sr.	NA	303
3	Caleb Foltz	Sr.	NA	163	15	Max Jolliff	So.	NA	120	40	Logan Mahler	Jr.	NA	142	70	Landon Courtney	Jr.	NA	256
5	Keagan Hull	Sr.	NA	195	20	Brady Kin	So.	NA	159	44	Jaxson Collins	So.	NA	135	71	Johnathon Burnett	11	NA	172
7	Jared Griggs	Jr.	NA	191	23	Jase Vermillion	Fr.	NA	120	50	Chris Cortez	Sr.	NA	207	72	Garrett Wykes	So.	NA	145
8	Wyatt Berry	So.	NA	190	24	Brayden Agapiou	So.	NA	153	54	Ian Boyd	Jr.	NA	160	73	Wesley Hartman	So.	NA	185
9	Caden Russell	So.	NA	146	25	Snyder Newloce	Fr.	NA	140	58	Cayne Essinger	Jr.	NA	155	75	Mason Cavinee	So.	NA	230
10	Luke Metzger	So.	NA	138	29	Grady Romick	Sr.	NA	185	62	Kolin Bird	Sr.	NA	225	76	Isaiah Schwab	So.	NA	317
11	Grant Riegler	Sr.	NA	150	32	Elijah Frysinger	Fr.	NA	143	65	Rylar Essinger	Jr.	NA	227	81	Cade Riegler	So.	NA	125

# Arlington looking to retool after losing a large senior class

By DYLAN FRAZIER  
DYLANFRAZIER@THECOURIER.COM

ARLINGTON — A season ago, Arlington's lucky number was 13.

It was awarded 13 All-BVC honors a season ago; seven first-team All-BVC (William Flick, Jack Bateson, Noah Thibaut, Conner Foust, Caden Lafferty, Jason Launder) selections, three-second team All-BVC (Gast and Foust) choices, Offensive Lineman of the Year in Flick, Defensive Player of the Year in Lafferty, and Coach of the Year in Josh McGrain. It was a banner year for the Red Devils, who made it to the regional quarterfinal.

The only problem was, those players were all seniors.

"We had a lot of kids play a lot of football for us in those four years and there were even some two-year starters in there as well," McGrain said. "We have a lot of new faces that we're trying to get up to speed and ready to go, but we also have a lot of kids with some experience as well. So if we can coach them up a little

bit and get those kids ready to roll and get them ready for Friday night football, it'll help."

After losing its starting quarterback in Jacob Price, the three-headed monster at running back with Gast, Foust, and Thibaut, three starting offensive linemen (Bateson, Flick, and Ethan Frazier), its starting tight end in Lafferty, and its two starting wide receivers in Launder and Austin Frysinger, along with many of the same players on defense, McGrain will certainly have hands full in trying to replicate that production.

"It's going to be a lot of learning, teaching, and growing," the fifth-year head coach said. "We're kind of looking at some different things and trying some things out to see what works. That's the challenge for us as coaches, is figuring out what we're good at as fast as we can and really accentuate those skills of our kids."

Third team all-BVC DB Jared Griggs will take over at quarterback for the Red Devils. Griggs saw time last

season in garbage time but hasn't played meaningful minutes at QB in a varsity game. Still, McGrain is optimistic about the junior taking the reins.

"I don't want to call him a gym rat or anything, but he's always been around sports. He knows the game, but I think for him it's putting it all together," McGrain said. "We've thrown a lot at him here the past couple of weeks as far as installing more stuff and he's handled that well. But also you've also got to understand he still needs to grow and he has each week."

Arlington might be without Ethan Frazier, Jack Bateson, and William Flick, but there are still many pieces returning on the offensive line that'll protect the first-year QB. A 207-pound senior guard, Chris Cortez, will be back in the trenches for the Red Devils, as will junior center Rylar Essinger. Ty Kessler, who saw some time a season ago, is expected to take over the full-time starting job as a tackle in front of Griggs. A 225-

pound senior, Kolin Bird and 230-pound sophomore Mason Cavinee could both get some time on the line this season.

It will be hard to replicate the offensive firepower that Thibaut, Foust and Gast provided a season ago. Combined, the three rushed for 1,524 yards and 17 touchdowns.

Trying to find three weapons like that in the backfield is tough, but it's not impossible. Arlington is hopeful that the two running backs it has this season can help lessen the blow.

"Grady Romick has been around for a few years — he's a two-year letterwinner who's been around and played a lot of football on Friday nights," McGrain said. "He's gotten some spot duty at running back where we had time to put other guys in. Grady has looked good back there, but so has Keagan Hull. He's come in this season, the kids have really embraced him, and he's done a great job."

At wide receiver, McGrain expects senior Grant Riegler and sopho-

more Caden Russell to step up at the receiver position this season. Luke Metzger, who was out last year with a broken leg, could also see some time at WR for the Red Devils. Senior Caleb Foltz expects to see some time as well at the wide-out spot.

Much like the offense for McGrain, the defense will be without several key pieces. It won't be nearly as hard to replicate their defensive success this season, however.

"A benefit we have this year is at least we have somebody coming back at each level that played significant minutes for us," the Arlington grad said. "The

challenge is finding those kids, filling those spots, and having those kids become leaders to get those guys ready."

Griggs will be back at safety for the Red Devils; he finished with a pair of interceptions a season ago. Grant Riegler will also be back in the secondary. Grady Romick (52 tackles, 7 TFLs) is back at linebacker. Chris Cortez will be back as well on the D-line.

"It all starts in the middle for us, starts in our inside," McGrain said. "We want to stop the run first and the two levels of our D-line and linebackers are obviously the key to that."



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**GO RED DEVILS!**





**2021 SCHEDULE**

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Paulding	A
	27	Ada	H
Sept.	3	Liberty-Benton	A*
	10	Cory-Rawson	H*
	17	Vanlue	H*
	24	Arcadia	A*
Oct.	1	McComb	A*
	8	Riverdale	H*
	15	Van Buren	H*
	22	North Baltimore	A*

# Arlington

**RED DEVILS**



**2020 RESULTS**

North Baltimore	54-0	Lima Central Catholic	26-49
Pandora-Gilboa	36-35	Edon	75-6
McComb	35-8	Hopewell-Loudon	35-42
Leipsic	43-0		
Liberty-Benton	14-21		

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	5-3	2015	5-6
2019	7-4	2014	11-2
2018	7-3	2013	9-4
2017	5-5	2012	7-4
2016	8-4	2011	6-4

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## 2021 HORNET ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Hunter Stauffer	Sr.	5-9	150	10	Savoux McNeil	Sr.	5-10	150	40	Jacob Anderson	Fr.	5-2	100	65	Lane Banner	Fr.	5-10	205
4	Alan Anderson	Fr.	5-8	125	16	Eric Davis	Jr.	5-11	170	42	Jared Thompson	Jr.	6-2	175	68	Railen Hassan	So.	6-2	200
5	Michael Bixler	Jr.	6-2	190	18	Jacob Thompson	Sr.	6-2	180	50	Connor Brooks	Jr.	6-0	175	69	Jonathan Black	Jr.	6-0	280
6	Cale Parkins	Jr.	6-2	180	20	Cohen Hamlin	So.	6-1	165	51	Nolan Johnson	Fr.	5-10	155	73	Alana Kizer	Fr.	5-10	170
7	Ethan Thompson	Fr.	5-10	115	22	Dakota Hauenstein	Jr.	6-1	175	55	Hunter Niese	Fr.	5-10	175	88	Ethan Boyles	Fr.	5-10	170
8	Cartier Davis	Fr.	5-8	140	35	Quinn Reinhart	Jr.	6-4	245	59	Ashton Montgomery	Fr.	5-11	190					

# New C-R coach Briggs wants 'everybody to start bleeding green and gold again'

By DYLAN FRAZIER  
DYLANFRAZIER@THECOURIER.COM

RAWSON— After an 0-10 campaign in 2020 and a recent stretch of losing football, Cory-Rawson is hopeful a change in leadership can bring back some of the program's former glory like it had when Hornet legend, Spike Berry, wore the headset.

To be the best, you have to learn from the best and that's what the newly hired head coach, Corey Briggs, has done.

"I've met the longtime coach Berry along with coach [Bob] Abbey—when I took over the job, I got to have lunch with those guys and learn about the culture," Briggs said. "But what was interesting was I knew those guys before I got the job. When I worked at my old job, I had a chance to meet coach Berry and coach Abbey and I got to learn about the Cory-Rawson tradition and its past."

Briggs -- a Lima Bath High and Ohio Northern University graduate -- may not have the resume that Berry does quite yet, but to be fair, very few do.

But what he does bring is experience in coaching, with stops at the University of Oregon and Ohio State

**"You'll see guys who collectively will play as a group and fly to the ball. That's what makes me so excited about our defense is no one guy stands out, we have a lot of guys who fly to the ball and want to get after it."**

COREY BRIGGS,  
CORY-RAWSON HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

University as a strength and conditioning intern and as an assistant coach at Bellefontaine.

"I was very fortunate when I got that Bellefontaine job [because] my cousin was the head coach when I was there and he still is now, he was a great mentor for me," Briggs said. "I talked to him about taking over a program, because he did at a young age as well at Bellefontaine. At Oregon and Ohio State, the biggest thing I took away from mentors was culture-building."

Which is very important to the 24-year-old first-time head coach.

"The first four months I've been here have just been about getting the culture right, not about winning and losing," Briggs said. "It's all been about changing the lives of young men and women to make them better people."

He'll have the chance to

enrich the lives of his team this season that brings back many from the offensive side of the ball, including junior quarterback Eric Davis, who finished 235 yards passing, seven touchdowns, and just one interception a season ago.

While Davis averaged just 39.2 passing yards per game, Briggs and his staff have tweaked some things in Davis's game that they hope can elevate his game.

"The biggest thing that my staff and mentors saw was the timing was off. There would be times where routes were going and the ball wouldn't be out in time," Briggs said. "So the biggest thing was the timing needed to get down. One of my best friends who is playing in Germany right now helped me out a lot with QBs and came out a few times to help me and our quarterback out."

Thankfully for Davis, he won't have a shortage

of weapons with a pair of receivers coming back, as well as running back Cale Parkins (154 rushing yards, 1 TD in '20).

"With our offense, we have a lot of athletes so we're going to utilize them the best we can and a lot of them happen to be juniors this year," Briggs said. "But we do have great senior leadership this year in Hunter Stauffer (131 yards receiving, 1 TD in '20) and Jacob Thompson who (are) playing as our slot receivers. They're explosive young men and we want to get them the ball."

A 6-4, 245-pound junior wideout, Quinn Reinhardt, is also expected to make some plays for the Hornets this season, as well as 5-10 Ethan Boyles at WR.

Protecting Davis will be a relatively young group, led by 6-foot, 280-pound junior Jonathan Black — the lone upperclassman on the offensive line. The next oldest lineman the 6-2, 200-pound sophomore in Railen Hassan. All other linemen are freshman for Briggs' inaugural team.

On the defensive side of the ball, Briggs says to expect contributions across the entire roster.

"The strong suit of our defense will be our line-

backers, but our defensive line will be just as strong," Briggs said.

Just like on the O-line, expect Hassan and Black to do the heavy lifting on the D-line, as well as Quinn Reinhardt.

In the linebacking unit, the Hornets will have juniors Jared Thompson (6-2, 175) and Connor Brooks (6-0, 175) back from a season ago.

Just as he is back as a receiving threat, expect Hunter Stauffer to lead the pack in the secondary. A season ago, he led the secondary with his two interceptions and one pick-6.

"You'll see guys who collectively will play as a group and fly to the ball," Briggs said "That's what makes me so excited about our defense is no one guy stands out, we

have a lot of guys who fly to the ball and want to get after it."

Being just 24 years old, Corey Briggs is grateful for the chance and eager to win some football games for the Hornet faithful. But he is perhaps even more eager for something more than winning as the head of the program.

"What we're trying to do is shape these young men and women into the next phase of their lives. We want to get the community involved, the alumni talking at practices, and learning from them," he said. "We want everybody to start bleeding green and gold again. Once we start doing that, Cory-Rawson will be headed on the path it needs to be."

**"What we're trying to do is shape these young men and women into the next phase of their lives. We want to get the community involved, the alumni talking at practices, and learning from them. We want everybody to start bleeding green and gold again. Once we start doing that, Cory-Rawson will be headed on the path it needs to be."**

COREY BRIGGS,  
CORY-RAWSON HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH



**2021 SCHEDULE**

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Bluffton	A
	27	Upper Scioto Valley	H
Sept.	3	Riverdale	H*
	10	Arlington	A*
	17	Liberty-Benton	A*
	24	North Baltimore	A*
Oct.	1	Arcadia	H*
	8	McComb	A*
	15	Vanlue	H*
	22	Pandora-Gilboa	A*

# Cory-Rawson

## HORNETS



**2020 RESULTS**

Pandora-Gilboa	0-62	Riverdale	8-47
North Baltimore	7-16	Ridgemont	27-54
Van Buren	9-52	Hardin Northern	14-48
Arcadia	6-53	Bluffton	14-50
Vanlue	0-48		

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	0-9	2015	4-6
2019	2-8	2014	3-7
2018	3-7	2013	2-8
2017	2-8	2012	2-8
2016	3-7	2011	3-7



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## 2021 EAGLE ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
1	Brayden Wages	Jr.	6-1	176	16	Tyler Rickenbacher	So.	5-10	132	50	Ethan Bauer	Jr.	5-10	217	68	Brady Jolliff	So.	6-1	190
2	Mason Modd	So.	5-11	155	17	Jared Wurth	So.	5-9	130	52	Javen Caropenter	So.	5-8	215	70	Alex Dible	Fr.	6-0	212
3	Jake Elchert	So.	6-0	160	18	Kiaian Scott	So.	5-8	140	53	Mason Tuttle	Sr.	5-11	180	72	Chad Hartley	Sr.	6-0	202
4	Lincoln Garlock	Jr.	5-9	155	22	Noah Trevino	Jr.	5-11	142	55	Connor Arnold	So.	5-10	155	74	Gavin Gillig	Jr.	6-1	205
5	Malik Eckford	Sr.	6-1	143	23	Brayden Lemire	Fr.	5-10	147	56	Damon Gasser	Jr.	5-8	181	75	Devin Montalbano	Jr.	6-1	247
6	Zach Ponz	So.	5-7	130	24	Noah Davis	So.	5-3	130	57	Colin Bates	Fr.	5-7	147	76	Storm Haudenschild	Sr.	6-0	281
7	Kameron Garlock	Jr.	5-10	164	26	Tristan Wilson	Fr.	6-1	154	58	Ashton Price	Sr.	6-0	246	77	Isaiah Higgins	Jr.	6-2	285
8	Kaden Fultz	So.	5-10	165	27	Kaden Boutwell	Jr.	5-9	142	59	Grant Myers	Fr.	6-0	157	78	Brennen Bailey	Sr.	5-9	328
9	Trevin Lieb	Fr.	6-0	142	28	Anderson Roberts	So.	5-10	155	60	Marqueese Birchfield	So.	5-11	192	79	Hunter Seymour	Fr.	5-10	240
10	Connor Boyd	Sr.	6-0	164	29	Zach Rickenbacher	Sr.	6-0	145	61	Caden Lemons	Sr.	6-2	204	80	Shane Lasiter	So.	6-1	157
11	Ashton Crawford	So.	6-0	146	32	Marquelle Birchfield	So.	5-8	152	62	Trevor Otley	Jr.	5-8	165	83	Conner Hiss	Fr.	5-9	153
12	Noah Heilman	Jr.	5-11	152	33	Alex Durliat	Fr.	5-8	145	65	Tyler Grose	Fr.	6-2	155	84	Carson Conoway	So.	6-4	185
13	Dalton Woodruff	So.	5-7	114	34	Brady Birkemeier	So.	5-11	150	66	Parker Wright	Fr.	5-9	220	86	Conner Niese	Jr.	5-11	162
14	Jake Hosey	Fr.	5-4	102	36	Garrett Seymour	So.	5-7	127	67	Nathaniel Smielewski	Jr.	5-10	175					
15	Toby Collert	Sr.	6-1	178	45	Cason Doolittle	Jr.	6-2	157										

# Key graduations on offense to challenge Liberty-Benton

By DAVE HANNEMAN  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

Scott Garlock has been around Liberty-Benton football long enough that no introductions are necessary.

Well, not totally.

When it comes to getting re-acquainted, Garlock may have to spend some time getting this season's players familiar with that leathery oblong thing with

laces on it and Wilson written on the side.

"Skill-wise, we have no player back who even touched the football (last season)," Garlock said.

"Well, a few did, but very, very little."

In going 8-1 last season, Liberty-Benton was among the BVC leaders in scoring (33.5 ppg) and total offense (328.3 ypg). Much of the credit went to a veteran

group of skilled players that included quarterback Ben Spiess, the BVC Offensive Player of the Year, running backs Brycen Abbott, the BVC first-team pick as an athlete, and Dru Baker, and wide outs Mason Richards (all-Ohio as a defensive back), Alex Dillon (first-team all-BVC receiver) and Kaden Ebert.

It was a talented group that picked up a bunch of

post-season honors last fall. Last spring, that group also picked up their diplomas.

"We don't have one returning starter that touched the ball last year. That's kind of scary," said Garlock, who compiled a 47-12 record as L-B's head coach from 2002-2006, served two-year stints as an assistant at both the University of Findlay and Findlay High School, and has been

an assistant at L-B since 2010 under Tim Nichols, the man he is replacing as head coach this season.

Garlock's familiarity with the program — and the players in it — will be an asset this season. And while graduation hit the skilled positions hard, it was not as deleterious in other areas of the game.

"Where we are experienced is on the offensive

and defensive lines, and we return starters at linebacker and defensive back," Garlock said.

"I'd have to say that's where our strength lies right now."

Ashton Price, a 6-foot, 246-pound senior, started both ways on the line last season. A guard on offense, Price also earned second-team all-BVC honors on the

See KEY, T14

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**2021 SCHEDULE**

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Leipsic	H
	27	Archbold	A
Sept.	3	Arlington	H*
	10	North Baltimore	H*
	17	Cory-Rawson	A*
	24	Van Buren	A*
Oct.	1	Riverdale	H*
	8	Pandora-Gilboa	A*
	15	Arcadia	A*
	22	McComb	H*

# Liberty-Benton

## EAGLES



**2020 RESULTS**

Arcadia	33-3	Pandora-Gilboa	27-0
Leipsic	42-0	Wynford	42-28
Lima Central Catholic	47-28		
McComb	31-0		
Arlington	21-14		

**POSTSEASON**

Elmwood	33-13
North Union	7-28

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	8-1	2015	6-4
2019	9-2	2014	12-1
2018	4-6	2013	9-1
2017	12-2	2012	12-2
2016	6-4	2011	10-2



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## 2021 PANTHER ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Camden Glaser	Jr.	6-2	175	12	Montana Pierce	Jr.	5-7	155	28	Nathaniel Miller	Sr.	6-2	205	61	Nick Bormuth	So.	6-3	260
3	Blake Wittenmyer	So.	6-2	190	14	Grant Dishong	Jr.	5-8	150	42	Jake VanAtta	Fr.	6-3	190	62	Brandon Hall	Sr.	6-2	220
4	Bryson Gault	Jr.	6-0	175	16	Ka'Von Bailey	Sr.	6-2	168	45	Landon Bankey	Fr.	5-10	135	63	Brady Womack	So.	5-8	140
5	Braydon Shoop	Fr.	5-10	135	17	Andrew Swisher	Jr.	5-9	175	50	Jalen Swain	So.	6-1	215	65	Thane Steinbrook	Jr.	5-7	190
6	Wilson Grubb	So.	5-9	160	20	Braxton Althausser	So.	5-8	150	52	Owen DeWeese	So.	6-0	205	67	Elijah Gibbs	Fr.	5-10	220
7	Ian Hendren	Sr.	5-10	165	23	Kaden Sherrick	Sr.	6-0	190	53	Logan McGill	So.	5-9	270	68	Eli Franks	Sr.	6-2	270
8	Donavin Hepperly	Fr.	5-11	135	25	Ryan Carter	Sr.	5-8	150	54	Madden Amador	Fr.	6-1	260	71	Dylan VanAtta	Sr.	6-5	370
9	Chase Woodruff	So.	5-10	150	26	Brad Miehls	Fr.	5-10	185	55	John Kowalski	Sr.	5-9	260	72	Dylan Swisher	Sr.	6-1	340
11	Haden Ebright	Fr.	5-2	115	27	Octavian Gonzalez	Fr.	5-9	152	60	Trace Bryan	Fr.	5-7	150	78	Benton Adkins	Fr.	5-10	250
															86	Ben Bishop	Sr.	6-0	170

# McComb motivated following rare losing season

By DAVE HANNEMAN  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

MCCOMB — The 2020 football season was a first for Kris Alge.

It's a good bet Alge and his McComb Panthers don't want there to be a second.

"That was not typical," said Alge, who as the starting quarterback at Arlington High School and the University of Findlay and in 23 seasons as head coach at McComb had never experienced a losing season before last year's 4-6 record.

"That's not the standard at McComb. We feel we work too hard. That's why put in all that time in the weight room, all that work in the summer. Hopefully we forget about last year and move on."

With four starters returning on a big, beefy offensive line, athletic talent at the skill positions and returning lettermen at most positions, Alge feels the Panthers will do just that.

"We had five seniors last year and only about three played a lot," Alge said. "We have most of our people back; it's going to be a matter of how much better are we?"

Most of McComb's veteran experience returns of what will be one of the biggest offensive lines in the league, a group headed by

**"(Last season) is not the standard at McComb. We feel we work too hard. That's why put in all that time in the weight room, all that work in the summer. Hopefully we forget about last year and move on. We had five seniors last year and only about three played a lot. We have most of our people back; it's going to be a matter of how much better are we?"**

KRIS ALGE,  
MCCOMB HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

two-time all-Ohio pick Eli Franks. A 6-foot-2, 270-pound senior Franks will be a four-year starter, along with 6-1, 340-pound senior Dylan Swisher. John Kowalski, a 5-9, 260-pound senior returns at center and Brandon Hall (6-2, 220, sr.) at guard.

Sophomores Owen DeWeese (6-0, 205) and Nick Bormuth (6-3, 260) will likely man the other spot on the line, and when Alge goes with what he calls his "heavy package" he can bring in 6-5, 370-pound senior Dylan VanAtta.

Nate Miller, a 6-2, 205-pound back who rushed for 270 yards and four touchdowns in McComb's six league games last season, is back for his senior season. Junior Andrew Swisher (5-9, 175) and sophomore Braxton Althausser (5-8, 150) will see time in the backfield as well.

Althausser were on that state 400 relay team, too, so we have good speed at the receiver corps. Hopefully we can run it or throw it out there and let our quick guys make some plays."

Chase Woodruff was McComb's starting quarterback as a freshman, but Grant Dishong finished the season behind center.

"As a true freshman, Chase just was not ready, and there came a point and time where we decided to make a change," Alge said.

Both were expected to contend for the position this season, but Woodruff will be the starter with Dishong recovering from an injury suffered during the baseball season.

"Chase came in bigger and stronger this year," Alge said. "He worked hard over the summer."

Franks, whose all-Ohio recognition came on the defensive side of the ball after he had eight sacks and 11 tackles for loss among his 67 total stops, and Swisher return

**"I know our kids don't want (a losing season) again, so it motivates you. It makes you want to get up earlier, work a little harder, study a little more. We still have to put the puzzle together, but I think the pieces are there."**

KRIS ALGE,  
MCCOMB HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

on the defensive front. Miller will man one defensive end position; sophomore Wilson Grubb (5-9, 160) the other.

Andrew Swisher, who led the Panthers with 60 tackles in BVC games a year ago, is a returning all-BVC linebacker, where he will be joined by Sherrick and junior Montana Pierce (5-7, 155). Bailey (2 interceptions), Glaser, Ian Hendren (5-10, 165) and Ryan Carter (5-8, 150) return in an all-senior secondary.

Though the after taste of a 4-6 season remains, Alge has noticed one promising side effect in his returning players.

"I know our kids don't want that again, so it motivates you," Alge said.

"It makes you want to get up earlier, work a little harder, study a little more. We still have to put the puzzle together, but I think the pieces are there."



**2021 SCHEDULE**

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Lake	A
	27	Marion Local	H
Sept.	3	Vanlue	A*
	10	Van Buren	A*
	17	Pandora-Gilboa	H*
	24	Riverdale	A*
Oct.	1	Arlington	H*
	8	Cory-Rawson	H*
	15	North Baltimore	H*
	22	Liberty-Benton	A*

# McComb

## PANTHERS



**2020 RESULTS**

Vanlue	54-0	Leipsic	25-43
Troy Christian	28-14	Lakota	26-31
Arlington	8-35	Fostoria	60-14
Liberty-Benton	0-31		
Pandora-Gilboa	7-41		

**POSTSEASON**

Upper Scioto Valley	41-0
Spencerville	20-28

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	4-6	2015	12-2
2019	8-3	2014	8-4
2018	14-1	2013	8-3
2017	9-3	2012	13-1
2016	12-2	2011	8-4

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# Getting things rolling — earlier than normal

## How some area coaches feel about the early start to the football season

By DYLAN FRAZIER  
DYLANFRAZIER@THECOURIER.COM

Just a few days.

That's how much longer it'll be until the 2021 football season will get underway.

If you were to ask a coach around the area, odds are they would tell you that's not enough time to get ready for their Week 1 matchups.

"We feel rushed because we feel like we need to put plays in, but instead we've been teaching a ton of technique and that's not necessarily a good thing," Columbus Grove head coach Andy Schafer said. "I feel like it's best to be teaching kids how to properly block, how to properly tackle but we're learning on the fly."

Last spring, the Ohio High School Athletic Association announced it was expanding its football playoffs from eight teams to 16. To accommodate for those changes, the season was bumped up a week and effectively caused all teams to lose an extra week of practice time.

"We have a lot of stuff that we got to put in and catch everybody up to speed — special teams and just learning our offense and defense—it's been hard, it's been a blur," said Liberty-Benton head coach Scott Garlock, who's back on the sidelines for the Eagles after stepping down in 2007.

"You feel like you're forgetting something and we probably will forget something once we get to Friday night," Garlock said. "There's gonna be something that we do where we go like 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe we weren't ready for that.'"

Expect everything to be off early in the season, Schafer says.

"Offense is so much about the timing of different things — especially in the type of offense we run. You can't work on timing when you don't have that extra week of practice," the Grove coach said. "Thankfully, everybody in the state is in the same boat, so we'll manage."

Head further east on Route 12 to Fosto-

See EARLIER, T15



DYLAN FRAZIER / The Courier

**VANLUE FOOTBALL** coach Lee Summers works with players during practice earlier this month. Courier writer Dylan Frazier spoke with three other football coaches: Liberty-Benton's Scott Garlock, Fostoria's Derek Kidwell and Columbus Grove's Andy Schafer about the challenges of the early start to this football season, as well as OHSAA playoff expansion.

### Cont from KEY, T10

defensive side of the ball after recording 41 tackles, including 14 tackles for loss.

Gavin Gillig, a 6-1, 205-pound junior guard, also saw action on the line last season, along with 6-2, 285-pound senior tackle Isaiah Higgins.

An added plus for L-B will be the return of Devin Montalbine. The 6-1, 247-pound junior missed last season with a knee injury, but was first-team all-BVC as a freshman.

Price, Gillig and Higgins also saw time on the defensive front a year ago when Liberty-Benton led the BVC in fewest points (45) and yards per game

(172.0) allowed.

Also back to spearhead that defense will be middle linebacker Toby Collert, a 6-1, 178-pound senior who had 16 solo tackles among his 46 stops in BVC play, and Connor Boyd, a 6-0, 164-pound senior who returns at safety.

L-B returns an added threat in Cason Doolittle, who earned second-team all-Ohio honors as a sophomore when he converted 24 of 27 PAT kicks and booted three field goals.

Being the big dog in the BVC, both in terms of enrollment and on-the-field success should be an advantage as well for L-B, whose 162 wins since 2000 are second only to McComb (190) among BVC schools.

And while senior-class numbers — 10 this year; 18 last season — are a bit down, there's depth on a 57-man roster looking to earn the school its 20th winning season in the past 21 years.

"We don't have any game-breakers, I don't think. But we have a bunch of kids, a lot of juniors and seniors, who have worked hard and have waited their turn to step up," Garlock said.

"We need experience — game experience — but I think those kids are hungry."

Kam Garlock, a 5-10, 164-pound junior, is expected to replace Spiess at quarterback. When it comes to touches, though, he was unable to get in as

many as hoped over the summer.

"He's gone through two surgeries with his labrum (which supports the shoulder's ball-and-socket joint), so he's coming back from that," Scott Garlock said. "We weren't able to get him the ton of reps we wanted to get him this summer, but he's okay; he's been cleared to play."

Mason Modd, a sophomore, will back-up the quarterback position, with Collert, Boyd, junior Noah Heilman (5-11, 152) and sophomore Kaden Fultz (5-10, 165) seeing time in the backfield.

Kam Garlock's twin brother Lincoln (5-9, 155) will be a slotback receiver, with Malik Eckford (6-1,

143, sr.), the starting point guard on L-B's basketball team, returning to the gridiron for his senior season. He'll join Zach Rickenacher (6-0, 145, sr.) and Brayden Wages (6-1, 176, jr.) on the outside.

Wages will likely see action on defense as well, along with Mason Tuttle (5-11, 180, sr.), Trevor Otley (5-8, 165, jr.) and Jake Elchert (6-0, 160, soph).

"We're still trying to find some linebackers, defensive backs and receivers, so we're trying a bunch of kids at those spots," Scott Garlock said.

The determining factor, Garlock says, will be how his young players perform in real-time situations.

"For me, it's the hitting, the physicality part. That's how you find out who your football players are, who's tough enough," he said.

"We had a really good scrimmage with Columbus Grove. They were very physical. I think we found out we do have some kids that want to hit, but we also found out there's things we need to work on, things we need to get better at.

"We're a young team and we're running out of time, but we need to find that out quick. What stinks is we have what I think will be our toughest games — Leipsic, Archbold, Arlington — right off the bat.

"We'll be tested early, that's for sure."

**Cont from LARGE, T3**

at the rate and the position that we need him to play at."

By contrast, Crutcher put on a few pounds, though you'd never know it.

"He's 6-9, 300 pounds and doesn't look like it," Gunder said. "The things he can do athletically and movement-wise for a guy that size, I've never seen anything like it."

"I gained some weight in the offseason, and worked really hard on speed and movement and the things I needed to work on to get ready for the season," Crutcher said.

"We'd come in on Saturday's and do sprint work, form and techniques to get faster."

Gunder calls Crutcher the "gentle giant" of the bunch. But with a twist

"When Zeke does find that inner aggressiveness," Gunder said. "I don't think too many people can line up across from him and hold their own."

Findlay's other linemen — left guard Vince Himebaugh (6-2, 230) and

center Jacob Benjamin (5-9, 242) — are dwarfed by Montgomery, Searls and Crutcher. So are backups Caleb McCaskey (5-9, 272), Cole Barnes (5-10, 188), Hunter Marquis (6-0, 244) and Desmon Bailey (6-0, 245).

Gunder warns though, that while big is better, other factors enter the process as well.

"Other than quarterback, offensive line is the toughest position to coach because you cannot do it by yourself," Gunder said.

"It takes the whole unit, all working together. For us to be able to sustain success and to be able to compete with teams we feel we should compete with consistently — (Toledo) Central Catholic and (Toledo) St. John's and (Toledo) Whitmer and Anthony Wayne and Perrysburg — all of those teams are going to be good. We need our guys, whether they are big or not, to be able to play together, play as a team, play fast and be physical

"If we can do that, I think we can have a really, really good season."

**Cont from EARLIER, T14**

ria, you'll hear a different answer than its neighbors. The season moving up could not matter less to the Redmen.

"They know how to pass, they know how to catch, they know how to block — the fundamentals don't change," Fostoria head coach Derek Kidwell said.

"So has it changed the way we do things? No, not really — we'll just schedule stuff earlier than normal. And most coaches have their schedule set for summer anyway, so we just kind of followed ours as normal."

No matter the week in which the season kicks off,

Kidwell wants to take this younger Fostoria team and hopefully capture what his father, Dick Kidwell, did when he led the Redmen.

"We just want to see improvement from scrimmage 1 to scrimmage 2, from Game 1 to Game 2, from Game 5 to Game 6 — we just wanna see our kids practicing hard and improving every week," Kidwell said.

With the playoffs being expanded to 16 teams, several teams in the area will see the postseason for the first time in a long time.

Not all the coaches are necessarily happy about that, though.

See EARLIER, T40



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## 2021 TIGER ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
1	Kevin Ramirez	Sr.	5-8	135	12	Rowan Tackett	So.	5-8	150	33	Darrian Zitzelberger	Sr.	5-8	150	62	Jeremiah Suman	Jr.	6-2	245
2	Johnny Hagemyer	Sr.	6-0	170	13	Torian Lute	Sr.	5-11	175	50	Jeremiah Boyd	Fr.	5-8	155	64	Kaleb Kelley	Jr.	5-6	165
3	Brendon Woodward	Sr.	6-0	155	15	Braiden Solly	Fr.	5-8	150	51	Brock Baltz	Sr.	5-11	220	72	Anthony Tracy	Jr.	5-6	145
4	Gaige Dewitt	Jr.	6-0	195	20	Gavin Soltis	So.	6-0	165	55	Logan Keller	Sr.	5-11	245	74	Eli Pennington	So.	6-0	215
5	Isaiah Boyd	Sr.	5-10	180	21	Wyatt Baltz	So.	6-0	160	56	Andre Johnson	So.	5-7	215	86	Isaiah Boyce	Fr.	5-7	145
7	Mitch Clark	Sr.	6-1	185	24	Peyton Carlton	So.	5-9	165	58	Adin Bureson	Jr.	5-10	205	99	Zach Trout	So.	5-8	150
10	Gunner Kepling	Sr.	6-1	170	25	Evan Pelton	Jr.	6-0	165										

# Ishmael believes NB can have a big season

By ZACH BAKER  
ZACHBAKER@THECOURIER.COM

NORTH BALTIMORE – North Baltimore’s football team hasn’t posted a winning season since 2017, and won only a single game two years ago.

But second-year coach Wade Ishmael believes the Tigers have the pieces in place for a turnaround.

It’s all about character and experience.

“These kids, most of these kids that are playing – we’ve got 11 seniors this year – it’s gonna be a big season, hopefully,” Ishmael said. “I have a lot of faith in these kids. They’re ready to work. They’ve been in here all summer, putting in time in the weight room, conditioning in the offseason.”

That said, Ishmael knows it won’t be easy to make a jump in the Blanchard Valley Conference.

“It’s a meat grinder,” Ishmael said of the Tigers’ league schedule. “I think we can compete with anybody. That’s my faith in what these kids are doing this year.”

There are changes, especially on the defensive side, where North Baltimore is shifting from a 4-3 alignment (4 down linemen, 3 linebackers) to a 3-4 (3 down linemen, 4 linebackers).

He said the change has had positive results.

“We had a little bit of a hitch, but these kids are really quick to learning, have no problem switching over,” Ishmael said. “It’s kind of helped us a lot, because a lot of our linemen are playing both ways, so we’re trying to maybe spell them a little bit.”

The team’s starters on the defensive line are expected to be Andre Johnson at nose tackle, with Jerry Suman and Gage Dewitt on the end spots.

But that could change.

“It’s just depending on what we call, where we’re gonna move them around,” Ishmael said.

Ishmael said that the back eight will be flexible, with linebackers and defensive backs flexing out depending on the calls.

Mitch Clark is expected to start at one of the outside linebacker spots, with the other being occupied by Adin Bureson.

**“We hope to score a lot of points, but it’s time of possession, too. You keep them (an opponent’s offense) off the field, they can’t score unless you’re giving up turnovers. We’re not all about scoring, but we do want to score points.”**

WADE ISHMAEL,  
NORTH BALTIMORE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

On the inside will be Wyatt Baltz and Peyton Carlton.

“I would say our linebackers are pretty strong,” Ishmael said. “DBs are just as strong.”

In the secondary, Johnny Hagemyer will be playing corner, along with Rowan Tackett. Gunner Kepling and Isaiah Boyd are expected to handle the safety spots.

On offense, the Tigers will be sticking with a modified spread formation.

They just haven’t decided on a quarterback yet. Ishmael said the competition is between Kepling and Boyd.

“They’re both very athletic, very smart kids,” Ishmael said. “Just gonna be a battle, they might be sharing time.”

At running back, the Tigers return a workhorse in Dewitt, who averaged 5½ yards a carry in 2020 as a sophomore.

“He’s a pretty good running

**“These kids, most of these kids that are playing – we’ve got 11 seniors this year – it’s gonna be a big season, hopefully. I have a lot of faith in these kids. They’re ready to work. They’ve been in here all summer, putting in time in the weight room, conditioning in the offseason.”**

WADE ISHMAEL,  
NORTH BALTIMORE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

back,” Ishmael said. “He’s not scared to put his head down and run over somebody or get out and make some moves and run.”

The Tigers also have a number of veteran receivers on the roster

The group will be led by seniors, starting with Hagemyer, who was third in the league in receiving yards last season. Mitch Clark is back after catching 20 passes in 2020, and the position group also has Torien Lute and Rowan Tackett.

Joining the group will be either Boyd or Kepling, whoever doesn’t end up at quarterback.

“They’ve been putting in a lot of work,” Ishmael said of the receivers. “So hopefully it’ll be paying off this year.”

On the offensive line, the Tigers have plenty of experience.

“Our line is all returning linemen from last year, all returning

lettermen,” Ishmael said. “Very decently big kids and very strong kids.”

Suman is set to start at left tackle, while Logan Keller is playing right tackle. Bureson is playing left guard, with Johnson playing right guard and Brock Baltz will be playing at center.

Ishmael said he wants the Tigers’ offense to take control of games as well as the clock.

“We hope to score a lot of points, but it’s time of possession, too,” he said. “You keep them (an opponent’s offense) off the field, they can’t score unless you’re giving up turnovers. We’re not all about scoring, but we do want to score points.”

Kevin Ramirez will be kicking for the Tigers, with Dewitt punting.



**2021 SCHEDULE**

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Evergreen	A
	27	Crestline	H
Sept.	3	Pandora-Gilboa	H*
	10	Liberty-Benton	A*
	17	Arcadia	H*
	24	Cory-Rawson	H*
Oct.	1	Vanlue	A*
	8	Van Buren	A*
	15	McComb	A*
	22	Arlington	H*

# North Baltimore

## TIGERS

**2020 RESULTS**

Arlington	0-54	Arcadia	6-43
Cory-Rawson	16-7	Crestview	7-69
Riverdale	14-21	Fremont St. Joe	27-43
Vanlue	58-22		
Van Buren	13-56		

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	2-6	2015	5-5
2019	3-7	2014	5-5
2018	1-9	2013	2-8
2017	6-4	2012	2-8
2016	5-5	2011	3-7



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## 2021 ROCKET ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Ben Kahle	Fr.	6-0	145	17	Elam Suter	Jr.	5-11	170	34	Andrew Miller	Fr.	5-10	180	65	Kaden Smith	Fr.	5-8	164
3	Isaac Stall	So.	5-7	140	18	Aidan Miller	So.	5-1	120	51	Braden Hegemier	Jr.	5-11	230	66	Parker Gallaspie	Fr.	5-7	210
4	Camden Teman	Jr.	5-11	185	19	Tony Steinmeyer	So.	5-7	150	52	Carson Meyer	So.	5-8	160	67	Wyatt Russell	Jr.	6-0	195
5	Noah Burkholder	Jr.	5-10	170	20	Tyler Pugh	Fr.	5-8	140	53	Logan Moser	Fr.	5-11	150	69	Carson Altman	Sr.	5-11	195
6	Lukis Deckard	So.	5-8	150	21	Ethan Luginbill	Jr.	6-0	190	55	Mitchell Blank	Jr.	6-1	180	70	Breckin Grothause	Sr.	6-0	240
7	Braden Gerding	Fr.	5-9	140	22	Joel Stall	Sr.	6-4	175	56	Omar Carrillo	Fr.	5-9	215	72	Eli Cobb	Fr.	5-7	170
8	Weston Macke	Jr.	6-1	160	24	Derek Maag	Jr.	5-11	160	57	Eli Luginbill	Fr.	6-1	200	74	Anthony Gerschutz	Fr.	5-6	190
9	Dillon Krohn	Sr.	6-0	175	25	Thomas Bauman	Sr.	5-11	155	59	Seth Correll	So.	5-10	150	76	Dalton Durst	So.	5-11	215
10	Aidan Morris	So.	6-0	160	27	Landon Sunderhaus	Fr.	5-11	140	60	Dylan Fenbert	Jr.	5-10	225	77	Brad Meyer	So.	5-11	226
11	Tanner Liechty	So.	6-0	155	28	Colin Harris	So.	6-0	135	62	Gael Salinas	Jr.	5-11	280	78	Chase Dettrow	Fr.	5-11	345
12	Garrett Schumacher	Jr.	6-0	165	29	Nate Walker	Fr.	5-8	130	63	Will Huston	Jr.	5-9	250	79	Jake Fisher	So.	6-0	195
14	Brock Stall	So.	5-7	145	31	Lane Lee	Fr.	5-5	115	64	Blake Duling	Fr.	5-5	195					

# Young Rockets look to keep winning tradition

By DAVE HANNEMAN  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

PANDORA — Matt Hershey says there's not much Friday Night Lights experience on his Pandora-Gilboa football team this season.

But it's another type of experience, the kind that comes from being part of a program that has gone 31-13 and made two deep playoff runs over the past four seasons, that Hershey sees as being invaluable for the Rockets.

"We did lose quite the senior class," Hershey said.

"We return nine lettermen. Only three or four started every game, but our numbers are good, 45 to 47 players, and that's got to be one of the better (turnouts) of Division VII teams in our area.

"Our younger guys are going to have to mature, and we're going to have to find an identity. But we've played full JV seasons the past three, four years so they've gotten to play and to learn and to grow and we've had some success (at the varsity level) so they understand what is expected of them.

"It's a good group. A lot of them have been waiting on those 12 seniors (to graduate). They've been waiting their turn, working their tails off to get to this point and now is their time to shine."

P-G's depth in numbers will come in handy as Hershey looks to fill the voids left by two-way standouts like Bryce Basinger, a

**"It's a good group. A lot of them have been waiting on those 12 seniors (to graduate). They've been waiting their turn, working their tails off to get to this point and now is their time to shine."**

COACH MATT HERSHEY

first-team all-Blanchard Valley Conference pick as a receiver and defensive back; lineman Gavin Biery, a first-teamer on both sides of the ball; Tommy Hovest, another all-BVC lineman on both offense (second team) and defense (third team); and running back (third team)/linebacker (second team) Sam Burkholder.

Another key loss, and one that could be style-changing for P-G, was the graduation of quarterback Silas Schmenk, who followed in the all-Ohio footsteps of Jared Breece (over 6,000 career passing yards) and threw for over 3,000 yards in his two years as a starter as the Rockets year-in and year-out produced one of the top passing attacks in the BVC.

Hershey said that was as much by necessity as by design.

"We try to adapt to what we have," he said.

"We want to run the ball, don't get me wrong there. But we just lacked a bit of physicality the last few years. We've always had some really fast guys, though, and some really skilled guys on the outside that

we could get the ball to, so it kind of necessitated it toward throwing the football.

"This is a unique year, though. We've always had a good group of returning starters, skill guys, so our summer 7-on-7 stuff would always be to go out, let those guys do their thing and bring the younger guys up to speed. Now they're all young, they're all brand new. We don't know our identity yet so right now we're trying to throw a lot of things at the dart board and see what sticks, then we'll fine-tune things and see what we're actually good at."

What Hershey hopes the Rockets are good at, considering their inexperience at the skilled positions, is good old ground and pound football.

"You know, football is won by running the ball and stopping the run," Hershey said. "And if we're going to take that next step we have to find a way to build more physicality."

Where P-G is strongest is where the strongest guys are.

"For the first time in a long time, we probably have more linemen on the team than we do

skilled guys," Hershey said. "I know I don't have any more uniforms to pass out for linemen.

"We have plenty of guys. We just have to find the right combination."

Whatever the combination, Carson Altman will figure greatly in it. The 5-foot-11, 230-pound senior is a returning starter and, like Biery and Hovest last season, will be counted on on both the offensive and defensive front.

"He's going to be our anchor," Hershey. "He's going to be our guy."

Juniors Braden Hagemier (5-11, 225), Mitchell Blank (6-0, 180) and Wyatt Russell (6-0, 190) will likely man the other tackle and both guard spots, respectively. Senior Breckin Grothause (5-10, 215) will be P-G's center.

"(Grothause) started week one his sophomore year, but hasn't seen the field since due to injuries," Hershey said. "Knock on wood, we can keep him healthy."

Also returning this season will be Dillon Krohn, who will replace Schmenk at quarterback.

"(Krohn) did not play last year, but he lettered as a sophomore at wide receiver so he has familiarity with the offense," Hershey said.

P-G boasts one of the top receivers in the league in Aidan Morris. A 5-10, 160-pound sophomore, Morris earned first-team all-BVC honors last season when

he caught 19 passes for 246 yards in five games. Sophomores Colin Harris and Tanner Liechty and first-year junior Camden Teman and Noah Burkholder, another junior, may be running routes as well.

Russell, P-G's leading tackler from his middle linebacker position, will spearhead the Rockets' defense, along with Altman on the line and Morris, a two-way starter as a freshman, in the secondary.

Blank saw considerable time at defensive end last season, along with Ethan Luginbill at linebacker.

Also back for P-G is junior kicker Elam Suter, who last season converted 17 of 19 PAT kicks and booted a field goal.

"He's been money for us," Hershey said. "He's pretty consistent."

P-G opens at home with a strong Columbus Grove program in both school's traditional Route 12 Rivalry. With four straight away games, Hershey says his Rockets will then have to be "road warriors," but he likes the mental makeup of his young team.

"The two biggest things we stressed this summer were attitude and effort," Hershey said.

"Those are two things they can control. They can't control playing time; coaches do that. But they can control attitude and effort and they've been fantastic with it, all 47 of them."



**2021 SCHEDULE**

Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug. 20	Columbus Grove	H
27	Bluffton	A
Sept. 3	North Baltimore	A*
10	Arcadia	A*
17	McComb	A*
24	Vanlue	H*
Oct. 1	Van Buren	H*
8	Liberty-Benton	H*
15	Riverdale	A*
22	Cory-Rawson	H*

# Pandora-Gilboa

## ROCKETS



**2020 RESULTS**

Cory-Rawson	62-0	Minster	42-0	<b>POSTSEASON</b>	
Arlington	35-36	Delphos St. John's	21-20	Cory-Rawson	canceled
Leipsic	10-13	Ayersville	37-14	Mohawk	14-26
McComb	41-7				
Liberty-Benton	0-27				

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	5-4	2015	5-5
2019	5-5	2014	6-5
2018	11-1	2013	6-4
2017	10-3	2012	5-5
2016	3-7	2011	2-8

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## 2021 FALCON ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Luke Morris	Jr.	5-11	180	12	Dylan Green	Jr.	5-6	130	30	Sam Stauffer	Sr.	5-7	150	60	Brayden Mellot	Fr.	5-3	225
3	Loukas Carter	Fr.	5-9	165	13	Joseph Quint	Fr.	6-2	170	42	Don Johnson	Jr.	6-2	180	65	Michael Augsberger	Fr.	6-3	230
5	Gavin Haudenschild	Sr.	6-0	215	15	Derek Courtad	Fr.	5-6	116	50	Joey Sherman	So.	6-0	160	67	Hunter Koehler	Sr.	6-3	205
6	Heath Dunbar	So.	6-2	150	16	Hawk Washburn	Fr.	5-7	136	51	Tyler Thei	So.	5-8	210	68	Ryan Nease	Sr.	6-0	165
8	Austin Evans	Sr.	5-8	165	17	Cameron Furr	So.	5-11	130	52	Alec Dunbar	Sr.	6-0	195	72	Ryman Miller	Sr.	6-3	224
9	Davin Harbor	So.	5-9	145	18	Carson Young	Jr.	5-8	146	54	Conner Driskill	So.	6-1	230	78	Eli Bagley	Fr.	6-0	190
10	Chris Reid	Sr.	5-11	175	19	Gage Neville	So.	5-9	160	55	Sam Spade	Jr.	5-7	210	80	Isaiah Cotton	So.	6-0	150
11	Spencer Dodds	Sr.	5-11	155	22	Luke Donaldson	So.	5-10	145										

# Petrie hopes to air it out in first season

By DYLAN FRAZIER  
DYLANFRAZIER@THECOURIER.COM

## MOUNTBLANCHARD

— There have been four head coaches in four years at Riverdale. After Mark Frey stepped down, it was Britton Devier. Then after Devier moved on to Sidney, that brought in Stefan Adams, who subsequently took the Findlay High School job when Matt Pees left for the Atlanta Falcons. Needless to say, there has been much uncertainty in Falcon country.

One of the few constants for the Falcons in the last three seasons?

That'd be Sam Petrie, who now has his chance to wear the headset each Friday for Riverdale. Petrie has been an assistant with the Falcons for the past two seasons, and after Adams moved on to Findlay, it was his turn to lead the program.

"I'm very excited to be around the kids — they've worked really hard this offseason and put a lot of time in the weight room since March when I took over," Petrie said. "I just feel like I've used these last six years putting my time in to become a head coach. I don't know if I'm necessarily ready for it, but I don't think you're

**"I just feel like I've used these last six years putting my time in to become a head coach. I don't know if I'm necessarily ready for it, but I don't think you're ever ready. We're just going to go with it and do the best we can."**

ever ready. We're just going to go with it and do the best we can."

Riverdale's best, at least on offense, will be vastly different from the rest of the conference. The BVC is chalked full of traditional run-first offenses that are methodical.

That could not be further than what the Falcons want their identity to be.

"We're an air raid team, we're no-huddle — basically we all have wristbands on so we can go as fast as we can between each play," Petrie said. "A lot of the defenses in the BVC work out of the huddle, so we think by going faster they won't be able to huddle and get their right defense calls, we think that will allow us to make plays and be successful."

Ambitious and definitely different, Riverdale will have to impose its will without last year's starting quarterback Kwade McCoy, who is no longer on the team. Last season, McCoy led the squad in

passing with 336 yards and 10 touchdowns as well as rushing with 313 yards and three touchdowns.

Those are certainly big shoes to fill for an offense that will heavily involve a quarterback.

"Lane Morris will take over as quarterback this season — he's been a receiver for the last two years," Petrie said. "He started as a freshman and played receiver last year, now he's going to move to quarterback. His brother was the quarterback two years ago when we ran an air raid, so he knows some general things about it, and we think he's transitioning well to it."

A bit of a work in progress for the Falcons, but Morris has caught on quickly and his coach said being a receiver for two years has expedited the positional change.

"I think he knew some of the basic things about it—how our screens worked, how our deep ball worked, how fast we wanted to be caught and

thrown," the Riverdale head coach said. "I think he's caught on well to that stuff, his biggest issue was he hadn't thrown the ball a whole lot. But each day he's out here, he's getting better, his ball has more velocity and more touch."

Riverdale will be without its leading rusher in McCoy and without its scoring leader in Luke Morris. But it does return senior slot guys in Spencer Dodds and Austin Evans. Sophomore Davin Harbor and junior Dylan Green also are expected to get looks at wide receiver.

"We have some new guys on the right side of the offense, but they're very good skill kids," Petrie said. "Then in the backfield, we actually moved our best offensive lineman to running back because we had great depth on our line and didn't have a whole lot of depth in the backfield. Gavin Haudenschild 6'2", 215, and runs a 4.8 40-yard — I don't know who would want that running at them

all game long."

Moving a second-team OL in Haudenschild is certainly a gamble, but it's easy to understand why Petrie made the move. Seniors Ryman Miller (6-3, 224 lbs.), Ryan Nease (6-0, 165 lbs.), Hunter Koehler (6-3, 205 lbs.), and 6-foot, 195-pound guard Alec Dunbar will all be back on the front line for the Falcons.

On the other side of the ball, Riverdale will showcase a 4-2-5 defensive scheme that will look like a 4-4 a majority of the time, Petrie says.

"We have some good linemen up front, we have a good secondary, we're kind of young in the linebacking corps but we're hoping our skill on the defensive line can cover up some of that inexperience come Friday night," Petrie said. "On the D-line, we have two experienced guys in Gavin Haudenschild and Hunter Koehler playing defensive end."

It is understandable why Petrie would say Riverdale's linebacking corps will be inexperienced as it will be without second team All-BVC LB Mike Galkiewicz, who a season ago led the team with 65.5 total tackles, which were seventh-

most seventh in the BVC a season ago. He was also second in the conference in tackles for loss with 12.5.

Austin Evans, Luke Donaldson, and Don Johnson are all three expected to contribute at LB.

They will also be without Luka Whittaker, who tied for third in the BVC in interceptions with three in 2020.

Spencer Dodds, a 5-11 free safety will be back in the secondary and he will lead a group that features juniors Dylan Green and Carson Young. Sophomores Heath Dunbar and Cameron Furr will also be a part of the Falcon secondary.

Above all else, Petrie's teams will be ready for the Friday night grind.

"It'll be a team led by expectations and the kids know my expectations," Petrie said. "We're going to be hard-working, play fast—we want to be the best-conditioned team because we are going to play fast. We play a lot of kids both ways, so we want kids to be well-conditioned, we want to play fast, and we want to play disciplined."



**2021 SCHEDULE**

Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug. 20	Colonel Crawford	A
27	Hardin Northern	H
Sept. 3	Cory-Rawson	A*
10	Vanlue	A*
17	Van Buren	H*
24	McComb	H*
Oct. 1	Liberty-Benton	A*
8	Arlington	A*
15	Pandora-Gilboa	H*
22	Arcadia	H*

# Riverdale

## FALCONS

**2020 RESULTS**

Leipsic	6-34	Bluffton	27-55
Vanlue	58-8	Lakota	0-40
North Baltimore	21-14		
Van Buren	14-10		
Arcadia	15-43		
Cory-Rawson	47-8		

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	4-4	2014	3-7
2019	6-4	2013	1-9
2018	5-5	2012	4-6
2017	5-5	2011	2-8
2016	4-6		
2015	2-8		

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## 2021 BLACK KNIGHT ROSTER

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1	Devin Thomas	Sr.	5-11	165	12	Grady Mason	Fr.	5-8	140	23	Zane Yoder	Fr.	5-8	145	64	James Hohman	So.	6-0	175
2	Lucas Brown	Jr.	6-1	185	14	Collin Wagner	So.	6-0	165	24	James Patton	Fr.	5-8	165	65	Gavin Schroer	Sr.	5-8	195
3	Josiah Chapin	Fr.	5-5	115	15	Cheyne Price	Sr.	5-10	200	25	Gaige Smith	Fr.	5-8	125	66	Luke Bressler	Jr.	5-9	260
4	Shane Coombes	Sr.	5-9	150	16	Cale Henry	Fr.	5-5	120	36	Jackson Gregory	Jr.	6-2	185	67	Brandon Buff	Jr.	5-11	245
5	Ethan Greathouse	Jr.	5-10	165	17	Lucas Harrington	Fr.	5-8	140	50	Mussie Hanson	So.	5-11	165	72	Baylor Wilkin	Fr.	6-3	200
6	Reese Reichley	Jr.	5-11	165	18	Mikey Pendergast	Fr.	5-6	125	52	Ryan Gifford	So.	6-0	185	77	Andrew Frische	Fr.	5-11	275
7	Parker Beilharz	So.	6-3	180	19	Owen Burge	Sr.	6-1	190	53	Trey Rampe	Sr.	5-9	185	78	Candon Brenneman	Jr.	6-0	245
8	Logan Dilgard	Jr.	5-11	170	20	Landen Heath	So.	5-9	150	54	Dustin Hodges	Fr.	5-9	145	85	Curtis Ware	So.	6-2	170
9	Andrew Parsell	Sr.	5-10	165	21	Elijah Mason	So.	5-8	150	57	Nash Feasel	Sr.	5-11	185	88	Connor Koehnke	Sr.	6-2	170
10	Landon Miller	Sr.	6-0	160	22	McGuire Hohman	Fr.	6-1	155	61	Dylan Buff	Fr.	5-9	195					

# Black Knights aim to move up in BVC ranks

By ZACH BAKER  
ZACHBAKER@THECOURIER.COM

VAN BUREN – J.T. Bates said he's tired of being stuck in the middle of the Blanchard Valley Conference.

The fifth-year Van Buren coach saw his team go 7-3 last year, 4-2 in the BVC. It was good enough to tie the Black Knights for third place with Riverdale and Arcadia.

Van Buren went just 1-7 in the BVC in 2019. But in Bates' other two seasons, it went a combined 9-7 in league play.

Just about in the middle. "You're gonna have your (Liberty-Bentons) you're gonna have your (McCombs and Pandora (-Gilboas), Arlingtons and perennial powers," Bates said. "We've got to start working up there. We need to be at the top.

"We've been stuck in the middle for a while," he said. "We want to get up toward the top. So, we're gonna have to beat the really good programs to do that."

To do that, Van Buren will be relying on a formula. Bates even has numbers to complement it.

"What we want to do is we want to be able to control the clock, run the ball," Bates said. "We're not gonna throw vertical routes, we're not gonna do

all that stuff. We have the ability, but we don't want to do that. We want to ground and pound. We want to be very physical.

"I'm not looking to score 55 points a game," he said. "If it happens, great. But if we can control the clock and get 21, 28 points, we should be in a pretty good position to hopefully win the game."

Hoping to put Van Buren in that position will be quarterback Parker Beilharz, who started six games last season as a freshman.

"He's gotten a lot stronger, he's gotten a lot bigger," Bates said of the sophomore who threw for 590 yards and five touchdowns in 2020. "He's taller, he's pushing 6-3, his arm's a lot stronger, and he's really stepping into a leadership role for us, so we're expecting a big season out of Parker."

One of Beilharz's top weapons figures to be receiver Devin Thomas, who received of praise from Bates.

"(He's) probably one of the best receivers in the area. Not just in the BVC, but in the area in my opinion," Bates said of Thomas. "He's a leader; he was a captain as a junior. He's a captain this year. We expect a lot out of him."

What makes Thomas so

special?

"(Thomas) is an excellent route runner," Bates said. "He's very good. He's fast and he's gritty. He loves to block, he's not the type of kid who's only gets involved when he's getting the ball and he's blocking, he's doing all the little things. He takes the younger receivers under his wing."

Joining Thomas at the receiver positions will be Landon Miller, who Bates described as a "deep threat" and newcomer Reese Reichley. Shane Coombes also will be in the mix.

Van Buren doesn't appear to have much experience in the backfield, where its top three rushers from last season all graduated.

Bates will be looking to Lucas Brown, who got reps in the backfield last year.

"He's kind of the one we lean on," Bates said. "He's more of our H-type back, we kind of flex him out (to receiver) and do some more things with him."

Cheyne Price, also a defensive lineman, is expected to play fullback, with Ethan Greathouse being used as more of a speed back.

Van Buren returns experience on the offensive line, with three starters in the fold. Trey Rampe, who played guard in 2020, is

moving to center. Nash Feasel is back at right tackle, and Gavin Schroer will be back at a guard spot.

The Black Knights will be breaking in some juniors for the remaining two spots on the line.

But each player has size: Brandon Buff and Candon Brenneman are each around the 260-pound mark.

"So, we're a little bit bigger with our juniors, they're just not as experienced," Bates said.

The Black Knights also will utilize some tight ends in their pro set offense. Owen Burge and Connor Koehnke are both seniors, and both returning to that spot.

On defense, Van Buren lost a few key players to graduation, but Bates said the expectations remain high for the unit, will again be using a 4-3 front.

This is my fifth year here, and we have been in the top four all four years and hopefully we keep the trend going this year," Bates said. "Defense is kinda what keeps us in games."

One key to this year's defense will be the play of Rampe, who's moving from outside linebacker to the middle to replace the graduated Blake Jones.

"Trey's got some big shoes to fill there, and he's

**"We've been stuck in the middle for a while. We want to get up toward the top. So, we're gonna have to beat the really good programs to do that."**

J.T. BATES,  
VAN BUREN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

done well," Bates said. "We had a scrimmage (earlier this month), and he did very well in the scrimmage, getting us in the right places, doing all those types of things."

Another key to the defense will be Thomas, who was an all-BVC selection in the secondary last season.

"He's our free safety, and he kinda gets everybody lined up where they're supposed to be, the coverages relayed and everything like that," Bates said.

As for the defensive line, Price will be back, while Feasel – a role player a season ago – figures to be a starter there as well. Meanwhile, Burge and Koehnke return to start on the ends.

In the secondary, Gannon Bahn had an excellent season in 2020 at corner, but he graduated. Greathouse is expected to take his spot after playing on the D-line last year.

"So that's a big jump, going from getting your hand out of the dirt, now you're back, back-pedaling,"

Bates said. "But he was a state qualifier on the relay team in track, he can flat-out fly. The thing is, we just gotta kind of harness him."

Also figuring into the back seven will be Reichley, Coombes and Miller.

In special teams, Parsell will return as the Black Knights' place kicker. He's proven to be a strong kicker – literally. Parsell made two field goals – including an overtime game-winner – against Patrick Henry last season.

"He's good from 50 yards," Bates said.

Jackson Gregory, a soccer player, is expected to punt.

Thomas, Miller and Brown will be the team's kick and punt returners.

"If we can get them into space, we like where they're at," Bates said. "They're all good athletes and they're really fast. The thing is, can we block that? If we're blocking well, we can definitely make some plays in the return game. That can shift the game."



2021 SCHEDULE

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Elmwood	A
	27	Otsego	H
Sept.	3	Arcadia	H*
	10	McComb	H*
	17	Riverdale	A*
	24	Liberty-Benton	H*
Oct.	1	Pandora-Gilboa	A*
	8	North Baltimore	H*
	15	Arlington	A*
	22	Vanlue	A*

# Van Buren

## BLACK KNIGHTS



2020 RESULTS

LIMA CEN. CATHOLIC	7-46	VANLUE	40-20
ARCADIA	33-20	PATRICK HENRY	18-15
CORY-RAWSON	52-9	LAKOTA	31-0
RIVERDALE	10-14		
NORTH BALTIMORE	56-13		

POSTSEASON

PAULDING	16-0
NORTHWOOD	10-43

RECORD BOOK

2020	7-3	2015	9-4
2019	2-8	2014	9-3
2018	5-5	2013	4-6
2017	6-4	2012	5-5
2016	7-3	2011	5-5

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## 2021 WILDCAT ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
7	Jaren Kloepfer	Sr.	6-2	190	27	Jaxon Temple	So.	5-9	160	50	Landon Saltzman	Fr.	5-7	170	58	Greg Spears	Fr.	5-7	175
16	Jerome Kloepfer	Jr.	6-2	160	35	T.J. Rickle	Jr.	5-11	200	52	Jesse Blakely	So.	6-2	330	63	Ty Miller	Sr.	5-9	175
17	J.R. Snook	Jr.	6-2	170	44	Alex Secord	Jr.	5-9	205	54	Kyle Kromer	So.	5-9	235	77	Jack Saltzman	Fr.	5-9	240

# Numbers down, hope is up for first-year Vanlue coach

By DYLAN FRAZIER  
DYLANFRAZIER@THECOURIER.COM

VANLUE -- Year in and year out, the Vanlue Wildcats have been able to field an 11-man football team despite dwindling enrollment numbers.

This year is no different.

With just 12 kids on the roster and long-time coach Jeremy Kloepfer having stepped down, first-time head coach Lee Summers is certainly going to have his hands full.

But there's no other place he'd rather kick off his coaching career than right at home.

"I'm a graduate here, spent my 13 years here, and coached baseball right after I graduated. The community members are really supportive of the programs here in sports and the school," Summers said. "Stepping in as the head coach here after helping coach Kloepfer here for five years is truly exciting."

"We have a lot of good people here — they work really hard, they know it's a tradition, and we have to keep going because they put everything they have into it," the Vanlue graduate said. "It's a collective effort from everybody from administration to athletic director, to all of our coaches and our parents."

Summers is hopeful those five years as an assistant coach under Kloepfer will pay dividends.

On the field and off.

"The wisdom in football knowledge Jeremy has, the experience that he has, he knows so much about the game of football but also in life," Summers said. "He has taught me a lot in the past five years, I think it's gonna help me out a lot."

For most schools, losing only six seniors would be a blessing, but for Vanlue, it's more like a nightmare. Those six seniors made up a little less than half of last year's roster.

Not only are the Wildcats going to be without many players from a season ago, but they will also be without several key pieces.

Vanlue will be without its 2020 first-team all-BVC WR Jared Kloepfer, who finished with a BVC-high 584 yards receiving and five touchdowns. Leading rusher Chase Wellman (185 yds rushing, 3 TDs) also graduated.

Also graduating was third-

**"I'm a graduate here, spent my 13 years here, and coached baseball right after I graduated. The community members are really supportive of the programs here in sports and the school. Stepping in as the head coach here after helping coach Kloepfer here for five years is truly exciting."**

LEE SUMMERS,  
VANLUE HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL COACH

team All-BVC CB Joey Bonham, who finished last year with three interceptions and a pick-6. Jaden Kloepfer and Evan Saltzman, who combined for 99 stops and 13 tackles for loss, will also be gone from the Wildcat defensive unit.

Some might think the 2021 offense will be inexperienced, but Summers has some weapons on the offensive front which he expects to step into those roles nicely.

"I got some size in Jaren Kloepfer, Jerome Kloepfer, and J.R. Snook," Summers said. "I'm going to look for Jaxon Temple to step into more running back role this year for us. We have some athletic guys still and now that the seniors are gone, they'll get more of a chance to contribute."

A season ago, Jaren Kloepfer nearly threw for more than 1,000 yards with nine touchdowns as Vanlue's quarterback and will return for his senior season, as

**"We have a lot of good people here — they work really hard, they know it's a tradition, and we have to keep going because they put everything they have into it. It's a collective effort from everybody from administration to athletic director, to all of our coaches and our parents."**

LEE SUMMERS,  
VANLUE HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL COACH

will wide receiver, Jerome Kloepfer who had 150 yards receiving with a touchdown in 2020.

But that's not the only upper-classmen Jaren will have to throw too.

"I fully expect JR Snook to step in and fill some of that athleticism void, especially in the receiver spot and catching some balls for us," Summers said. "With him just being an overall athlete, we're looking for him to step up in many ways."

The 5-foot-9 junior Alex Secord is expected to play a larger role at WR for the Wildcats as well.

Protecting Jaren Kloepfer on the offensive will be a younger group, but it's a group that isn't lacking size. Jesse Blakely, a 6-2 330-pound sophomore, will lead the pack for Summers' team. Ty Miller (5-9, 175) will be back for his senior season as an offensive lineman and 235-pound sophomore, Kyle Kromer, is also

expected to help protect Jaren.

With both Kloepfers and Snook on offense, expect the Wildcats to move the ball all around the field with them running a spread offense.

"We're looking to run some stuff with the tight end, but it just depends on what we're looking at for the week and who we're playing," Summers said. "I think the guys we have we could be pretty versatile in what we bring on offense."

Defensively, expect many of the same names to carry the load of Summers' 3-4 scheme.

"Jerome Kloepfer will step in and do a nice job at either the corner or safety position for us," he said. "Linebacker-wise, we're looking for TJ Rickle and JR Snook to step up and do a lot of our heavy lifting for us to secure the middle this year."



2021 SCHEDULE

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Ridgmont	H
	27	Ridgedale	A
Sept.	3	McComb	H*
	10	Riverdale	H*
	17	Arlington	A*
	24	Pandora-Gilboa	A*
Oct.	1	North Baltimore	H*
	8	Arcadia	A*
	15	Cory-Rawson	A*
	22	Van Buren	H*

# Vanlue

## WILDCATS



2020 RESULTS

McComb 0-54	Van Buren 20-40
Riverdale 8-58	Patrick Henry 12-51
Arcadia 14-47	Fremont St. Joe 30-65
North Baltimore 22-58	Crestline 28-48
Cory-Rawson 48-0	

RECORD BOOK

2020	1-8	2015	0-10
2019	2-8	2014	1-9
2018	0-10	2013	0-10
2017	1-9	2012	0-10
2016	2-8	2011	1-9

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## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

# Stroud is frontrunner as freshmen battle for Buckeyes QB job

By MITCH STACY  
AP SPORTS WRITER

COLUMBUS — None of the three freshmen competing to start at quarterback for No. 4 Ohio State has thrown a pass in a college football game.

That's unfamiliar and unsettling for third-year Ohio State coach Ryan Day, who had the luxury of the record-shattering Justin Fields running the offense the past two seasons.

Day revealed Monday that the frontrunner to start is C.J. Stroud, a 6-foot-3, 218-pound red-shirt freshman from Rancho Cucamonga, California, who played sparingly last year in mop-up duty. Stroud has moved in front of Jack Miller, a member of that same 2020 recruiting class, and freshman Kyle McCord.

"I don't know how much separation there is. I'm not sure," Day said. "But I'll say that every day (Stroud's) been competing, he's been taking care of the football, making good decisions, he's been a leader. And those are all some of the traits we're looking for."

The wildcard is Quinn Ewers from Southlake, Texas, the No. 2 high school

prospect in the 2022 class who decided to forgo his senior season and come to Ohio State to take advantage of endorsement offers via new NIL rules. Ewers is enrolled and is going through the process to be eligible to play this season.

Day is trying to impress upon the freshmen the sometimes crushing responsibility that comes with the top QB position at Ohio State.

"I try to tell them all the time if you can survive practice with me kind of getting after you, the games will be easy," he said. "That's sometimes hard on those guys. I try to help them understand how hard it is to win a game and to play quarterback at this level."

"Our expectation here is Heisman Trophy, national championship. The pressure has never been higher for those guys, and they understand."

RYAN DAY,  
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
FOOTBALL COACH

## KEYS TO THE CAR

Whichever freshman wins the job will have an outstanding supporting cast, including receivers Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson, possibly the best wideout tandem in college

See **STROUD, T47**



PAUL VERNON / The Associated Press

OHIO STATE COACH Ryan Day is seen during an NCAA college football practice in Columbus, last April. Third-year coach Day opens a preseason camp for the first time without a good idea of who will be the starting quarterback. "If I did, I'd probably sleep a little better right now, but I don't," said Day, who is 23-2 in his first two seasons since taking over for Urban Meyer.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN FOOTBALL PREVIEW

# Jim Harbaugh happy to be coaching Michigan for 7th season

By LARRY LAGE  
AP SPORTS WRITER

ANN ARBOR — Jim Harbaugh is thrilled and perhaps relieved to still be coaching at Michigan for a seventh season, a year after winning two games and signing a new contract that gives the school an out if it wants to replace him.

“Personally, a lot of gratitude,” he said.

“How am I feeling? Attacking. Attacking each day with tremendous enthusiasm.”

The former quarterback, drafted by Chicago in the first round in 1987 out of Michigan, hung up his helmet

after the 2000 season with the San Diego Chargers after also playing in Indianapolis. As a head coach, Harbaugh turned around the University of San Diego, Stanford and San Francisco 49ers.

Hopes were high he could do it again, but enthusiasm at least outside the program has waned because Harbaugh is winless against rival Ohio State and is 0-11 in games the Wolverines were not favored to win.

Questions swirled about what athletic director and former teammate Warde Manuel would do last winter — right up until

Harbaugh was handed a five-year deal that cuts guaranteed compensation and gives him a chance to make up for the financial loss if he can start winning championships.

Michigan can buy out Harbaugh’s contract for \$4 million if it decides to fire him without cause after the 2021 season and the amount is reduced by \$1

million in each of the following three years.

“I don’t think he gets the credit he deserves,” said defensive backs coach Steve Clinkscale, who was hired away from Kentucky in May. “So, we’re going

to go out there and prove people wrong.”

## UNDER CENTER

Cade McNamara is expected to start the season as the No. 1 quarterback after playing in four games with one start last year as a redshirt freshman.

“His confidence is always something he carries on his sleeve,” receiver Ronnie Bell said.

J.J. McCarthy, a highly touted freshman, is pushing for playing time and to potentially replace McNamara if he does not make the most of the opportunity.

“Of all the years, the

**“How am I feeling? Attacking. Attacking each day with tremendous enthusiasm.”**

JIM HARBAUGH,  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
FOOTBALL COACH

See JIM, T53



PAUL SANCYA / The Associated Press  
MICHIGAN HEAD COACH Jim Harbaugh watches against Ohio State during an NCAA college football game in 2019 in Ann Arbor. Harbaugh is happy to still be coaching at Michigan for a seventh season, a year after winning two games and signing a new contract that gives the school an out if it wants to replace him.



Photo by ZACH BAKER / The Courier; Design by JASON SMITH / The Courier

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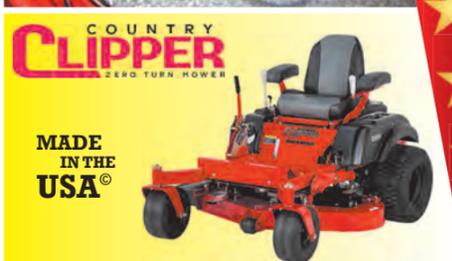
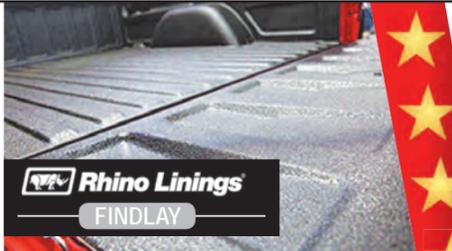
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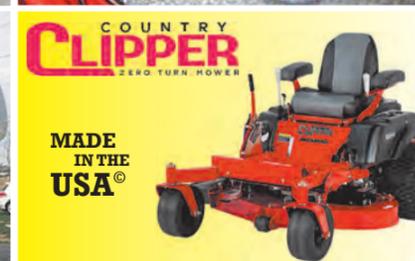
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Tom May



Austin May



Jay Helms



Kim Hall

**2021 TROJAN ROSTER**

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
1	Donovan Harris	Jr.	5-7	145	19	Jacob Vance	Fr.	5-9	166	37	Ethan Klotz	Jr.	5-10	130	63	Jordan Smith	So.	5-8	229
2	Justin Roth	Sr.	6-0	162	20	Tucker Oliver	Jr.	5-7	154	39	Rahmerce Crutcher	So.	5-11	149	64	Cole Barnes	Jr.	5-10	188
3	Terrion Ross	Sr.	5-11	159	21	Mark Scherger	So.	5-9	150	40	Gabin Helms	Jr.	5-10	175	70	Tre'von Ludwig	So.	5-10	250
4	Alexander Theis	Sr.	5-10	170	22	Baret Helms	So.	5-6	130	41	Evan Hammer	So.	5-01	154	71	Hunter Marquis	Jr.	6-0	244
5	Sam Weihrauch	Sr.	6-0	202	23	Luke Weihrauch	So.	5-11	157	42	Rylen Hansen	So.	5-7	168	72	Tyler Treft	Sr.	6-1	227
6	Max Roth	Sr.	6-0	160	24	Elijah Johnson	So.	5-10	195	44	Jackson Lane	So.	5-9	181	73	Grady Schroeder	Jr.	6-1	246
8	Trace Robinson	Sr.	5-6	150	25	Reece Little	Fr.	6-1	190	45	Skylar Scott	Sr.	5-9	180	74	Luciano Hernandez III	So.	5-6	256
9	Ben Ireland	Sr.	6-0	180	26	Landon Powell	Jr.	5-11	148	46	Tyler Sheets	So.	5-7	173	75	Jacob Benjamin, Jr.	Jr.	5-8	242
10	Brady Allen	Jr.	6-0	157	27	Dallas DeLaCruz	Jr.	5-11	207	47	Nathan Rieggle	So.	6-1	190	76	Alexander Welch	So.	6-0	216
11	Connor Harp	Jr.	5-11	202	28	Matthew Guthrie	So.	5-11	148	48	Ashton Yeager	Fr.	6-1	203	77	Quintin Romero	So.	5-9	263
12	Antwon Murphy	Jr.	5-8	146	29	Benjamin Best	So.	6-1	155	49	Raheem Crutcher	Fr.	6-1	195	78	Desmon Bailey	So.	6-0	245
13	Brady Barnes	So.	5-8	150	30	Braden Parker	Sr.	5-7	190	50	Caleb McCaskey	Sr.	5-9	272	79	Matthew Searls	Sr.	6-8	305
14	Austin Hasselbach	So.	5-10	155	31	Garrett Edmister	So.	5-8	175	51	Rahzik Crutcher	Sr.	6-9	306	82	Jackson Bollenbacher	Jr.	5-8	135
15	Brayden Layne	Sr.	6-0	188	32	Miles Bowman	So.	5-7	161	53	Jesse Gomez	Jr.	5-11	295	88	Jackson Redman	So.	5-10	179
16	Kam Stagnolia	Sr.	5-7	137	33	Isaac James	Sr.	6-1	165	54	Vince Himebaugh	Jr.	6-2	230	93	Dylan Stacey	Jr.	5-11	233
17	Ryan Montgomery	Fr.	6-2	180	34	Isaac Tuiloma	So.	5-10	189	55	Luke Montgomery	Jr.	6-5	257	98	Brice Potteiger	Sr.	6-1	180
18	Grant Johnston	Jr.	5-10	132	35	Lukas Spencer	So.	5-8	140	62	Logan Trinko	So.	5-6	273	99	Caleb Schroeder	Jr.	5-9	219

# Adams 'couldn't have asked for a better situation to walk into' in Findlay

By **DAVE HANNEMAN**  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

Whether it was the basketball court at Henderson High School in West Chester, Pa. or the backfield at

Bloomsburg University, Stefan Adams never shied away from a challenge.

"In basketball, I would guard the big guys because I would go in there and be

a little more physical, go in there and mix it up," Adams said.

"At Bloomsburg I was a fullback, but I liked to call myself an athletic guard. I

was kind of a bruiser.

"I came from a world where we wanted to establish dominance at the line of scrimmage, and that all starts with the guys up

front."

Those guys up front for Findlay High this season are some of the biggest in school history. And with experience, talent and speed

at the skill positions, Adams enters his first season as the Trojans' head coach looking to blend all those ingredients into something special.

See ADAMS, T31

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**Cont from ADAMS, T30**

"I couldn't have asked for a better situation to walk into than what we have here," Adams said.

"We have kids coming back with great skills on the outside, some pretty darn good athletes. But mostly I think we have the personnel that matches what I want to do, and that's establish the run game up front and stop the run on defense.

"We want to establish a culture of unity but also of absolute toughness. I want to see confidence

in your technique with a good sprinkling of want-to. That's a great combination for physicality."

Findlay is coming off an abbreviated 3-2 record directly affected by COVID-19. Two Three Rivers Athletic Conference games — with Toledo Central Catholic and Oregon Clay — were canceled due to the pandemic.

The Trojans' 2020 season ended with a 28-19 loss to Springboro in the first round of the Division I playoffs.

Eighteen seniors and several lettermen return from that squad, including a number of key starters. Most notable — at least to the naked eye — is a bigger-than-average group of linemen that

includes junior Luke Montgomery and seniors Matt Searls and Razzik "Zeke" Crutcher.

Montgomery, ranked among the top 10 prep linemen in the country in the graduating class of 2023 by several recruiting services, is 6-foot-5, 257 pounds. Searls is 6-8, 305; Crutcher 6-9, 306.

"Yeah, we have some big kids, a unit that looks like (an offensive line) unit," Adams said.

"Coach (Phil) Gunder has a great background in offensive line play and

he really has those guys buying into what we're trying to do."

Searls at guard and Crutcher at tackle will be on the right side of the Trojans' line. Montgomery will be the left tackle and 6-2, 230-pound junior Vince Himebaugh the left guard. Jacob Benjamin, Jr. a 242-pound junior, centers the ball. Backing up the front liners will be senior Caleb McCaskey (5-9, 272), juniors Cole Barnes (5-10, 188) and Hunter Marquis (6-0, 244) and sophomore Desmon Bailey (6-0, 245).

In a tight end alignment, sophomore Nate Riegle (6-1, 190) and freshman Ashton Yeager (6-1, 203) will likely man that position.

"We do have that package, that personnel set," Adams said. "It depends on what the defense is giving us. That's what our offense is all about, seeing what the defense is doing and how we react to it."

Experience at the skill positions gives Adams and the Trojans that option.

**See ADAMS, T32**

**2021 SCHEDULE**

Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug. 20	Anthony Wayne	H
27	Perrysburg	A
Sept. 3	Bowling Green	H
10	Toledo Central Catholic	A*
17	Toledo Whitmer	A*
24	Fremont Ross	H*
Oct. 1	Toledo St. Francis	H*
8	Oregon Clay	A*
15	Tol. St. John's	A*
22	Lima Senior	H*

# Findlay TROJANS



**2020 RESULTS**

2020 RESULTS	POSTSEASON
Toledo Whitmer 31-21	Springboro 19-28
Fremont Ross 31-18	
Toldo St. John's 24-25	
Lima Senior 31-6	

**RECORD BOOK**

Year	Record	Year	Record
2020	3-2	2015	6-4
2019	4-6	2014	6-4
2018	4-6	2013	2-8
2017	4-6	2012	8-2
2016	7-4	2011	9-2

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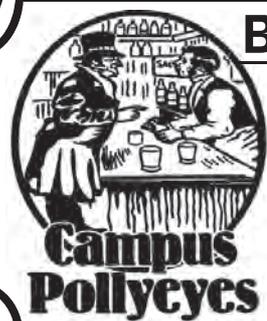
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Cont from ADAMS, T31

Max Roth, an excellent all-around athlete who has received some scholarship offers in basketball, will be a three-year starter at quarterback. Alex Theis (107 yards rushing, 1 TD) and Isaac James (418 yards, 4 TDs) have experience in the backfield, long with Dallas DeLaCruz and Sam Weihrauch and Ben Ireland, an all-Ohio receiver, will be on the outside along with Justin Roth, Donavan Harris (5-7, 145, jr.) and Antwan Murphy (5-8, 146, jr.).

"Alex Theis is a guy we feel is ready to break out," Adams said. "He's quick, he's got some speed, he's got some twists ... I think he

can surprise some people this year."

A two-time all-state pick, Ireland caught 28 passes for 388 yards and five touchdowns in 2020, and has 57 catches for 1,058 yards and 15 TDs over the past two seasons. Roth caught nine passes for 181 yards.

"We call those guys Benny and the Jets," Adams said of his receiving corps. "We feel we have a lot of depth at that position."

In 10 games as a starter (he was injured midway through the 2019 season) Max Roth has thrown for 1,386 yards and 12 touchdowns and rushed for 544 yards and another four scores.

"Max is a big-time player, a competitor," Adams said. "You see that on the basketball floor. He loves to have the ball in his hands, he loves to make plays, he just loves to compete."

Findlay appears set now and in the future at the position with Roth's backup expected to be Ryan Montgomery, who may surpass his brother Luke in Division I offers. Though he has yet to take a snap in a regular-season varsity game, the 6-2, 180-pound freshman has been so impressive in summer camps he has already received a number of offers, including one from Michigan.

"Right now he's the next guy up," Adams said.

Findlay's offensive experience provides a number of options.

And Adams likes options.

"We're a multiple team," he said. "We can basically be in anything from a pro-I to an empty set. We have the ability to spread it out,

which I think most of our personnel tends to that look.

"We want to be physical, run the ball, be smart with the pass .... We want to do whatever it takes to win the ball game, and that's taking advantage of what the defense gives us."

Though projected as an offensive lineman at the next level, Luke Montgomery was all-Ohio as a freshman (honorable mention) and sophomore (second team, 20 tackles 4 tfl) on the defensive side of the ball. He'll still see time there, along with Riegel and Dylan Stacey (5-11, 233, jr.)

"Nate Riegle has a ridiculous motor," Adams said. "He has a crazy work ethic, a starvation to be good and be dominant."

Graduation hit Findlay fairly hard defensively with the loss of Laith Salama (28 tackles), Declan Adkins (21, 4 tfl), Micah Grembling (21), Nate Sterling (21) Elisa Baxter (18) and Tanner Herz (19, 2 sacks).

Sam Weihrauch, who

led Findlay with seven tackles for loss and 37 total tackles, returns at middle linebacker. Also back are seniors Terrion Ross (15 tackles), Brayden Layne (19), who led the team with 18 solo stops, and Justin Roth (14), who shared the team lead for pass break-ups with four.

Junior Connor Harp will also step in at linebacker, and Adams has been impressed with the play of returning letterman Kam Stagnolia, a 5-7, 137-pound senior.

"He's one of the smaller guys on the team," Adams said. "But pound for pound he's one of the toughest"

Trace Robinson returns to handle the place-kicking duties after converting 15 of 16 PAT kicks and booting five field goals. Max Roth did the punting, earning second-team all-Northwest District honors by averaging 36.6 yards a boot and pinning the opposition inside the 20 on half of his 14 kicks.

**"We have kids coming back with great skills on the outside, some pretty darn good athletes. But mostly I think we have the personnel that matches what I want to do, and that's establish the run game up front and stop the run on defense. We want to establish a culture of unity but also of absolute toughness. I want to see confidence in your technique with a good sprinkling of want-to. That's a great combination for physicality."**

STEFAN ADAMS,  
FINDLAY HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL COACH

**"We're a multiple team. We can basically be in anything from a pro-I to an empty set. We have the ability to spread it out, which I think most of our personnel tends to that look."**

STEFAN ADAMS,  
FINDLAY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

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## 2021 BLUE DEVIL ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Brayden Frederick	Sr.	6-0	160	15	Dylan Ellis	Jr.	5-11	165	40	Bryce Conti	Sr.	6-1	170	56	Easton Korody	Sr.	6-5	275
3	Carter Smiley	So.	5-7	135	16	Austin Niederkoher	So.	5-11	160	42	Ethan Bretz	Jr.	5-8	165	57	Jacob Scott	Sr.	5-11	225
4	Sam Cole	Fr.	6-2	138	23	Dominic Yeater	So.	6-2	160	44	Cooper Brodman	Sr.	5-9	160	58	Cash Hartley	So.	5-6	171
5	Kayden Burgei	Fr.	5-8	130	24	Jordan Vallejo	Sr.	6-1	265	45	Nathan Brodman	So.	6-3	190	59	Jonah Peters	So.	6-2	190
6	Jordan Mattimoe	Jr.	5-10	135	25	Layne Barger	Jr.	6-0	157	46	Jeremiah Patton	Sr.	5-11	195	63	Nathan Gery	Fr.	5-8	122
7	Kasen Sherman	Fr.	5-7	118	26	Gage Summit	Jr.	6-0	170	49	Isaac Carman	Sr.	5-8	245	65	Dalton Myers	Fr.	5-8	157
8	Doug Pinkerton	So.	5-8	135	27	Nicholas Putnam	So.	5-10	145	50	Tyler Bretz	Fr.	5-11	150	66	Cameron Penwell	Fr.	5-11	165
9	Alexander Putnam	So.	6-2	170	28	Gavin Snyder	Fr.	5-7	175	51	Cameron Pahl	Sr.	6-0	215	67	Luke Steen	Fr.	5-3	135
10	Derek Lonsway	Sr.	6-1	180	29	Brandon Tanner	Fr.	5-6	136	52	Mitchell Boes	So.	6-2	198	68	Logan Kessler	So.	5-11	205
11	Lance Woods	Sr.	5-11	180	32	Landen Kemmerly	Jr.	6-0	200	53	Collin Ferguson	Sr.	6-2	260	70	Hunter Row	Fr.	5-9	138
12	Anthony Bell	Jr.	5-11	156	33	Jack Van Sky	Fr.	5-10	130	54	Ashton Clauss	Sr.	5-11	212	71	Trennen Stoll	Sr.	6-2	260
13	Lance Rickle	Jr.	5-10	165	36	Duane Gibson	So.	6-0	190	55	Carson Pahl	Sr.	6-0	203					
14	Conner Norden	So.	5-11	160	38	Owen Steinmetz	Fr.	5-10	129										

# 'This team is something special'

By MATT NYE

MNYE@ADVERTISER-TRIBUNE.COM

CAREY — There's no secret, Week 1 of the high school football season can't come soon enough.

Especially for Carey coach Jonathon Mershman, with a trip to Hopewell-Loudon awaiting his Blue Devils.

Both teams bring back a lot of experience, especially in the playoffs the past two seasons for Carey.

Two years ago, Carey made a run to the regional final, and last year it made it to the third round before being bounced by a tough Archbold squad on the road.

Mershman lost some quality players to graduation, including Cade Crawford and Ian Yeater, who are both playing D-III college ball this fall.

But the cupboard certainly isn't bare.

"A lot of these guys have got experience from, you know, their sophomore year and from last year," Mershman said. "So, we're working on those things. We're building off of that and just

finding our weaknesses and trying to work, you know, clean stuff up. So getting ready for a really excellent game one.

"The offseason went really well for us. We had a lot of seniors in the weight room that, you know, led things and they did a fantastic job being great leaders in the weight room and showing them how things were done. I thought we had a really good offseason, but right now we haven't got down to our captains yet but, I think overall our leadership is really high right now. I think everybody's doing a fantastic job and I think we're ready to go."

Replacing Crawford (481 yards rushing, 381 yards receiving), Yeater (185 yards receiving), Jacob Reinhart (53 tackles) and Hayden Nash (22 tackles, 3 INTs) will be tough, but Carey has some depth and some youth ready for their turn to step in.

"We lost a couple of guys with Crawford and Ian Yeater, they're going off to college play on offense.

**"I think there's a lot of tough teams and if you don't come ready to play every week, and I know it's cliché to say, but it is what it is. You know I'm not overlooking anybody in our league. I know we always get everybody's best and they're always willing to show us their best side. So we've gotta be ready."**

JONATHAN MERSHMAN,  
CAREY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH

And those guys are hard to replace, but I got some guys that are eager to try to replace them," Mershman said. "I believe that they can get the job done, maybe not just as well, but I mean, pretty darn close. And I'm pretty excited about those guys trying to fill those roles."

Carey does have some solid returners as well.

Derek Lonsway returns under center. He threw for 1,370 yards with 15 TDs and seven picks last year and ran for another 636 yards and five scores in his first season as a starter.

Receiver Bryce Conti caught 22 passes for 535

yards and six TDs and offensive tackle Easton Korody was named second-team all-Ohio. He's getting some Division I offers as well. Anthony Bell was named the special teams player of the year in the N10.

Those are some pretty good pieces to lean on.

The offense is coming along, Mershman said, but he pointed to the defense being the real strength of the team in the early part of the season.

The defense brings back Landon Kemmerley at linebacker, who recorded 88 tackles, two sacks, two forced fumbles and 16 tack-

les for loss. Gage Summit had 54 tackles, three forced fumbles, three sacks and nine TFLs and Trennen Stoll at defensive tackle (37 tackles, 6 TFLs, 3rd-team all-Ohio). Conti returns at his safety spot where he earned first-team all-Ohio. He recorded 35 tackles and four INTs.

"We are always working on it, but I think the strength right now is our defense. I do think our linebackers in the scrimmage we're flying around really well, and I'm just really proud of the way they adjusted against McComb.

"You know, there are some things that we haven't gone over yet, but I thought as the scrimmage went on, they adjusted within the game really well. And that was something I was really proud of."

The defense will have to be ready to go in Week 1 with a talented, experience H-L squad ready to go. Then the Blue Devils travel to Galion and then host Toledo Waite.

Beyond the exciting

Week 1 game, Mershman said he likes the competition of the non-league schedule, which will definitely get the Blue Devils ready for N10 play.

Going into the season, the N10 might be wide open, but the usual suspects will likely be battling for the title.

"Wynford is always tough. You know, they got a program," Mershman said. "It's still going to be a tough year for anybody, not just us. Mohawk's got a program, so they're going to be tough. And you never know what Upper (Sandusky) has, when they get 65, 70 guys out, you never know who they're going to have.

"I think there's a lot of tough teams and if you don't come ready to play every week, and I know it's cliché to say, but it is what it is. You know I'm not overlooking anybody in our league. I know we always get everybody's best and they're always willing to show us their best side. So we've gotta be ready."



**2021 SCHEDULE**

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Hopewell-Loudon	A
	27	Galion	A
Sept.	3	Waite	H
	10	Colonel Crawford	H*
	17	Mohawk	H*
	24	Bucyrus	H*
Oct.	1	Upper Sandusky	A*
	8	Seneca East	A*
	15	Wynford	H*
	22	Buckeye Central	A*

# Carey

## BLUE DEVILS



**2020 RESULTS**

COLONEL CRAWFORD	7-16	WYNFORD	31-23
MOHAWK	20-12	TINORA	48-7
BUCYRUS	69-0		
UPPER SANDUSKY	64-0		
SENECA EAST	49-0		

**POSTSEASON**

MONTPELIER	63-0
CRESTVIEW	42-14
ARCHBOLD	28-35

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	8-2	2015	4-6
2019	7-6	2014	8-2
2018	7-4	2013	7-3
2017	8-4	2012	8-2
2016	6-4	2011	8-3

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No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Evan Hill	Jr.	5-11	155	15	Alex Rosario	So.	5-10	140	34	Aidan Gallant	Sr.	6-0	195	54	Aaron Flowers	Jr.	6-1	200
3	Kaden Holman	So.	6-0	170	16	Dalton Shock	Fr.	5-7	110	37	Noah Stevenson	Jr.	6-0	180	55	Collin Bills	Jr.	6-0	275
4	Peyton Bosley	Fr.	5-11	155	17	Justin Heilman	Fr.	5-7	125	40	Nathan Lewis	Fr.	5-11	165	56	Karson Alban	Jr.	5-8	190
5	Gavin Frey	So.	5-7	135	18	Noah Hale	So.	6-0	160	41	Gavin Cole	Jr.	5-11	150	57	DJ Goulding	Jr.	6-0	215
6	Darrin Bigler	Sr.	6-0	150	19	Tobi Platt	Jr.	6-2	190	42	Carson Barrows	Jr.	5-7	150	58	Cameron Vince	Sr.	6-0	200
7	Gage Frey	Sr.	5-10	165	22	Levi Allen	Jr.	5-11	180	44	Caleb Clary	Jr.	5-7	140	59	Carson VanHorn	Sr.	5-5	215
8	Karson Stombaugh	Jr.	6-0	155	23	Ethan Hill	So.	5-7	130	45	Logan Mooney	So.	5-10	130	60	Ethan Compton	So.	5-11	155
9	Blaise Gallant	So.	5-11	175	24	Jacob Pever	Jr.	6-2	150	47	Brayden Chester	So.	5-11	190	61	Roger Ball	So.	5-6	230
10	Tommy Brown	Jr.	5-8	135	25	Levi Lamb	Jr.	6-0	160	50	Logan Risner	Sr.	5-7	225	63	Max Traxler	Fr.	5-8	140
11	Chayce Thiel	So.	5-9	140	27	Kail Vince	Fr.	5-7	150	51	Braxton Johnson	Sr.	6-0	230	64	Coen Shumaker	So.	5-10	230
12	Jacob Halter	So.	6-0	150	29	Kelby McGrew	So.	5-9	165	52	Degan Eldridge	Jr.	5-10	230	65	Kaleb Swavel	Fr.	5-6	185
13	Zach Sheaffer	Sr.	6-2	165	30	Lane Montgomery	Jr.	5-9	160	53	Damon Ward	So.	5-7	170	66	Braden Spears	Fr.	5-8	150
14	Landon Kitchen	So.	5-8	140	32	Kaleb Francis	Fr.	5-4	130										

# More experienced Rams try to feed off last season's finish

By JOSH MORGRET  
JMORGRET@ADVERTISER-TRIBUNE.COM

UPPER SANDUSKY – Being thrown into the fire early sometimes can evolve into good results.

Last year, Upper Sandusky had a young team, forcing many kids into roles that they not have been ready for. But, that has allowed the Rams to take an experienced team into 2021 under fourth-year head coach Russell Hall.

“We had a very young team last year with six seniors,” Hall said. “The younger guys last year had to step up and mature a little early. A lot of them made a jump from playing freshman football the year before to all of a sudden playing varsity minutes. It was tough, but as the year went on, we kept improving. It really showed throughout the season as we ended the season with two straight wins. Our execution was a lot better and sharper.”

Upper Sandusky started the year 1-6 before finishing off the season with high-

scoring wins over Bucyrus and Willard.

“We tried to carry that into the entire offseason and keep getting better every single day. That is the nice thing about having six seniors the year before is most of your team comes back,” Hall said. “A lot of these guys have varsity playing experience – not necessarily starting – but rotating in and things like that. They have continued to work. They know what it takes and they know how important it is to keep getting better. They know how important it is to execute and do your one job that you need to do on that job.”

If the Rams want to be successful, they must start on the defensive side of the ball. Upper Sandusky allowed an average of 45.7 points per game including a combined 132 points in consecutive losses to Carey and Wynford in the middle of the season.

“We started four sophomores last year on our defensive line. The best

thing about that is this year they are coming back as juniors,” Hall said. “That is always a plus. We rotated other guys last year and one guy we rotated graduated. There are some other guys that have really stepped up so that we can feel comfortable rotating some guys in. At linebacker, we lost Blake Herbert, but Aiden Gallant is back. There were some other guys that got to get in on special teams last year.”

The Rams look to start sophomore Kaden Holman at quarterback. He completed 51 of 89 passes (57.3%, second in Northern 10 Athletic Conference) for

**“I just want to continue to see the constant improvement. We have slowly been building that. It is not easy to do. We are working at it and we are working hard. We are emphasizing the team over the individual – people with experience within the different position groups to not only keep challenging each other to get better, but the players that are new, to help them develop and enhance along the way.”**

RUSSELL HALL,  
UPPER SANDUSKY HIGH SCHOOL HEAD COACH

604 yards and eight touchdowns. Holman split time with Keegan Iles (39/100, 579 yards, four TD) and Jordan Wright (18/31, 325 yards, two TD).

“This is the first time in my four years as coach

that we have a returning quarterback as a starter,” Hall said. “He understands it and we have a backup quarterback that is also a sophomore actually. Caden ended up starting the last couple games for us as a

freshman, which is a tough task. He calmed down and he got used to it. He got better and better every game. He has continued to improve as well.”

Holman will need time

See RAMS, T40



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	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	River Valley	H
	27	Mount Gilead	A
Sept.	3	Galion	A
	10	Mohawk	H*
	17	Colonel Crawford	H*
	24	Buckeye Central	A*
Oct.	1	Carey	H*
	8	Wynford	A*
	15	Seneca East	H*
	22	Bucyrus	A*

# Upper Sandusky

## RAMS



**2020 RESULTS**

Mohawk	0-42	Seneca East	7-41
Colonel Crawford	19-54	Firelands	20-59
Buckeye Central	26-18	Bucyrus	62-34
Carey	0-64	Willard	41-31
Wynford	21-68		

**RECORD BOOK**

2020	3-6	2015	3-7
2019	2-8	2014	2-8
2018	3-7	2013	7-3
2017	3-7	2012	7-4
2016	4-6	2011	5-5

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## 2021 TITAN ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
1	Ethan Metzger	Fr.	5-6	130	17	Nick Ellerbrock	So.	5-8	155	45	Dawson Maag	Jr.	6-0	140	64	Trevor Strite	So.	5-8	190
2	Walker Buddelmeyer	Sr.	6-3	185	18	Walter Ross	Jr.	6-2	175	47	Wilson Otto	Sr.	5-10	190	65	Cael Hoehn	Sr.	6-3	240
3	Logan Maas	Fr.	5-8	163	19	Jayden Stechschulte	Fr.	5-7	150	47	Grant Evers	Fr.	5-8	130	70	Landyn Schulte	Fr.	5-8	229
2	Grant Schroeder	So.	6-0	162	20	Justin Pope	Jr.	5-6	138	50	Kaleb Yoder	Jr.	5-10	194	71	Weston Schroeder	So.	5-10	215
5	Kolton Schroeder	Fr.	5-8	122	21	Colin White	So.	6-3	185	51	Ben Kahle	Sr.	6-2	245	72	Fernando Valle	Jr.	5-8	200
6	Rodney Meyer	Sr.	6-0	175	22	Landon Morman	Jr.	6-0	160	52	Beau Nienberg	Sr.	6-3	230	72	William Gulker	Fr.	5-10	170
7	Alex Macke	So.	5-10	175	23	Jordan Metzger	So.	5-8	135	53	Grant Kahle	So.	5-6	150	73	Hayden Kaufman	Fr.	5-9	176
8	Griffin Seimet	So.	5-9	188	24	Chase Faber	Jr.	5-10	155	54	Nathan Dulle	Fr.	5-6	120	74	Sam Becker	Sr.	6-3	245
9	Griffin Beckett	Fr.	5-8	155	32	Ian Fenbert	Sr.	6-0	185	55	Grant Schmitz	Fr.	5-7	110	75	Evan Cox	Jr.	5-9	197
10	Landon Jordan	Sr.	6-1	185	35	Clayton Inkrott	Sr.	5-7	170	56	Will Schmitz	Jr.	6-1	188	76	Cooper Niese	So.	5-10	240
10	Kaiden Fenbert	Fr.	5-10	131	35	Ajani Thomas	Fr.	5-6	150	57	Austin Maas	Jr.	6-0	175	78	Spencer Alt	Sr.	6-1	225
11	Aden Fisher	Sr.	6-2	170	36	Parker Schnipke	Sr.	6-0	173	58	Cole Kleman	Fr.	5-4	160	78	Dylan Siefker	Fr.	5-7	200
12	Cy Rump	Jr.	6-0	175	36	Caylee Verhoff	Fr.	5-3	127	59	Dylan Birkemeier	Sr.	6-2	210	79	Bradley Bockrath	So.	6-0	330
12	Peyton Kuhlman	Fr.	5-9	140	41	Owen Thomas	Sr.	5-6	150	60	Austin Haley	Fr.	5-10	270	81	Manny Carrillo	Jr.	5-8	146
13	Trevor Cantrell	Sr.	6-0	170	42	Alec Schroeder	So.	6-1	190	62	Tyler Leopold	Sr.	6-5	310	84	Larkin Felkey	Fr.	5-5	120
14	Caleb Kuhlman	Sr.	6-0	190	43	Mason Vogt	Fr.	5-10	170	63	Hunter Conn	Sr.	5-10	235	85	Dane Duling	Fr.	5-10	145
14	Vinnie Brinkman	Fr.	5-10	170	44	Connor Kitchen	So.	6-2	215										

# Senior-heavy Titans prep for another strong season

BY DAVE HANNEMAN  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

OTTAWA — Like most schools, picture day includes a traditional 'seniors-only' photo for those players entering their final season.

At Ottawa-Glandorf, they probably needed a wide-angle lens to get it done.

"Two of the kids are kickers. Another is a first-year kid who wanted to come out and be part of (the team), but yeah, we got a quite a few," O-G coach Ken Schriener said of his 20-man senior class, one of the largest in his 26 seasons as O-G's head coach.

"It's a really good group of kids. A lot may not necessarily have been starters, but they've been on the field quite a bit. There's good experience there, and hopefully we can find some success with it."

Schriener has built a career around finding success at a school often tagged more for its basketball accomplishments. Despite being one of the smallest schools in the rugged Western Buckeye League, O-G has compiled a 184-95 record under

Schriener and made 15 trips to the playoffs, reaching the state semifinals in 2009 and making three other appearances in the regional championship game.

Last year's playoff run (three games) may not have been as long as Schriener had hoped. But the Titans went 7-2 in the COVID-19 scrambled season and were the only team to beat Division IV state champion Van Wert, a pivotal victory that earned O-G (5-1) a share of its sixth Western Buckeye League football title since 2002.

Graduation did hit O-G in key areas, especially the skilled positions. Brennen Blevins, a third-team all-Ohio receiver, graduated, along with running back and third-team all-state linebacker Will Kaufman. Also gone is quarterback Jacob Balbaugh, who by necessity (re: injuries to returning starters) and design, ended up being a four-year starter for the Titans.

Schriener has not only 20 seniors, but 25 returning lettermen. And a bunch of those lettermen are hunkered down right where a guy like Schriener, an all-Ohio lineman during his

prep days at Tiffin Calvert who went on to play for BGSU, loves seeing them.

"If you'd ask anybody what they would prefer to have back, an experienced backfield or an experienced line, and as far as I'm concerned it would be the offensive line," Schriener said.

"You can protect inexperience with a good offensive line."

Three starters return on O-G's all-senior offensive front. Heading up that group is Tyler Leopold, a 6-foot-5, 310-pound senior who has verbally committed to play college ball for Akron. Leopold was a Division V first-team all-Ohio selection last season, when he was also the Western Buckeye League and the Northwest District Division V Lineman of the Year as well.

Seniors Cael Hoehn (6-3, 240) and Beau Nienberg (6-3, 230) are returning starters as well. Spencer Alt (6-1, 225) moves into the starting lineup after seeing role time last season, and Ben Kahle (6-2, 245) steps in at center.

Schriener has been impressed by the group's numbers that don't just

appear under headings like height, weight and bench press.

"The way defenses are playing now, moving people around and all over the place, the days of just lining up and knocking people off the ball are gone. You have to be more creative," Schriener said.

"I tell the guys there are going to be times on the field when they are going to see things happen and they will have to adjust. This is a good group, an intelligent group, and I'll take smart guys every time. They all have pretty good IQs, and pretty good football IQs as well."

Landon Jordan, a 6-1, 185-pound senior who backed up Balbaugh the past couple of seasons, steps in at quarterback.

"He's got a good arm, he's athletic as heck and he's a threat to run," Schriener said. "Jacob (Balbaugh) was not as much of a run threat, but he was a super intelligent kid who made a lot of plays for us as a four-year starter."

On the outside, O-G will be counting on Caleb Kuhlman, a second-team all-WBL and all-district

selection, and Colin White, an athletic 6-3 sophomore who has already been offered a basketball scholarship by the University of Toledo. Senior Walker Buddelmeyer (6-3, 185) will also be in the mix at wide receiver

Parker Schnipke (6-0, 173, sr.) returns in the backfield, with Ian Fenbert (6-0, 185, sr.), Cy Rump (6-0, 175, jr.) and sophomore Alec Schroeder (6-1, 190) helping to carry the load as well.

"We have a number of weapons. We have to find out who the playmakers are, who can get us the big play, who can put us in the end zone," Schriener said.

The upside of O-G's experience on the offensive line is tempered by the fact most if not all will be doing double duty on defense as well.

"My big concern right now is depth. We don't have a whole lot (of depth) behind those guys right now, so we have got to develop some depth," Schriener said.

"We don't rotate our offensive line. We do rotate defensive linemen quite a bit. Brian Heebsh, our defensive coordinator, does

a fantastic job with that, making sure everybody is ready to go."

It's on the defensive side of the ball where Schriener feels O-G can make best use of its returning experience and overall athletic ability.

"I think our defense can be pretty good," Schriener said of the Titans, who allowed an average of 16.2 points a game last season.

"Our base will be a three-man front, but after that I can't tell you because we are so multiple. Sometimes we'll have a three-stack, sometimes we'll have four linebackers, sometimes we'll bring a safety up in the middle.

"Brian (Heebsh) has dabbled in a lot of things. He's very versatile and our defense is very versatile. If I was running an offense against him, I'm not sure how I would attack it."

Behind the defensive front, Fenbert, Rump and Kuhlman will be the linebackers. Trevor Cantrell (6-0, 170, sr.) and Landon Morman (6-0, 160, jr.) return at the corners, with White, Buddelmeyer and Rodney Meyer (6-0, 175, sr.) the safeties.



Photos by KENT TARBOX / The Courier

OTTAWA-GLANDORF teammates Spencer Alt (78) and Parker Schnipke (36), above left, bring down Otsego's Trent Leiter during last year's postseason game. Ottawa-Glandorf's Murray Niese (4), above right, also tackled Otsego's Ryan Gray (9) and Cy Rump (12), right, brought down quarterback Joseph Dzierwa (14).

2021 SCHEDULE

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Eastwood	A
	27	Wapakoneta	H*
	3	Elida	A*
Sept.	10	St. Marys Memorial	H*
	17	Lima Bath	H*
	24	Van Wert	A*
	1	Celina	A*
Oct.	8	Lima Shawnee	H*
	15	Defiance	H*
	22	Kenton	A*

# Ottawa-Glandorf

## TITANS



2020 RESULTS

Defiance	48-13	Kenton	34-27
Elida	7-14		
St. Marys Mem.	27-20, 2 OT		
Lima Bath	20-17		
Van Wert	35-34		

POSTSEASON

Orrville	62-0	2020	7-2	2015	6-4
Northwestern	21-0	2019	9-4	2014	8-2
Otsego	6-21	2018	5-5	2013	6-4
		2017	3-7	2012	12-1
		2016	11-2	2011	8-3

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Cont from RAMS, T36

to allow plays to develop. The offensive line is experienced for the Rams. Senior Gage Frey is back at running back after 80 carries for 494 yards and four scores last year. Iles ran 118 times for 555 yards and seven touchdowns in 2020. Junior Evan Hill topped the Rams last year with a league-high 39 receptions for 372 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

"A lot of the guys are back. Last year we had one senior on the offensive line with Blake Herbert," Hall said. "He graduated, but we had five or six other guys that were starting or playing big minutes last year that have come back. That's what is nice this year — we have guys up front that have that varsity game experience — and it shows. They know what it takes to compete at the varsity level to give yourself the best chance to win. It takes effort and they are working on that to get better."

Outside of last year's automatic bid to the playoffs, the Rams have only been in the postseason once since 2004.

"I just want to continue to see the constant improvement," Hall said. "We have slowly been building that. It is not easy to do. We are working at it and we are working hard. We are emphasizing the team over the individual — people with experience within the different position groups to not only keep challenging each other to get better, but the players that are new, to help them develop and enhance along the way."

With players continuing to get better and improve their game, it takes time and studying the in's and out's of what is being done correctly — but also what

can be done better.

"We try and film as much as we can and evaluate the boys every single day on every single rep that we can," Hall said. "It takes time, but it is right there. Then, we can let the kids know what they need to work on to get better if they want to move up and improve. So far, they have taken that challenge and tried to fix their biggest problems. We just keep progressing and that is good to see."

Mistakes will happen, but it is what you learn from the mistake that will make you a better player, teammate, and individual in general.

"If you mess up, we tell them to do it at full-speed," Hall said. "Sometimes effort can make up for a bad play, whether on offense, defense, or special teams. If you go full-go and you miss your assignment and you are able to cover and you get to the guy with the ball, it turns out to be a good play. If you misread your read on defense, effort can help make up for that. It is the same thing on offense."

Hall continues to emphasize that it is a team effort. If you work as a team, you will succeed as an individual.

"It is not so much about the individual," Hall said. "We do have some very talented individuals, but it is not like basketball and that is something I stress. If you have LeBron James on your team in basketball, you are going to be pretty good. All you have to do is stay out of the way and he will take care of it. But in football, it is not really like that unless you have that caliber of player in high school that is going to eventually go on and play in the NFL."

# Chasing Tide: Alabama is No. 1 in preseason AP Top 25 again



VASHA HUNT / The Associated Press

ALABAMA DEFENSIVE coordinator Pete Golding works with linebacker Christian Harris (8) as Henry To'oTo'o (10) listens at left during the NCAA college football team's practice in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Another college football season will start with everyone chasing the Tide. Alabama is No. 1 in The Associated Press Top 25 preseason college football poll.

Cont from EARLIER, T15

"Honestly, I think it's a money grab for the state," Kidwell said. "I understand why they did it—they want to recoup some of the money they lost last year with COVID. I hope they go back to eight or go to 12, but I don't think you need to go to 16 this year. It wasn't what the coaches association asked, so there's a little riff there, but it is what it is."

It's not just that the playoffs were expanded; it's also that coaches felt as if they had no say in the matter.

"I'm ok with letting a few more teams in there because last year we took advantage of the bye week we

were given," Schafer said. "But 73% of coaches in Ohio were not in favor of the expanding the playoffs [to 16], but they did it anyway and it just doesn't make sense."

There's also concern about the safety of players, being put at risk with more games being played.

"A 16-seed playing on 1-seed — that's an injury waiting to happen," Schafer said. "A 16-seeded team knocking off a 1-seed is probably not going to happen and more importantly, those higher-seeded teams just want to get healthy for that next game. There's no reason that they need to play a 16-seed to play a 1-seed."

By RALPH D. RUSSO  
AP COLLEGE FOOTBALL WRITER

Another college football season will start with everyone chasing the Tide.

Alabama is No. 1 in The Associated Press Top 25 preseason poll for fourth time in the past six seasons.

Coming off its sixth national championship under Nick Saban, the Crimson Tide enters the season loaded with potential replacements for the record-breakers and NFL draft picks who have moved on, including Heisman Trophy winner DeVonta Smith.

Alabama received 47 of 63 first-place votes from the panel of sports writers and broadcasters in the poll presented by Regions Bank. Oklahoma is No. 2, just ahead of No. 3 Clemson (each received six first-place votes).

Ohio State, which lost to the Tide in last season's championship game, is No.

See TOP, T41

It's just dangerous in divisions VII and VII."

Garlock, however, sees it as a chance to get more great teams in the postseason.

"There are some teams that are playing well at the end of the year that maybe have a 7-3 or 6-4 record and are hitting a stride towards the end and hopefully that could be us this year," the L-B coach said. "We're young and I hope that we're playing our best football at the end and if we would slip along the way somewhere and now, we get a chance to get in the playoffs at 7-3 or 6-4. I think that's a great positive."

**Cont from TOP, T40**

4 after receiving a first-place vote. Georgia received three first-place votes and rounds out the top five.

The 2020 Buckeyes were emblematic of a bizarre season played through the pandemic, suiting up for only eight games after the Big Ten didn't kickoff until late October. The season was riddled with postponements, cancellations, and players and coaches missing games across the country because of COVID-19. There was little nonconference play and none among Power Five conference teams.

Amid all the chaos and frustration was a familiar ending: The season came to a close with Alabama on top.

Last year's Tide staked a claim as the greatest team of the Saban dynasty. Alabama went 13-0, facing 11 Southeastern Conference teams and playoff showdowns with Notre Dame and Ohio State.

"The challenge is you've got to rebuild with a lot of new players who will be younger, have new roles, less experience, and how do they respond to these new roles?" Saban said. "That's why rebuilding is a tremendous challenge. That's why it's very difficult to repeat."

The most powerful offense in the country lost Smith, quarterback Mac Jones and running back Najee Harris, all first-round NFL draft picks this year. The next wave of blue-chippers stepping into bigger roles includes running back Brian Robinson, receiver John Metchie and quarterback Bryce Young, a former five-star recruit from California.

"Bryce has endless potential," Saban said.

Since the AP started the preseason poll in 1950, only 11 teams that started No.

1 also ended the season as No. 1. Alabama was the last do it, in 2017, the middle season of three straight in which the Crimson Tide took the preseason top spot. Alabama finished second in 2016 and '18.

No program faces higher expectations than Alabama going into any season: The Crimson Tide is the only team in the country to start each of the last 13 seasons ranked in the top five.

And no program has been better at meeting those expectations: Along with the six national titles, the Tide has three more top-four finishes over the previous 12 years and has never ended a season ranked lower than 10th.

**POLL POINTS**

- Alabama is now tied with Ohio State for the second-most preseason No. 1 rankings with eight. Oklahoma has the most with 10.

- Only two teams have gone wire-to-wire as the No. 1 team in the country during a season. Southern California was the last in 2004, with Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart. The first was undefeated Florida State in 1999, possibly the best team of the Bobby Bowden era. Bowden died earlier this month at 91.

- No. 8 Cincinnati of the American Athletic Conference is the first team from outside the Power Five leagues to be ranked in the preseason top 10 since Louisville started ninth in 2012. That was the Cardinals' final season as a member of the AAC before joining the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The defending AAC champion Bearcats have the best preseason ranking for a non-Power Five or BCS conference team since Boise State was No. 5 to begin 2011. The Broncos out of the Mountain West finished that season No. 8.



**CLEMSON GATHERS** before the Sugar Bowl NCAA college football game against Ohio State in New Orleans last January. Clemson is No. 3 in The Associated Press Top 25 preseason college football poll.

BUTCH DILL / The Associated Press

**RARITIES AND FIRSTS**

- Sun Belt rivals No. 22 Coastal Carolina and No. 23 Louisiana-Lafayette are ranked in the preseason poll for the first time. It's the first time the conference has had any teams ranked in the preseason.

- No. 7 Iowa State is ranked in the preseason for the third straight season after having only one previous appearance in the preseason poll (1978). The Cyclones had never been ranked better than 20th to

begin a season. They also have never been ranked higher at any point than the No. 8 they reached last year on the way to finishing ninth.

- No. 10 North Carolina has its best preseason ranking since being No. 7 in 1997 during coach Mack Brown's first stint with the Tar Heels.

- No. 17 Indiana is ranked in the preseason poll for the first time since 1968. The Hoosiers finished last season at No. 12, the sec-

ond-best final ranking in program history. Indiana has never started and finished a season ranked.

**CONFERENCE CALL**

No. 6 Texas A&M starts with its best preseason ranking since 1995 when the Aggies were No. 3. Coach Jimbo Fisher's team also gives the SEC three teams in the top six, joining Alabama and Georgia.

Breakdown by conference:  
SEC — 5 (Nos. 1, 5, 6,

13, 16).

Big Ten — 5 (Nos. 4, 12, 17, 18, 19).

Pac-12 — 5 (Nos. 11, 15, 20, 24, 25).

ACC — 3 (Nos. 3, 10, 14).

Big 12 — 3 (No. 2, 7, 21).

Sun Belt — 2 (Nos. 22, 23).

American — 1 (No. 8).

Independent — 1 (No. 9).

# Taking a look at area NWC teams

By **DAVE HANNEMAN**  
DAVEHANNEMAN@THECOURIER.COM

Area teams will be looking to restock, reload and rebuild heading into Northwest Conference play this season.

One team will even be re-appearing in the NWC ranks.

## COLUMBUS GROVE

Columbus Grove (10-1), coming off three straight league championships, will be looking to restock after sustaining heavy graduation losses, including six all-Ohio players, from a talented senior class that not only reached the state semifinals in football (Division VI), but advanced to the state championship game in basketball (Division IV) as well.

Key among the vacated positions are wide receiver,

where the Bulldogs graduated first-team all-Ohio pick Gabe Clements (1,690 all-purpose yards, 12 TDs), and quarterback, where they are now without Blake Reynolds, a third-team all-state pick and four-year starter who last season threw for 1,747 yards, rushed for 535 and accounted for 32 touchdowns.

Also gone are all-Ohio linemen Gunner King, a first-team all-Ohio pick on defense, and second-team offensive lineman Jeff Meyer, along with Ezra Jones (third-team linebacker) and Jon Banal (honorable mention, DB).

Expectations aren't the only things up at Columbus Grove, though. Program numbers are strong and head coach Andy Schaefer, 25-8 with one outright

league title, two NWC championships and two solid playoff runs over the past three seasons, will be counting on some key returning veterans to mesh with some incoming talent that's been waiting to step up and have their turn at keeping things rolling.

Despite the graduation of Reynolds and Clement, Grove returns one of its top offensive weapons in Colin Metzger, a 5-foot-11, 205-pound senior running back who last season churned out 1,209 yards and scored 12 touchdowns. Also back is senior end Jacksen Schroeder, a first-team all-NWC receiver in 2020.

Anchoring the lines for the Bulldogs will be Mitch Douglas, a 6-1, 245-pound senior who last season was all-Northwest Conference on both offense (first team)

and defense (second team).

AJ Schaefer and Tad Koch, two juniors who will be three-year starters, will also be counted on on both sides of the football.

Grove returns an added weapon in Rece Verhoff. Considered one of the top kickers in the state, Verhoff was second-team all-Ohio last season and has connected on 13 field goals and 101 of 105 PAT kicks in his prep career.

## BLUFFTON

Bluffton (5-3) will be looking to reload in 2021 after what was one of the wilder up and down seasons — COVID or not — in school history.

The Pirates scored just 29 points in an 0-2 start to the season, but exploded for 62 points in one game

See NWC, T43

# Columbus Grove

## BULLDOGS



### 2021 SCHEDULE

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Pandora-Gilboa	A
	27	Paulding	H
Sept.	3	Patrick Henry	A
	10	Delphos Jefferson	A*
	17	Allen East	H*
	24	Leipsic	A*
Oct.	1	Convoy Crestview	H*
	8	Ada	A*
	15	Spencerville	H*
	22	Bluffton	H*

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**Cont from NWC, T42**  
and hit 50 or more in two others in winning five of their last six contests.

Bluffton's flexbone triple option offense averaged an impressive 34.6 points a game. But the defense gave up an average of 51.3 points in its three losses, and 40.1 a game overall.

An extremely young team, Bluffton had just four

seniors and six juniors on the 28-man 2020 roster. Graduation cost the Pirates an outstanding two-way threat in Tyson Shutler, a second-team all-NWC pick on both sides of the ball who rushed for 1,047 yards and 15 touchdowns, caught 33 passes for 363 yards and three more scores, and intercepted four passes on defense, returning all four for TDs.

Sixth-year Bluffton coach Jeff Richards welcomes back six all-league veterans, though, from a team that earned the program's most wins since the Pirates went 7-3 in 2015.

A good deal of that experience returns in the trenches, where 6-3, 303-pound senior Aaron Tabler was all-league on both offense (second team) and defense (honorable men-

tion). Trent Howard (6-0, 210, sr.) also received honorable mention all-NWC recognition on the offensive line, along with Jackson Wilson (6-4, 210, sr.) on the defensive front.

Nate Schaadt, a 6-1, 190-pound senior who threw for 542 yards and seven touchdowns and ran for another 503 yards and five scores in league play last season, will be a four-

year starter at quarterback.

Along with Jackson and Tabler up front, the Pirates' defense returns two honorable mention all-league veterans in junior linebacker Kameron Coughlan (5-9, 185) and junior defensive back Landyn Fleharty (5-10, 175).

**ADA**

At Ada (0-3), former Bellefontaine coach Toby

Smith (46-27 in 7 seasons) is being tasked with rebuilding a program that made 11 playoff appearances and compiled a 103-36 record during a 12-year run from 2006-2017, but has gone just 4-19 over the last three seasons.

Following an 0-3 start, and with safety issues a concern due to low num-

**See NWC, T44**

# Bluffton

## PIRATES



2021 SCHEDULE							
	Date	Opponent	Home/Away		Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Cory-Rawson	H		24	Convoy Crestview	H*
	27	Pandora-Gilboa	H	Oct.	1	Leipsic	H*
Sept.	3	Ayersville	A		8	Allen East	A*
	10	Spencerville	A*		15	Delphos Jefferson	H*
	17	Ada	A*		22	Columbus Grove	A*

2021 SCHEDULE			
	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Waynesfield-Goshen	A
	27	Arlington	A
Sept.	3	Hardin Northern	A
	10	Leipsic	H*
	17	Bluffton	H*



# Ada

## BULLDOGS

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**GOOD LUCK**  
**PIRATES!**

**Cont from NWC, T43**

bers, Ada pulled the plug just three games into the 2020 season.

Spencer Wall, a 5-11, 160-pound junior, saw some action at quarterback in those three games, however. Junior Ethan Murphy (6-2, 160, jr.) also saw playing time, along with senior linemen Brandon Paul (5-9, 255) and Kadin Phipps (5-8, 245).

**LEIPSIC**

Fifty-five years after leaving the Northwest Conference, Leipsic is jumping back in.

A member of the NWC from 1962-64, Leipsic switched over to the Blanchard Valley Conference in 1965. When Paulding left for the Green Meadows Conference, however, the NWC had a vacancy. Leipsic not only accepted an invitation to re-join the league, but BVC officials agreed to forego the customary two-year change-over procedure, meaning the Viking enter the 2021 season already full-fledged NWC members.

Traditionally a strong football program, especially under the direction of head coach Joe

Kirkendall (40-15 at Leipsic with five straight playoff appearances, 111-52 overall) Leipsic joins an eight-school alignment of Division IV and VII programs, including cross-county Putnam County rival Columbus Grove.

A bit young and untested after heavy graduation losses from a 2019 team that reached the regional finals, Leipsic started the 2020 season 2-3, with all three losses by lopsided margins: 42-0 to Liberty-Benton, 43-0 to Arlington, 51-0 to Lima Central Catholic. The Vikings finished strong, though, beating McComb (43-25), Spencerville (35-28) and Antwerp (41-13) before a COVID-related cancellation cut short their play-off run.

Going 5-3 was not a major letdown in a year Kirkendall predicted to be a bit of a rebuilding one for the Vikings. And while graduation did cost Leipsic a number of all-BVC talents — linemen Gabe Jimenez (second team) and Lorenzo Martinez (honorable mention), running back Lorenzo Walther (third team) and defensive back Tyler Sickmiller (third

team) — Kirkendall is counting on several returning veterans to make Leipsic's return to the NWC a competitive one.

Offensively, Leipsic returns third-team all-BVC quarterback Dillan Niese, a 6-3, 195-pound senior who threw for 611 yards and five touchdowns in league play a year ago. Also back is Fabian Pena, a four-year starter, and Trent Siefker, who as a freshman caught 20 passes for 300 yards and earned second-team all-BVC honors.

Up front, Leipsic returns three all-league linemen in Brayden Casteel (second team), Adrian Carillo (third team) and Kolby Chamberlin (honorable mention).

Spearheading Leipsic's defense will be first-team all-BVC linebacker Ethan Lammers, a 5-11, 195-pound senior who had six tackles for losses among his 53 total stops. Leipsic's secondary returns nearly intact with senior Blake Liffick, a second-team all-league defensive back, and Estevan Carrillo (5-11, 150) and Quin Schroeder (5-8, 140), who both started as freshmen.



# VIKINGS Leipsic

**2021 SCHEDULE**

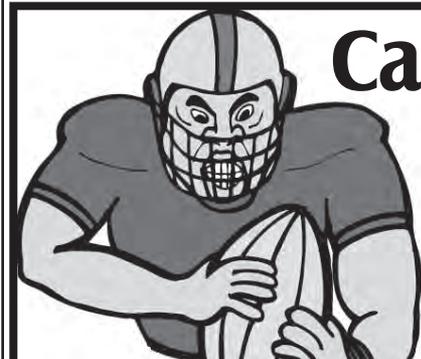
	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Liberty-Benton	A
	27	Fairview	H
Sept.	3	Tinora	A
	10	Ada	A*
	17	Spencerville	A*
Oct.	24	Columbus Grove	H*
	1	Bluffton	A*
	8	Delphos Jefferson	H*
	15	Allen East	H*
	22	Convoy Crestview	H*



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2021 CHIEFTAIN ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
2	Devin Falter	Sr.	5-10	165	19	Sherron Jones	Sr.	5-11	165	53	Brandon Boes	Sr.	6-4	290	71	Baron Fetro	Fr.	5-11	185
5	Blake Berrier	So.	5-10	150	21	Joe Colatruglio	Sr.	5-9	190	54	Haden Stahl	Jr.	5-11	255	72	Matthew Rybka	Sr.	5-10	280
6	Ried Jury	Sr.	6-0	185	23	Braylon Smith	Jr.	6-3	250	55	Noah Kubitz	So.	5-9	175	73	Chase Jorgensen	Jr.	6-2	225
7	Adam Kreais	So.	6-3	165	24	Isaac Gaietto	Sr.	5-11	185	57	Vinny Fox	Fr.	5-8	150	75	Cooper Snyder	Fr.	5-10	160
9	Lance Crawford	Sr.	5-9	150	25	Brayden Brickman	Fr.	5-7	135	59	Kade Nelson	Sr.	5-10	205	76	Jack Kerschner	Fr.	5-7	140
10	Evan Kreais	So.	6-4	160	28	Nico Garcia	Sr.	5-10	185	60	Ryan Cook	Sr.	5-10	250	77	Lucas Nutter	Sr.	6-0	280
11	Jagger Endicott	Jr.	5-10	160	32	Hayden Welly	Jr.	6-0	220	61	Ayden Fetro	10	6-1	260	78	Collin Masterson	Jr.	6-1	280
12	Braylon Martinez	Fr.	5-8	140	33	Jon Collene	Fr.	5-6	140	62	Octavio Garcia	Jr.	5-10	225	80	Lane Baker	So.	5-9	140
14	Tyler Fedele	Sr.	6-2	215	36	Eric Hoover	Sr.	5-11	165	63	Alex Steinhauser	Fr.	5-9	145	81	Matthew Wyman	Fr.	5-8	145
15	Major Strahm	Fr.	5-10	140	50	Wyatt Crow	Fr.	6-0	175	65	Tristan Biller	Fr.	5-7	140	84	George Beucler	Jr.	5-10	165
16	Gavin Jordan	Jr.	5-11	165	51	Mason Jorgensen	Fr.	5-9	210	66	Brodie Vitt	Sr.	5-11	215	85	Thomas Daniel	Fr.	5-9	155
18	Ashton Bour	Sr.	5-11	190	52	Erik Hossler	Jr.	6-0	205	70	Will Nutter	Fr.	6-2	200					

# Chieftains poised for another stellar season

By JOHN MONTGOMERY  
JMONTGOMERY@  
ADVERTISER-TRIBUNE.COM

BASCOM — To call Hopewell-Loudon favored to defend its conference crown would be obvious.

With 20 veterans — 17 seniors, 3 juniors — and plenty of starters back from a team that went 8-1 overall and 5-0 in Sandusky Bay Conference River Division play during a COVID-influ-

enced season, the Chieftains definitely have the base to build and improve upon last year's success.

In fact, this year is similar to 2020 in some ways for H-L. Although the Chieftains went just 4-6 overall in 2019, last year's team brought back a lot of experience and talent that H-L honed into a conference championship and a trip to the regional finals.

But while the Chieftains

were just one question mark among a host of question marks last year, coach Brian Colatruglio said 2021 will be different.

"Last year was a different year. You knew the season was going to be shortened, everybody was going to get into the playoffs and we were kind of an unknown. We thought we were better (than others thought) and it obviously turned out that we proved

that," he said.

"Coming into this year is a completely different mindset; kind of the hunters to the hunted. We're not sneaking up on anybody this year. We've got a ton back, everybody knows we're going to be good, so it's a different mindset," he said. "It's a different job for me. Last year I'm trying to convince them that they're good, this year I'm trying to convince them why they

were good last year. We've got to keep putting that work in and there is no limit to what we can do with this team."

A big part of that work will come on the defensive side.

Six starters return there, but H-L also graduated eight players who saw ample time on that side of the ball. And many of those returning on defense this year will find themselves

in new spots.

"The biggest thing for us from last year to this year, we're way faster on defense. When teams scored points on us (last year), our lack of speed was kind of what showed up and we knew we had to get faster," Colatruglio said. "So we moved a few people around. We moved some guys who were starters in one position last

See H-L, T46

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## 2021 SCHEDULE

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug.	20	Carey	H
Sept.	3	Fostoria	H
	10	Lakota	A*
	17	Margaretta	H*
	24	St. Mary Cen. Cath.	A*
Oct.	1	St. Joseph Cen. Cath.	H*
	8	Northwood	A
	15	Tiffin Calvert	H*
	22	Gibsonburg	A*

# Hopewell-Loudon

## CHIEFTAINS



## 2020 RESULTS

2020 RESULTS		POSTSEASON	
GIBSONBURG	27-13	PATRICK HENRY	41-6
MARGARETTA	42-21	LIMA PERRY	36-6
ST JOSEPH C.C.	40-13	ARLINGTON	42-35
LAKOTA	49-28	LIMA C.C.	20-62
TIFFIN CALVERT	35-10		

## RECORD BOOK

RECORD BOOK			
2020	8-1	2015	6-4
2019	4-6	2014	3-7
2018	4-6	2013	4-6
2017	3-7	2012	5-5
2016	5-5	2011	10-1

## Cont from H-L, T45

year to other positions just to get our fastest guys out onto the field."

Wherever the veterans play, they'll bring talent.

Senior Isaac Gaietto led the team with 52 tackles as a linebacker last year en route to a second-team district award. Classmate Eric Hoover tallied 36 stops and an interception alongside him.

Senior Ried Jury finished as a third-team All-Ohio defensive back after registering 20 tackles and three picks.

Senior Lance Crawford (33 tackles, 1 INT) and junior George Beucler (16 tackles, 1 INT, 1 fumble

recovery) contributed last year in the secondary, while seniors Brodie Vitt (31 tackles) and All-Ohio honorable mention pick Brandon Boes (26 tackles, 3 sacks) return after providing solid help along the line.

The Chieftains have just a few spots to fill on offense, and lots of talent everywhere else.

"We've got a ton of experience with our receivers and our starting quarterback and starting tailback, so there's only a couple spots (to fill)," Colatruglio said.

"We return four starters on the offensive line. That fifth spot, we really have about four guys that are pretty close to being varsity

players that are competing for that one starting spot," he said. "We have a couple juniors that have never played because they've been sitting behind the four starters we have back."

Boes (tackle), an honorable mention All-Ohio selection, is one of four starters back on the line. The others are seniors Matthew Rybka (center, first team SBC), Ryan Cook (guard, first team SBC) and Brodie Vitt (guard, second team SBC).

Senior Ashton Bour finished as first-team All-Ohio quarterback by throwing for 1,487 yards and 21 touchdowns and running for 1,108 yards and 16 more scores. He also kicked 38 PATs. He also earned first-

team district, first-team conference and SBC River Division most outstanding performer awards.

When Bour didn't run and throw, there were great odds senior Hayden Welly carried the ball. He racked up 816 yards and eight TDs on the ground on the way to SBC River Division first-team honors.

Jury hauled in 32 receptions for 465 yards and six scoring catches, and fellow seniors Sherron Jones (10-103, 3 TDs) and Nico Garcia (8-225, 4 TDs) also contributed.

While H-L has depth to fill that fifth lineman spot, Colatruglio said finding replacements at tight end and fullback are taking a

bit longer.

"We're still trying to sift our way through who's going to play those spots," he said.

And they've got to prepare for a more traditional regular season, something Colatruglio said will be a challenge after last year's playoffs regardless of record.

"We have to prepare physically and mentally for a full 10-game season, playing some non-league opponents that are pretty good. Our level of competition in the regular season is going to be much greater than it was last year," he said.

"Last year never felt like a grind because we

were just so happy to be out there, and it was such a short, fast season," he said. "Now we have to be able to push through. You're going to deal with little injuries, you're going to deal with just the ups and downs of a 10-game season."

But that's where the veteran leadership, especially from the senior class, plays a big role, he said.

"I love our senior class. A lot of three-year starters in this group," Colatruglio said. "We played a lot of them as sophomores when they weren't ready to play and we got our brains kicked in, and now these guys are seniors. They're ready, it's their time to really take our team."

**Cont from STROUD, T26**

football. Master Teague III returns as the top incumbent running back, but he's being pushed by others, including freshmen Miyan Williams and TreVeyon Henderson.

"They got a nice little vehicle to drive," offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson said of the QB candidates. "We'll see who can put their hands on and steer it the best."

**O-LINE RICHES**

Ohio State's offensive line is massive and talented. There is experience in Thayer Muford, who is being switched from tackle to guard, Harry Miller at center and Nicholas Petit-Frere at left tackle. Camp has been buzzing about 6-foot-8, 360-pound Dawand Jones, a junior who could win the starting job at right tackle.

"I got 10 guys (who can play)," offensive line coach Greg Studrawa said. "I think the backups would start at a lot of places."

**ON THE OTHER SIDE**

The Buckeyes' defensive line will be anchored by tackle Haskell Garrett, who took advantage of an extra year of eligibility offered due to the pandemic. He emerged as a star and leader last season after being shot in the face on the street last summer. Safety Josh Proctor and cornerback Sevyn Banks, both seniors, lead the secondary. The Buckeyes will have three new starters at linebacker.

**SCHEDULE**

No tune-up games to start the season this time for the Buckeyes. They open on Thursday night, Sept. 2, at Minnesota and come back home to face No. 11 Oregon in Week 2. Other key games will be at No. 17 Indiana on Oct. 23, at home against No. 19 Penn State on Oct. 30, at Michigan on Nov. 27 in the annual rivalry game. Prediction: 11-1.



Photos by PAUL VERNON / The Associated Press

**OHIO STATE** quarterback Jack Miller, above, throws on the sideline while C.J. Stroud, left, runs through a drill during a pair of spring football games held last April. Third-year Ohio State coach Ryan Day opens a preseason camp for the first time without a good idea of who will be the starting quarterback.

## 2021 ROYAL ROSTER

No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.	No.	Name	Grade	Ht.	Wt.
1	Mason Mossbarger	Jr.	5-11	180	15	Gunner Endicott	Sr.	5-9	160	45	Jesus Almarez	Fr.	5-5	155	63	Kyle Long	Jr.	5-10	170
2	Micah Oliver	So.	6-0	175	18	Clinton Ankey	So.	5-10	160	48	Milan Van Genne	So.	6-1	170	65	Luke Barringer	So.	6-0	210
3	Landon Murray	Jr.	6-0	170	20	Thomas Versyer	Jr.	5-10	160	50	Will Sorensen	Sr.	6-1	185	71	Tyler Baum	Sr.	5-5	240
4	Kyler Heiserman	Sr.	6-0	190	21	Mason Oliver	Jr.	5-9	180	51	Jack Hummel	Fr.	6-0	185	72	Jimmy Palmer	So.	5-10	220
5	Declan Rowe	Jr.	5-8	150	22	Andrew Traxler	Fr.	5-6	145	52	Ethan Baum	So.	5-6	190	74	Cody Edwards	So.	6-1	325
6	Collin Campbell	So.	5-7	125	23	Colton Bradford	Fr.	6-1	175	53	Zach May	Jr.	5-11	225	76	Colton Ickes	Sr.	5-10	230
7	Alex Arnold	Jr.	6-0	180	25	Lex Voska	Jr.	5-8	140	54	Owen Seedorf	So.	6-0	175	77	Seth Barringer	Sr.	6-4	290
8	Hayden Wickard	Jr.	6-3	190	26	Raymond Gallagher	Fr.	5-10	120	55	Trey Brossia	Sr.	5-10	210	78	Caleb Peery	Sr.	6-2	295
9	Brady Mareches	Fr.	5-10	130	27	James Jenkins	So.	5-9	160	56	Phillip Korner	So.	5-6	225	79	Jonathan Bodnar	Sr.	5-9	265
10	Cannon Endicott	Jr.	6-2	175	28	Frank Blair	Jr.	6-0	155	57	Vince Allen	Fr.	5-8	195	80	Peyton Schafer	Fr.	5-6	120
11	Brennan Hiser	So.	5-9	145	30	Gavin Solarik	Fr.	5-6	130	58	Casey Frank	Sr.	6-3	185	86	Dominic DeWitt	Fr.	5-3	110
12	Griffin Piper	Fr.	5-8	120	32	Eike Damerau	Jr.	6-1	150	59	Bryan Grilliot	Jr.	5-9	155	87	Aydan Gheen	So.	5-8	145
13	Pierson Parson	So.	5-8	175	33	James Blair	Fr.	5-8	135	60	Logan Bomer	Sr.	6-1	245					
14	Adam Meyer	Jr.	5-7	180	42	Connor Sterling	Fr.	5-9	150	61	Tanner Pennington	Jr.	5-10	225					

## 2021 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug. 20	Van Buren	H
27	Lakota	A
Sept. 3	Allen East	A
10	Fostoria	H*
17	Otsego	A*
24	Woodmore	A*
Oct. 1	Eastwood	H*
8	Lake	H*
15	Genoa	A*

## Elmwood

ROYALS



## 2020 RESULTS

Genoa	21-28	Eastwood	28-52
Rossford	26-17	Lakota	53-21
Fostoria	41-12	Liberty-Benton	13-33
Lake	13-30		
Woodmore	48-7		

## RECORD BOOK

2020	4-4	2015	2-8
2019	4-6	2014	1-9
2018	2-8	2013	1-9
2017	1-9	2012	4-6
2016	2-8	2011	4-6



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2021 SCHEDULE

	Date	Opponent	Home/Away
August	20	Oak Harbor	H
	27	Seneca East	A
September	3	Hopewell-Loudon	A
	10	Elmwood	A*
	17	Rossford	H*
	24	Genoa	A*
October	1	Otsego	H*
	8	Woodmore	A*
	15	Eastwood	H*
	22	Lake	H*

# Fostoria

REDMEN



## After winless season, Kidwell stressing improvement

By **JOHN MONTGOMERY**  
JMONTGOMERY  
@ADVERTISER-TRIBUNE.COM

FOSTORIA — Simply put, last year was a rough one for Fostoria, and it wasn't totally unexpected.

One year after posting their first winning season in a decade, the 2020 Redmen returned just five veterans and struggled through an 0-9 season (0-7 Northern Buckeye Conference) in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Graduation claimed the vast majority of last year's letterwinners and this year's Redmen hit the field with little experience, lots of spots to

fill and only a few seniors.

"We'll still be young and inexperienced. It's a rebuild. We knew it was going to be a rebuild after the '19 season when we lost 16 seniors," coach Derek Kidwell said.

"So we'll be all juniors and sophomores, the nucleus of our team. They're hard-working kids. They don't ask questions, they show up and do the things we ask them to do," he said. "We've got to get stronger and they've got to get more experience under their belt."

The experience will come quickly.

Eight of this year's opponents won playoff games last year with three (Hopewell-Loudon, Otsego

and Eastwood) posting multiple postseason victories.

Granted, the pandemic led to everyone getting at least one playoff game last year and graduation claimed some of the talent involved, but Kidwell said this year's schedule is far from easy.

The Redmen open Aug. 20 at home against Oak Harbor before away games at Seneca East and Hopewell-Loudon.

They then start the conference slate Sept. 10 at Elmwood, followed by games against Rossford (home), Genoa (away), Otsego (home), Woodmore (away), Eastwood (home) and Lake (home).

"We'll know right away (how good we are)," Kidwell said.

"They're getting tired of practicing against each other, but when we do make a mistake, I tell them to look around — the team we have right now will be the team we have next year," he said. "For us coaches, it's a work in progress, but it's also something to look forward to. Hopefully in the short future we'll have an experienced football team instead of having the inexperienced football team. But it's a fun group. There's no cancers, no negativity. They do everything we ask them to do."

But a small roster of about 35 won't leave much wiggle room for

substitutions.

"Obviously we're going to have to avoid injuries because we lack depth," he said. "Across the board we're going to have to be very conditioned because you see the same names on offense and the same names on defense, and the special teams is going to be the same names also."

While some spots are set, others are still being finalized.

Who will play quarterback fits that bill, with junior Derek Russell and sophomore Gavin Miller competing for the starting role to run the

See FOSTORIA, T51



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## Elmwood has high expectations for offense, defense

By ZACH BAKER  
ZACHBAKER@THECOURIER.COM

Elmwood coach Greg Bishop has set lofty goals for his team.

On each side of the ball. On offense, Bishop said the Royals have the ability to be prolific.

“We want to execute, we want to average 35 points a game,” he said. “We want to make sure we’re able to push the ball down the field, vertically. We want to make defenses cover the entire field.”

And on defense, Elmwood’s coach thinks his unit can be stingy.

“Defense, we want to limit everybody to 14 points or under,” he said. “We have goals for rushing and everything. We have certain goals we want to reach, and we feel if we have those goals, we’ll be successful.”

If they reach those goals, Elmwood would be more

than successful; it will be downright dominant. And coming off a 4-4 season and with plenty of experience returning, the Royals appear primed for a strong campaign.

The offense will be using a spread offense, and returns Hayden Wickard, who threw for more than 1,000 yards in 2020.

“We feel he’s gonna be a great player for us,” Bishop said.

The coach feels the same way about his top tailback, Mason Oliver, who rushed for more than 1,000 yards in a shortened season. Added to the mix is Gunner Endicott, who got reps in the backfield last year.

“We have a 1-2 punch back there with those two,” Bishop said.

The Royals also have a pair of receivers returning, led by Mason Mossbarger, who had eight receiving touchdowns and more than 600 yards in 2020. Joining

him is Alex Arnold, who missed all of last season with an injury.

Being a spread team, Elmwood doesn’t use a tight end, but will occasionally utilize an H-back. Bishop said that in those cases, Kyle Heiserman will play there.

The Royals have a great deal of experience returning to the offensive line.

Colton Ickes, a three-year starter, returns at one tackle spot, while Will Sorenson will play the other. Logan Bomer and Seth Barringer are back at the guard positions, while Zach May will be at center.

“We return our full offensive line from last year,” Bishop said. “Some guys came in because of injuries, so we have a lot of experience up front. It’s fun to watch them fine-tune things, start to learn the game even more.

“And we have plenty of guys who may not be in that

five, but we have plenty of guys that have gotten experience in other games due to injuries last year that can fill in, too,” Bishop said.

One thing is for sure. Bishop wants his offense to be in attack mode.

“We want to challenge teams,” he said.

And Bishop wants his defense to have the same attitude.

“We want to be aggressive,” he said. “We want teams to make sure that they’re thinking with pressure in their face. We want to come after you.”

Helping the Royals do that will be their three returning lineman. Bomer will play nose tackle, with Ickes and Casey Frank occupying the ends.

We have Colton Ickes, Logan Bomer at nose. Casey Frank at the other defensive end spot.

At the linebacker positions, Heiserman will play in the middle, with Adam

**“We’re gonna take it one week at a time.**

**Our goal, we wanna be 1-0 every week. It’s a gauntlet type schedule, so we’re gonna take it one week at a time.”**

GREG BISHOP,  
ELMWOOD HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL COACH

Meyer, Sorenson and May also playing there. On the outside, Endicott is a four-year starter, and he will be joined by Will Keiffer.

In the secondary, Elmwood has a number of players who could see time: Micah Oliver, Brennan Hiser, Alex Arnold, Mason Oliver, Mossbarger and Lex Voska.

“We have quite a bit of depth back there,” Bishop said. “We have experience across the board.”

On special teams, Bishop said that Sorenson and Mason Oliver are competing at placekicker, while Voska and Wickard are

each up for the punting job.

Like many schools in northwest Ohio, Elmwood is preparing for a transition, moving from the Northern Buckeye Conference to the Blanchard Valley Conference.

But that’s in the future. In 2021, Bishop and his team are focused on the NBC.

And not looking ahead.

“We’re gonna take it one week at a time,” Bishop said. “Our goal, we wanna be 1-0 every week. It’s a gauntlet type schedule, so we’re gonna take it one week at a time.”

# Bowden made everyone feel like a Hall of Famer, too

By RALPH D. RUSSO

**B**obby Bowden's greatest gift was making everybody he met feel like a Hall of Famer, too.

The patriarch of Florida State football, the coach who built a dynasty from scratch died at 91 on August 8 at his home in Tallahassee, Florida. The end came a little more than two weeks after Bowden's family revealed publicly he had pancreatic cancer.

Bowden's resume is among the greatest in the history of the game, with 377 wins, a dozen Atlantic Coast Conference championships and national titles in 1993 and 1999. His death brought an outpouring of tributes and memories from those whose life he impacted with acts of kindness, humility and levity.

Alabama coach Nick Saban recounted how Bowden, when he was head coach at West Virginia in the mid-1970s, reached out

to him after Saban's father died.

"Coach didn't know me from Adam's house cat, but he knew my Dad and got word that maybe my Mom was struggling a bit back home in West Virginia," Saban wrote in a social media post. If Saban needed to be closer to his mother, Bowden said, he would make room for him on his staff.

"How many coaches would do that?" Saban wondered. "How many people would do that?"

South Carolina coach Shane Beamer, the son of another Hall of Famer, former Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer, recalled how he would write letters to established coaches when he was young and aspiring to follow in his father's footsteps.

"I wrote hundreds of them," Beamer wrote. "Very rarely heard back from any of them. I ALWAYS got a response from Coach Bowden."

If you covered college football over the last 40 years, you almost certainly had the opportunity to speak with Bowden. His home phone number was listed. If you could catch him there, he was usually happy to give a few minutes — and a great quote or two.

The first time I met Bowden was at a Florida State practice in Tallahassee in September 2005. We chatted on his golf cart as the team worked out. Yes, the coach — one of the most accomplished in the history of the game at that point — gave an interview to a reporter he had never met before DURING practice. He even worked in a "Dadgummit," as I recall.

Bowden was among the last college football coaches who didn't guard the program like a fortress. He seemed to understand that you could be intensely competitive while not taking yourself or the job too seriously.

He asked about me and



PHIL SANDLIN / The Associated Press

**FLORIDA STATE** head football coach Bobby Bowden turns to leave Florida coach Urban Meyer after congratulating Meyer following Florida's 37-10 win over Florida during a 2009 NCAA football game in Gainesville, Florida. The Hall of Fame college football coach Bobby Bowden died August 8 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Exuding charm and wit, Bowden led Florida State to two national championships and a record of 315-98-4 during his 34 seasons with the Seminoles. In all, Bowden had 377 wins during his 40 years in major college coaching. He was 91 years old.

where I was from. He was affable and charming as I asked him, essentially, do you think it might be time to retire? Bowden said he

would know when it was time to go.

At this point in his career, Bowden's program was slipping from its lofty

heights. After a record 14 straight seasons finishing ranked in the top five of the

**See BOWDEN, T55**

**Cont from FOSTORIA, T49**  
spread offense.

Kidwell said both are athletic and bring talent to the position.

"We just have to see them under fire to see what each of them have, what their qualities are. I like how both of them throw the ball, I like how they both take ownership in the huddle," he said. "We just have to let it play out and see which of them gives us the best the chance to win."

The line is mostly set, with

juniors Drake Ritter at center, Trace Agapiou at left guard and Binicio Flores at left tackle and sophomore Dylan Holmes at right tackle.

Sophomore Tony Hill-Hernandez and freshman Trenton Kirby are battling to start at right guard, with senior Ethan Mercado also possibly showing up there once he returns from a stint with the Army National Guard.

Senior Landon Powell, juniors Antonio Bernal, Kayden Hutchins and Aidan Sprang, sophomores

Matthew Balderama and Caiden Essex, and freshman Braden Harrison are all vying for wide receiver spots.

A few different faces will rotate in on defense, but not that many different.

Sophomore Kaleb Schube will start at nose guard in Fostoria's 3-5-3 defense, with Agapiou at one tackle and senior Alex DeLaRosa, Flores and Kirby rotating in at another.

Sophomore Eli Kiser, sophomore Machi Johnson, Bernal,

Hutchins, Sprang, Cramer and Russell will trade off in the line-backing corps.

Miller will play free safety, with Balderama, Essex and Powell also seeing time in the secondary.

Along with keeping a small roster healthy, Kidwell a big key will be having the players maintain a positive attitude and stay in the right frame of mind throughout the season.

"We're going to have to work hard as coaches to keep these kids positive on a four-quarter basis in a

game and on a weekly grind of the schedule," he said. "It's not an easy schedule because we've got some very good teams on our schedule."

"I'm not sure how many wins we're looking at when we look at the schedule, but as coaches, all we can look to do is see improvement each day in practice, each week during games," he said. "If we stay healthy

I definitely think we can see some progress because the more they play, the more the game will slow down for them."

2021 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Home/Away
Aug. 20	Arcadia	H
27	Riverdale	A
Sept. 3	Ada	H
10	Ridgedale	A*
17	Archbold	A*
24	Elgin	H*
Oct. 1	U. Scioto Valley	A*
8	Crestline	H*
15	Ridgemont	A*
22	W.-Goshen	H*



# Hardin Northern

## POLAR BEARS

# Line 'em up: Hardin Northern to replace key players up front

By ZACH BAKER  
ZACHBAKER@THECOURIER.COM

Generally speaking, when Hardin Northern won games last year, it scored a lot of points.

The Polar Bears went 5-5 in 2020. In the victories, Hardin Northern put up an average of 40.6 points a game.

Quarterback Nevin Robson and receiver Owen Wetherill – almost always – played huge roles in that

prolific attack.

But another big piece of that success is – for the most part – missing. The line.

“We lost a lot of offensive and defensive linemen to graduation, so a lot of new faces competing for starting spots,” said Hardin Northern coach Travis Rettig.

There are some lineman returning. Senior Kaden Carpenter, a 315-pound senior, returns on the

offensive side, while Kobee Hooker, a 225-pound senior, also is back on the O-line.

Justin Reffitt is another returning offensive lineman. The 220-pounder is entering his sophomore year.

Whoever plays on the offensive line, their job will be to protect Robson, who is back for his senior season. Robson will have a number of familiar weapons to throw to. Wetherill has graduated, but the Polar Bears return junior wide receivers Colby Curtis and Connor

Curtis, sophomore running back Connor Curtis, and tight end Brandon Henicle.

“We return most of our skill players from last year’s team and our overall roster size is up from previous years,” Rettig said.

The Polar Bears also have a number of returners on defense. In the secondary, Hardin Northern returns Robson, Colby and Connor Curtis, and sophomore Cooper Thomas. At linebacker, the Polar Bears bring back Hooker, junior

Kaiden Sedlock and Carter Curtis.

Up front on the defensive side, senior Cody Warmbrod and Henicle, return.

The Polar Bears went 3-1 in the Dennis Division of the Northwest Central Conference before dropping its lone postseason game at Delphos St. John’s. Rettig is hoping to continue the winning ways in 2021.

“We want to finish with a winning record and compete in the top half of the NWCC,” he said.

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ABOVE: PAUL SANCYA / The Associated Press; BELOW: Photos by DOUG MCSCHOOLER / The Associated Press  
**MICHIGAN QUARTERBACK** Cade McNamara, above, throws during warmups before a 2019 NCAA college football game against Middle Tennessee in Ann Arbor. McNamara is expected to start at quarterback this season for the Wolverines. Michigan defensive end Aidan Hutchinson, below left, and linebacker Josh Ross, below right, talk with reporters during an NCAA college football news conference at the Big Ten Conference media days last month at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.



Cont from JIM, T27

quarterback play right at the beginning has been really sharp," Harbaugh said.

### SURPRISE SCHEME

Harbaugh made many changes on his staff. The biggest one was hiring 33-year-old defensive coordinator Mike Macdonald to replace Don Brown. Macdonald spent the past seven seasons with Harbaugh's brother, John, and the Baltimore Ravens.

Fifth-year senior safety Brad Hawkins said opponents will be forced to guess what they will see from the new-look defense.

"You can't show the same things and the same pressures," Hawkins said. "You have to disguise, rotate and give different looks. That's what we've been working on in camp."

### SILVER LINING

Michigan was 2-4 last season in part because a lot of inexperienced offensive linemen were forced into significant roles.

"It was crazy year, but it was good in one sense," said Andrew Stueber, one of five offensive linemen returning with starting experience. "It got a lot of people playing that otherwise would not have gotten any playing time."

### TRIO OF LEADERS

The Wolverines have eight starters back on defense led by defensive end Aidan Hutchinson, linebacker Josh Ross and Hawkins.

"It's very important for all of us to lead these guys in the right direction," Hawkins said. "We've been here and we've seen a lot."

### THE SCHEDULE

Michigan, which went 0-3 at home during the pandemic-shortened season, opens Sept. 4 against Western Michigan at the Big House. The Wolverines will host No. 20 Washington on Sept. 11 under the lights and No. 17 Indiana on Nov. 6.

The schedule also has home games against No. 12 Wisconsin (Oct. 2), No. 19 Penn State (Nov. 13) and the fourth-ranked Buckeyes on Nov. 27, when Harbaugh gets a chance to end his 0-6 drought as coach in the program's greatest rivalry.

# Why would the ACC, Big Ten, Pac-12 form an alliance?

By RALPH D. RUSSO

The Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten and Pac-12 are exploring ways to counter the Oklahoma-Texas expansion and curtail the Southeastern Conference's growing power in college football.

The commissioners of the ACC, Big Ten and Pac-12 have discussed how creating an alliance between leagues that span the country could provide both financial benefits and policy making pull as the NCAA begins to hand off more responsibilities to conferences.

The discussions were first reported by The Athletic. Two people with knowledge of the discussions confirmed them to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no one has been authorized by the conferences to speak publicly about the talks. The conversations were described as conceptual and exploratory.

There are two important events on the horizon that could influence how quickly some type of agreement — formal or otherwise — between the three conferences comes together: The next meeting regarding College Football Playoff expansion is scheduled for Sept. 28. And the NCAA has called for a special constitutional convention that is expected to convene no later than Nov. 15.

There is no obvious precedent in big-time col-

lege sports of an alliance of conferences, so this could be whatever the leagues involved make of it.

In this case, there are two areas where the conferences believe working together has potential to fortify all three.

## SCHEDULING AND REVENUE

The untapped revenue-generating potential in college football is in creating more big games. Or maybe better described as games between big brands

A scheduling agreement among the ACC, Big Ten and Pac-12 could lead to more made-for-TV marquee games: Think Southern California-Clemson; Ohio State-Miami; Penn State-Florida State; Oregon-Michigan.

Of course, those types of games happen already. Oregon is at Ohio State and Washington plays at Michigan on Sept. 11.

An alliance could make those juicy matchups more frequent, with the hope that they unlock more revenue in media rights agreements and ticket sales.

The Pac-12's current TV deals with Fox and ESPN expire in 2024 and new commissioner George Kliavkoff's job is to figure out how to increase both revenue and exposure for a league that has been falling behind its peers in both.

The ACC has the opposite issue, locked into its exclusive deal with ESPN until 2036. New commissioner Jim Phillips is



ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE commissioner Jim Phillips speaks during the NCAA college football ACC media days in Charlotte, last month.

charged with finding ways to keep up with the SEC and Big Ten money-making machines in the absence of the bump that would come from going back on the market.

The Big Ten's current deals with Fox and ESPN are up in 2023. Commissioner Kevin Warren is in a more fortuitous position than his counterparts from

the Pac-12 and ACC. The Big Ten's value is comparable to the SEC's. Still, there has to be some concern within the conference that the addition of Texas and Oklahoma to the SEC no later than 2025 makes the Big Ten less relevant and lucrative.

The SEC's addition of Texas and Oklahoma gave the conference two more

national brands to add to a roster that already includes the star power of Alabama, LSU, Florida, Georgia, Auburn and Texas A&M.

When it happens, the SEC will certainly increase the number of conference games it plays from eight to nine and maybe even 10. Meanwhile, the SEC's new deal with ESPN gives the network exclusive rights to

all of its football starting in 2024.

An SEC Saturday could include enough high-profile games, with prime slots on ESPN platforms, including the 3:30 p.m. ET showcase on ABC, that it overshadows the rest of college football.

A game of the week fea-

See WHY, T55

NELL REDMOND / The Associated Press

**Cont from WHY, T54**  
-turing some combination of the best teams in the other three conferences is a potential way to push back.  
**THE CFP AND POST-NCAA POLICY MAKING**

The College Football Playoff expansion plan now under discussion was created by the commissioners of the SEC, the Big 12, the Mountain West and Notre Dame's athletic director.

Barely two months after the 12-team plan was unveiled, SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey announced the conference was inviting in Oklahoma and Texas, crippling the Big 12 and creating a path to turning an expanded CFP into a mini-SEC tournament.

The SEC's power play has not gone over well in other conferences.

An alliance between traditional Rose Bowl partners, the Big Ten and Pac-12, along with the ACC could be a way of containing the SEC's growing influence over college football.

The first step could be banding together to ensure the media rights for the new CFP format is

brought to market instead of negotiating exclusively with ESPN. Unless ESPN can be persuaded to give up its window of exclusivity that might require waiting until the 2026 season to implement the 12-team format.

The upside? Multiple TV partners could not only increase the value of the CFP, but give other networks more motivation to invest in regular-season college football. Perhaps in something like a yearly ACC/Big Ten/Pac-12 challenge?

Finally, as the NCAA cedes power, conferences will take a bigger role in governance. An alliance between the ACC, Big Ten and Pac-12 could prevent the SEC from setting an agenda the rest of the country is forced to follow if it wants to compete.

In the long run, it could keep conference flagships such as Ohio State, Clemson and USC from deciding — the way Texas and Oklahoma did — that the only way to compete with the SEC is to join the SEC.

*Russo is a College Sports Writer for the Associated Press.*



**BIG TEN COMMISSIONER** Kevin Warren speaks during an NCAA college football news conference at the Big Ten Conference media days, held last month at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

DOUG MCSCHOOLER / The Associated Press

**Cont from BOWDEN, T51**

AP poll, the Seminoles reached 10 victories just once from 2001-04.

Crossing paths with Bowden over the years or calling him at home, I found it remarkable how he never seemed to forget a name or a face. Of course, he called everybody "Buddy," so maybe he wasn't so good with the names. Whatever the case, it didn't matter if you had met him before. He treated everyone like an old friend.

"He was so normal," said Texas A&M coach Jimbo Fisher, who succeeded Bowden at FSU. "He could make you feel like you knew him for 20 years in the first

two minutes you ever talked to him."

In 2010, after Florida State not-so-subtly nudged Bowden into retirement, he released a book, "Called to Coach: Reflections on Life, Faith and Football." As part of the promotional tour, Bowden passed through New York and stopped at The Associated Press to give an interview.

Bowden wanted to make sure everybody knew his resignation was not his choice.

"Fired might be a little too strong," he said at the time. "Pushed out ain't bad. I was pushed out, no doubt about it. I didn't want but one more year.

Gosh, I'm 80."

Bowden smiled and laughed through much of the interview. He made clear he was a hurt, but not bitter.

For most of the next 10 years, Bowden traveled the country, speaking about his faith, played golf and enjoyed his grandchildren with his wife of 72 years, Ann.

While Bowden would half-jokingly talk about how there was only one big event left in life after retirement and he wasn't in a rush to get there, it turns out he had plenty left to accomplish.

Back in 2010, when I asked Bowden how his first few months

**Bowden was among the last college football coaches who didn't guard the program like a fortress. He seemed to understand that you could be intensely competitive while not taking yourself or the job too seriously.**

as a former coach were going, he said it was great because every day was like Saturday: You're off today and you're off tomorrow.

Of course, for most of his life Saturdays were workday, but the description jumped out. My retired dad had been using it for years. I told Bowden that and he asked about my father, a former New York City bus driver now

residing in Florida.

Bowden grabbed one of his books and signed it to my dad: "Everyday is like Saturday because we're retired!"

To Bobby Bowden, he and the former bus driver had a lot in common.

*Russo is a College Sports Writer for the Associated Press.*

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