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# There's a New Head 'Eagle' in the Nest in West Columbia

**BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

Longtime assistant coach Andre Cook has swooped in to take over the football program at Airport High School. He replaced Kirk Burnett, who was the longest active head football coach in the Midlands upon his retirement.

"I'm just super excited about the opportunity," Cook said. "It's something I've always dreamed about and wanted to do. You know, I put in a lot of hard work and I kind of set a goal for myself about 16 years back and, here it is, and it's come to fruition. This is really some place that I always thought could be great."

Cook brings along two decades worth of experience working in North and South Carolina. Most recently, he was an associate head coach/defensive coordinator at River Bluff High School and served as interim head coach to open the 2021 season after C. Blair Hardin was sidelined due to COVID-19 protocols. Cook also brings along his son, senior wide receiver Apollos Cook, already verbally committed to Duke University. The elder Cook said his son has worked closely with quarterback Kyle Chavis since

his arrival and expects them to develop a "good connection."

Cook is especially pleased with his secondary, with defensive

positive and we're going to love these guys. I don't like to look at what we can't do and, I'll be honest, I had a lot of people tell me what kids here can't do. We're not going to focus on what they can't do.

"We're going to focus on what they can do and we're going to figure out a way to really work on the things that they can do and help them to be better at those things."

The Eagles are coming off back-to-back losing seasons. Nevertheless, Cook confidently told his players they will compete for a Region 4-4A title.

"There's definitely some talent here walking these hallways and I've some out on the field," Cook said.

"We've got a few strong kids, we've got some big kids, we've got some athletic kids. I've got a senior class that I think is extremely talented, that can make plays and what we're trying to do is just allow them to understand that they're going to be the guys that set the tone and it's their legacy that's going to start the turnaround at Airport High School."

The Eagles open

the season at home Aug. 19 against Swansea. It's the first WACH-

57 Rush's Friday Night Rivals Game of the Week.



PROVIDED

**Wide receiver Apollos Cook will now play at Airport.**

Other impact offensive players for Airport, according to Cook, include running back Marcus Dwyer. On defense, inside linebacker Carlos Anderson has been a vocal leader for the Eagles, along with Jeremiah Gilchrist and Trey Neil. Defensive lineman D.J. McFadden is part of an upfront group with size and potential.

backs Jorden Mimms and Kendell Stroman.

What the elder Cook believes is his biggest strength is his overall energy. Through good times and through adversity, Cook plans to lead the team with perseverance and positive thinking.

"I'm a positive person and we're going to be positive," he said. "We're going to coach

## 2022 EAGLES

1 Amari Lewis	25 Jordan Reese
2 Devin Butts	26 Phillip Payne
3 Kyle Chavis	28 Brendan Powe
4 Jorden Mimms	30 Logan Crandall
5 Kendell Stroman	31 Mahrley Rast
6 Marcus Dwyer	33 Jeremiah Gilchrist
7 Logan Crawford	35 Trey Neil
8 Jesse Hoover	41 Cion Burton
9 Carlos Anderson	42 Jacobi Collum
10 Ethan Raysor	50 Jason Bowman
11 Jonathan Dodson	52 Maddox Roark
12 Sebastian Sapp	60 Anderson
13 Apollos Cook	Richbourg
14 Bohanin Jacobs	62 Chad Dulinksy
15 Karon Jackson	63 Parker Hudson
17 Ivan Taylor	65 D.J. McFadden
18 Jalen Stephens	74 John Homeier
20 Caleb Raysor	75 Julian Glover
21 Micah Harris	76 Dylan Barberly
22 Detrick Keys	84 Avery Jones
23 Kenneth Pearson	85 Eduardo Hernandez
	86 Oscar Lendos



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** – Swansea  
**Aug. 26** – at Brookland-Cayce  
**Sept. 2** – Butler (Ga.)  
**Sept. 9** – Lugoff-Elgin  
**Sept. 16** – at Fox Creek  
**Sept. 23** – Irmo  
**Sept. 30** – Aiken  
**Oct. 7** – at Midland Valley  
**Oct. 14** – South Aiken  
**Oct. 21** – at North Augusta  
**Oct. 28** – Idle



# Brookland-Cayce Looks to Build on Last Year's Region Championship

## 2022 BEARCATS

0 Naahzeikiel Mays	27 Kobie Atkinson
1 Will Young	30 Nehemiah Daniels
2 Marty Miles	31 David McCoy
3 Tyrone Jackson	33 Benjamine Pugh
4 Davion Carson	35 Jamorion Brown
5 Tanner Staton	40 Henry Ward
6 Elijah Pate	53 Montez Edwards
7 David Daniels	55 Trequan Singleton
8 Javon Edwards	56 Kamden Sox
9 Brogan Sox	57 Jaz Ervin
10 Deshawn Washington	61 Ryshaun Foster
11 Jady Johnson	63 Latron Pauling
12 Evan Golden	66 Jalani Golston
13 Quantavis Coffee	68 Obryan Leaphart
15 Sullivan Castles	70 Devin Broom
16 Jonas McCoy	71 Jacory Jones
17 Lavarjae Jones	72 Jase Jones
18 Mason Springs	73 Jared Holmes
19 Jalen Garrick	75 An'tohn Ford
Glover	80 Calvin Busby
21 Laron Perkins	81 Jackson Davis
24 Chandler	82 P.J. Newman
Shumpert	83 Khalif Vaughn
25 John Kelly	88 Jackson Thomas
	99 John Allen Mower



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** - at J.F. Byrnes  
**Aug. 26** - Airport  
**Sept. 2** - at Northwestern  
**Sept. 9** - A.C. Flora  
**Sept. 16** - Chapin  
**Sept. 23** - Idle  
**Sept. 30** - at Oburg-Wilkinson  
**Oct. 7** - Lower Richland  
**Oct. 14** - Dreher  
**Oct. 21** - at Swansea  
**Oct. 28** - at Gilbert

BY TERRY WARD

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The Brookland-Cayce High School football team won Region 5-3A title in 2021. The 2022 edition of the Bearcats has a chance to be just as good or better, according to head coach Rusty Charpia.

"If we can survive our non-region schedule, without injuries, we can compete for the region championship and do well into the playoffs," he said.

Brookland-Cayce plays J.F. Byrnes, Northwestern, A.C. Flora, Chapin, and archrival Airport. All are non-region Classes 4A and 5A teams.

The Bearcats will have an experienced field general. Quarterback Tanner Staton, the Region 5-3A Player of the Year, has committed to play at the college level for Division One Elon.

Charpia said his offense is a little ahead of his defense. He feels he has his best offensive line ever with seniors Jalani Golston and Jase Jones and juniors Jacory Jones and Kamden Sox.

Running backs for the Bearcats include DeShaun Washington, Naahzeikial Mays and newcomer Tyrone Jackson.

Charpia said soccer player John Mower will manage the kicking duties for the Bearcats.

"Will Young is our go-to wide receiver," Charpia said.

Evan Golden is another option at wide receiver and Jackson Thomas is coming over from baseball to play tight end and wideout.

Tron Pauling and Mo Singleton are the core of the defensive line.

"We'll have a really good defensive line, this year," Charpia said.



PHOTO | GOFASHWIN.COM

Quarterback Tanner Staton

Linebackers that will get the bulk of the snaps are B.J. Pugh and Jady Johnson, who will also play safety.

Charpia said by the time BC gets to its region schedule, his

players should be ready.

"We can have a real good year, maybe even a 3A championship, if everyone stays healthy and we get them playing to their potential," he said.



# Love at First Sight for New B-L Coach

**BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.**  
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From the moment he and his wife, Kimberly, arrived in Batesburg-Leesville, they developed a kinship with a community whose love of football mirrored his own.

Having spent more than three decades winning state titles for the likes of Union, Gaffney and Hemingway (where he won a state championship in boys' basketball) and worked under Hall of Fame coaches like Shell Dula, Mike Anthony and Phil Strickland, Lawson sought a place to possibly close out his long

career.

"I've been very blessed in my time as a coach," Lawson said. "I've told everybody I've talked to that being able to come to Batesburg-Leesville and coach here has just been a revitalization for me. The opportunity to come here and coach here was just like, this is where God wanted me to be. For me to say no was not going to happen."

Lawson is the third head coach employed by Batesburg-Leesville in the past nine months. Gene Cathcart was initially hired in January to replace Gary Adams, but quickly re-

signed due to "personal matters" according to Lexington County School District 3.

Given the changeover at the position, Lawson has spent the summer months ingratiating himself with the players and assuring them that he's with the Panthers for the long haul.

"When I first came here, I wanted to make it clear to the kids that I was going to be here," he said. "I was grateful and blessed and honored to be here. I wanted to be here. You know, the opportunity to come here was something that doesn't happen to a lot of people and when it was given to me, I

jumped at it and felt very honored that I was going to have a chance to come here and coach them.

"I also told them that, you know, I've been coaching for 31 years, I've coached with a lot of great coaches, been to a lot of good programs and I'm not looking to use Batesburg-Leesville as a steppingstone, I'm not going anywhere. This is it for me."

Among Lawson's first challenges, in his words, is reestablishing Batesburg-Leesville's offensive identity. This means a return to emphasizing the running game, which was a staple of the school's past seven state championships.

"I felt like they need to be Batesburg-Leesville again," Lawson said. "Coming in and making an observation the first couple of weeks that I met them, I felt like we needed to go back to what Batesburg does and that's run the football first."

Lawson has put together a coaching staff with previous ties to the program. Former Panthers head coach and longtime assistant Gary Smallen is back as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach, along with Panther alumni Daniel Burton (receivers coach), Gary "Bubba" Adams (defensive line coach) and Brandon Cumbee and Emil West (offensive line coaches).

Batesburg-Leesville will lean on its seniors — quarterback Cade Bouknight, tailback

Korey Williams and tight end Patrick Swygert — on a relatively young team. He expects

## 2022 PANTHERS

1 Ja'Steven Whitt	41 Jamareyon Long
2 Jamerius Clark	42 Eduardo
3 Latrez Nicholson	Gerardo-Reyna
4 Tucker Bolen	43 Johntavious Risher
5 Cole Price	51 Matthew Howard
6 Amare Odom	52 Gabe Johnson
7 Patrick Swygert	53 Jamaricus Williams
8 Korey Williams	54 Peyton West
9 Daiquan Richardson	56 Tanner Fulmer
10 Cade Bouknight	57 Moises Gonzales
11 Christian Burkett	58 Johndarrion Abney
13 Adarius Horne	60 Julian Farrant
15 Kaleb McKiever	62 Landon Durst
16 Tanner Watkins	64 Shaquezius Dennis
20 Brody Leapt	65 Travis Gates
21 Felipe Juarez-Diaz	67 Ty Anderson
22 Caleb Rodgers	70 Ethan Gipe
23 Michael Lorick	80 Jeremyah Harris
24 Hansel Discua	82 John Sawyer
25 Cameron Sackel	84 Matthew Berry
30 Jay Alewine	Vernard Boatwright
31 Tanner Rikard	Damondre Watson
32 L.J. Williams	Treble Jarrett Jr.
33 Bryson Brown	
34 T.J. Rowe	
40 Clarence Springs	



## 2022 SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 – at Clinton  
 Aug. 26 – Gilbert  
 Sept. 2 – at Ridge Spring-Monetta  
 Sept. 9 – Idle  
 Sept. 16 – Newberry  
 Sept. 23 – at Chester  
 Sept. 30 – at Strom Thurmond  
 Oct. 7 – Silver Bluff  
 Oct. 14 – at Fox Creek  
 Oct. 21 – Pelion  
 Oct. 28 – Saluda

**Go Gilbert Indians & Batesburg-Leesville Panthers!**



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## 2022 EAGLES

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 Jack Cannon           | 47 Wyatt Bland       |
| 3 Adam Bass             | 48 Jonas Quintana    |
| 4 Meshack Lameck        | 50 Cooper Canady     |
| 5 Max Drag              | 51 Conner Engelking  |
| 6 Gavin Tirado          | 53 Riley Gilbert     |
| 7 Zion Wallace          | 54 Andrew Lindler    |
| 8 Tanner Short          | 55 Christian Clanton |
| 9 Demarius Prophet      | 56 Xander Devall     |
| 10 Brady Albro          | 57 Tyler Childs      |
| 12 Tate Bohannon        | 59 Jeff Harmon       |
| 13 Clayton Sondgeroth   | 61 Isaiah Floyd      |
| 14 Jack Sumner          | 62 Benji Del Priore  |
| 15 Wade Warden          | 67 Nathan Gilley     |
| 16 Grady Brandstatter   | 69 Kai Washington    |
| 17 Jacob Brantley       | 70 Luke Major        |
| 18 Weldon Gunter        | 71 Even Creel        |
| 19 Luke Becker          | 72 Noah Bodie        |
| 20 Gavin Stam           | 73 Hayden McCarson   |
| 21 Vincent Santostefano | 75 Luke Rankin       |
| 22 Russell Gentry       | 76 Caleb Muskus      |
| 23 Ty Haltiwanger       | 78 Walker Ciccone    |
| 24 Yang Thankling       | 79 Zach Johnson      |
| 25 Ryan Hill            | 80 Reid Burton       |
| 26 Nolan Beerman        | 81 Isaiah Green      |
| 27 Bryan Rosales        | 82 Kayden Elkins     |
| 28 Camden Ranieri       | 83 Justin Williams   |
| 29 Sam Perry            | 84 Brice Jolley      |
| 30 Kalen Bostic         | 85 Jacob Nerone      |
| 31 Griffin Burns        | 87 Brock Reeves      |
| 33 John Rossi           | 90 Xavier Williams   |
| 36 Justin Munguia       | 93 Danny Rhymer      |
| 37 Chase Cline          | 94 Hayden Burriss    |
| 40 Jeremy Parrott       |                      |
| 42 Jonathan Sheppard    |                      |
| 43 Bryce Beerman        |                      |
| 44 Will VanVollenhoven  |                      |
| 45 Brodgon Ambrose      |                      |



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** – at Irmo  
**Aug. 26** – at Mid-Carolina  
**Sept. 2** – Spring Valley  
**Sept. 9** – Newberry  
**Sept. 16** – at Brookland-Cayce  
**Sept. 23** – A.C. Flora  
**Sept. 30** – Lexington  
**Oct. 7** – Idle  
**Oct. 14** – at Dutch Fork  
**Oct. 21** – White Knoll  
**Oct. 28** – at River Bluff

# Chapin to Use Non-Region Schedule to Improve

BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.

thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

Last season, Chapin High School head coach Justin Gentry could rely upon a “three-headed monster” on offense.

This year, he faces the challenge of having to replace his starting quarterback (Jayden Bradford), leading rusher (Bennett Galloway) and record-setting wide receiver (Zavier Short) while competing in Region 5-5A.

“We spent a couple of years building an offense to try to get Zavier the ball,” Gentry said. “We’ve got Zion Wallace who’s come in who’s played a lot of football out there. He’s going to have to learn to tote the team until some of these younger guys can get ready and acclimated to what we’re trying to do. And we’ve been impressed with the young guys. ... But when you lose Xavier Short, Bennett Galloway and Jayden Bradford, it’s tough on offense, but it also gives these young guys a chance to show what they can do.”

Gentry is reluctant to fully call this season a rebuild as he believes there are a “lot of pieces to the puzzle” that need to get put together. The key is getting the younger talent to show improvement

over the long season.

“Football season is not a sprint, it’s a marathon,” Gentry said. “So we want to be steady and get better each week and see what happens when we get to region.”

With the losses on offense, Gentry believes defense will be the team strength. Chapin returns several defensive lineman led by Max Drag and Hayden Burris, linebackers like Will VanVollenhoven, Nolan Beerman and Adam Bass, Russell Gentry and Griffin Burns and three returning starters in the secondary.

Gentry still expects a battle for the top two seeds in Region 5-5A, with Dutch Fork still the favorite. He also believes his team’s non-region schedule will prepare them for the battles ahead in October.

“We always go into the season with the same goals,” Gentry said. “But you know,



PHOTO | GOFLASHWIN.COM

Chapin head coach Justin Gentry

with our region schedule and then our pre-season schedule, we feel like ... it’s hard to say right now. It just depends on how our youth can develop and how fast they can develop. We know that Irmo is going to be a really good football team. Mid-Carolina

and Chapin is always neck and neck. And then we’ve got A.C. Flora, Brookland-Cayce, Newberry, Spring Valley. So that’s our pre-region schedule, but that’s going to get us ready for what we’re going to face in the region.”



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STATE SENATOR

**RONNIE CROMER**

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# Dutch Fork Marches On



PHOTO | GOFFLASHWIN.COM

Jarvis Green of Dutch Fork

**BY THOMAS GRANT JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

There's a higher level of focus and intensity around the Dutch Fork football program.

For the first time in six years, the Silver Foxes aren't a defending state champion. Their five-year reign as Class 5A kingpin came to a stunning end at the hands of Gaffney in December.

The loss snapped three historic winning streaks for Dutch Fork: 62 consecutive games without a loss, 61 consecutive wins against Palmetto State teams (surpassing Abbeville's 56-game winning streak) and 28 consecutive playoff victories (a S.C. High School League record).

So head coach Tom Knotts had no problem finding motivation for his returning players and varsity newcomers.

"It left a bitter taste in our mouth," Knotts said. "We win 60-something games in a row and then lose one and then feel like losers all off-season. If that doesn't motivate the seniors, I don't think anything well."

Count linebacker Chandler Perry, the winner of the Lexington Chronicle High School Football Edition cover contest, as one of those extra-motivated seniors. He's part of a linebacking corps filled with college prospects, with Landon Danley and Jaylen Hinton joining him.

"We're motivated," Perry said. "The fact that

## 2022 SILVER FOXES

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Joseph Buetow       | 59 Michael Steed       |
| 2 K.J. Smith          | 61 Campbell Geliske    |
| 3 Justin Welch        | 61 Tyler Norris        |
| 3 John Lizewski       | 62 Trent Cobb          |
| 4 Jarvis Green        | 63 John Griffin        |
| 5 Boykin Bickley      | 64 Camden Myers        |
| 6 Paul Taylor         | 65 Jacob Beasley       |
| 7 Matthew Walker      | 66 Joe Evans           |
| 8 Jayden Westbrook    | 67 Jabary Thompson     |
| 10 Aliam Appler       | 68 Eli Furner          |
| 11 Kade Shearer       | 70 Cayden McFadden     |
| 12 Landon Danley      | 71 Ky-mani Mcliesh     |
| 12 Daylaun Shepard    | 72 Jeremiah Carter     |
| 14 Jacob Hamilton     | 73 Steven Hill         |
| 14 Keiondre Pollack   | 74 Josh Benson         |
| 15 Weldon Gunter      | 75 Layne Turner        |
| 16 Bryan Ford         | 76 Nikee Caldwell      |
| 17 Isaiah Jones       | 77 Noah Robertson      |
| 18 Blake Cook         | 78 Michael Smith       |
| 18 Jason Washington   | 79 Max Schreffler      |
| 19 Jon Hunt           | 80 Rob Holliday        |
| 20 Maurice McQuire    | 80 Carlos Sexton       |
| 21 Trey Starks        | 81 Daniel Mitchell     |
| 22 Deon Winsley       | 81 Jaylen Taylor-Gault |
| 23 Leyton Shuler      | 82 Maurice Goings      |
| 24 John Buetow        | 83 R.J. Henderson      |
| 25 Peyton Bates       | 84 Coleman Safriet     |
| 26 J'von Mack         | 84 Charlie Rogers      |
| 27 Derek Smith        | 85 Prince Ross         |
| 28 William Conelly    | 86 Jayden Bradford     |
| 29 Chandler Perry     | 87 Aidan Pender        |
| 29 Quinton Stroman    | 88 Garrett Werts       |
| 51 Connor McGee       | 89 Alexander Bolton    |
| 52 Candler Morden     | 90 Jaden Johnson       |
| 53 Pressley Honeycutt | 91 Xavier Steed        |
| 54 Myles Smoak        | 92 Derrick McBride     |
| 54 Ocyrus Young       | 93 Alexander Johnson   |
| 55 Dakota Jordan      | 94 Derris Bowen        |
| 56 RJ China           | 95 Jay Berry           |
| 57 Terrance Wells     | 96 Jaylen Trezevant    |
| 58 Zay Wider          | 97 Daniel Williams     |
|                       | 98 Jadon Cook          |
|                       | 99 Jared Lynch         |



## 2022 SCHEDULE

- Aug. 19** – at Clinton  
**Aug. 26** – Gilbert  
**Sept. 2** – at Ridge Spring-Monetta  
**Sept. 9** – Idle  
**Sept. 16** – Newberry  
**Sept. 23** – at Chester  
**Sept. 30** – at Strom Thurmond  
**Oct. 7** – Silver Bluff  
**Oct. 14** – at Fox Creek  
**Oct. 21** – Pelion  
**Oct. 28** – Saluda



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# Gilbert Looks to Continue Success Under Leaphart

## 2022 INDIANS

1 Alias	50 Will Stroud
Graham-Woodberry	51 Chase Hopkins
2 Matt Edwards	52 Kyler Seigler
3 Jaylen Jay	53 Carson Hallman
4 Jordan Smith	54 Knox McFarland
5 Eli Mayers	55 Gavin Hall
6 C.J. Browning	56 Nat Yan
7 Drake Braddock	58 Kyle Turpin
8 Connor Gooding	60 Colton Travis
9 Javonte Adams	62 Drew Hill
10 Jake Torbett	65 Blake Cooke
11 Chance Jennings	66 Blake Goings
14 Krew Morris	78 Bryson Butler
15 Ethan Haus	71 C.J. Rice
20 Landon Browning	72 Cole Mullens
21 Tytrell Smith	73 Nathan Patterson
22 Daiquarius Coleman	74 Kal Garriss
25 Jaden Allen-Hendrix	75 Michael Scott
30 Daniel Augustin	77 Xavian Davenport
32 Ayden Bracey	78 Adam Thomas
40 Brenden Boatwright	79 Corban Rabon
41 JD Peck	80 Ethan Coleman
42 Caleb Stese	82 Zach Laster
44 Kelvin Blackwell	83 Owen Roberts
45 Braxton Goins	85 Vikram Cheema
48 Lauren Ansell	88 Chance Guthrie
	89 Ben Stogner



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 26** - at Batesburg-Leesville  
**Sept. 2** - South Aiken  
**Sept. 9** - Pelion  
**Sept. 16** - at Lexington  
**Sept. 23** - at Saluda  
**Sept. 30** - at Lower Richland  
**Oct. 7** - Swansea  
**Oct. 14** - Orangeburg-Wilkinson  
**Oct. 21** - at Dreher  
**Oct. 28** - Brookland-Cayce

BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.

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In years' past, a 9-3 season, a share of first place in the region and a second round playoff appearance called for a large celebration at Gilbert High School.

Since head coach Chad Leaphart has returned to his alma mater, however, the standards for winning have increased. From double-digit victory seasons to Lower State title appearances, the Indians have enjoyed on-field success under Leaphart not seen since Hall of Fame head coach Marty Woolbright's tenure.

"We went 9-3 last year," he said. "We obviously wanted more than that. I think if you can ask every one of our seniors on that team, they probably wanted more than that. I mean, I wanted more than that. Our community probably wanted more than that."

"But you know, you've also got to put it in perspective. It's a pretty dang good year. And, you know, when we first got here, I think we went 10-2 and we might as well as have won the Super Bowl that year, it was so exciting, because it's so many years since Gilbert had won much of anything."

Last year, Leaphart continued, Gilbert lost a couple games by a couple points, and while there have been plenty years the team hasn't even hit that mark, expectations have been ratcheted up.

"You got to put it in perspective, that is what happens when you have successful programs," he said. "The expectations get higher and higher every year."

Leaphart enters his seventh season at the helm just nine wins shy of surpassing Wool-

bright for career wins at Gilbert. Of greater importance to the current coach is keeping the Indians atop an increasingly competitive Region 5-3A, which features newcomers Lower Richland and Dreher.

This is especially a challenge for a team that returns its lowest number of seniors (11) since Leaphart took over in 2017.

"We just got to gain that experience each week," Leaphart said. "These guys do have some talent. So hopefully, that can offset some of the experience problems we have."

Gilbert does return dual-threat quarterback Chance Jennings, who will probably share time with Drake Braddock, as he's expected to see time in a secondary which lost several starters.

He'll have a thunder-and-lightning backfield of physical Jaden-Allen Hendrix and the speedy Alias-Graham Woodberry, who each accounted for over 1,000 yards last season. At wide receiver, Max Edwards has shown promise during 7-on-7 camps this past summer along with Chance Guthrie, Krew Morris and Javante Adams.

With the Indians returning only two starters on defense, Leaphart said the team will lead upon its offense to lead the way. A key there is the offensive line, led by three-year starter Blake Smith, where Leaphart has concerns about overall depth.

Gilbert will have plenty of coaching experience on the sidelines. Former Dreher head coach Treigh Sullivan, a Gilbert alumnus, will oversee the running backs while former Batesburg-Leesville head coach Gary Adams is in charge of the defensive line.



PHOTO | SCOTT MILES

### Gilbert quarterback Chance Jennings

The latter group is led by nose tackle Kelvin Blackwell, the younger brother of former Gilbert standout Darius Bell.

"They just bring so much experience," Leaphart said. "They've been there, done that, seen that, those kinds of things. They'll be able to bring that kind of experience."

"They also really know how to build relationships with the kids being from former head coaches. I can already see that with both of them in their position groups and the relationships they've built with the guys in their group right there. So again, knowledge for sure, but they're going to bring us countless intangibles as well."

Gilbert opens the season Aug. 26 at Adams' alma mater and former employer Batesburg-Leesville.



# Gray Colleges Look to Keep Championship Momentum Going



PHOTO | GEORGE MATSUU

Riley Staton takes over the starting quarterback duties for defending Class 2A champion Gray Collegiate.

**BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

It is an exciting time to be a Gray Collegiate Academy War Eagle.

The football team is coming off a 14-1 season in which it claimed its first-ever state championship. Despite the graduation of major contributors, most notably record-setting running back K.Z. Adams, the War Eagles are still a favorite to win their region with an opportunity to open the postseason at their newly constructed home facilities.

“The guys that are coming back for our team ... understand what their job is to keep the momentum going,” head coach Adam Holmes said. “We talked about it as a team, even back in January, we got back here to work it out, you know, all winter that, you know, our goal has been reached and that is going to be our goal from here on out.

“Our younger guys must understand that it has been implemented into our program. That is our goal from here on and that is what we are working towards. So, our

guys have done a good job of that. We have had a great offseason, had a good camp.”

Adams acknowledged the challenge of replacing Adams, an S.C. Mr. Football finalist and the first running back in state history to rush for more than 3,000 yards in a season. With the 2021 Lexington Chronicle Player of the Year now at Georgia State, the War Eagles have new candidates to run behind an offensive line that returns three starters.

“[Adams] was amazing, outstanding,” Holmes said. “But we have got two running

backs we feel really good about. Caleb Ford, who is a big back, 220 pounds, a bruiser. BJ Montgomery, he is more of our speed guy.

“Offensively, we are going to be a little bit different. We got four guys who can really stretch the field with Devin Johnson, Zai Offord and Jamarious Lockett and Savion Smith and then Riley Staton at quarterback who has a big arm. So, we are going to be a little bit different offensively. But I am excited about what we got coming back.”

Staton replaces Tre Robinson, who scored three touchdowns in the Class 2A championship game. Having played in seven games last season, Staton is experienced enough to make a drop off at the position unexpected.

Gray Collegiate was also hit hard by graduation on defense. But the War Eagles do return four-year starter Jordan Robertson at linebacker, and Adams is encouraged by what he has seen from the newcomers on the defensive line, led by Elijah Radden.

“When you lose three, five, seven starters on the defensive side of the football, it kind of makes you cringe a little

bit,” Holmes said. “But those guys have stepped in and done a great job for us.”

Gray Collegiate will open the season with four away games. The

first is Aug. 19 in Mount Pleasant against sister school Oceanside Collegiate.

## 2022 WAR EAGLES

0 Devin Johnson	28 J.P. Sweatt
1 Savion Smith	30 Blake Croft
2 Zai Offord	32 DeVon Toney
3/4 Riley Staton	33 Chris Boston
5 Caleb Ford	45 Richardo Haigler
6 Zion Job	50 Zeb Taylor
7 BJ Montgomery	51 Trey Craig
9 Khilil Peake	52 Steven Newman
11 Rylan Cunningham	53 Cam Davis
12 Jamarious Lockett	55 La La Radden
14 Conner Holmes	58 Carter Stevens
15 Justin Pauling	60 J.T. Sowell
16/26 Milik Job	62 Steven Newman
19 Brandon Ivory	65 Carson Atkinson
20 Blaine Redmond	72 Ryan Longiono
21 Tyquan McDuffie	75 Shola Erinfolami
23 Jordan Robinson	76 Bernard Brown
25 Kaine Williams	



## 2022 SCHEDULE

- Oct. 19** – at Oceanside Collegiate
- Oct. 26** – at Crestwood
- Sept. 3** – South Atlanta (Cam Newton Classic in Atlanta, Ga.)
- Sept. 9** – at Camden
- Sept. 16** – Eau Claire
- Sept. 23** – Mid-Carolina
- Sept. 30** – at Columbia
- Oct. 7** – at Fairfield Central
- Oct. 14** – Newberry
- Oct. 21** – Idle
- Oct. 28** – W.J. Keenan



# Irmo Looks to Keep Its Foot on the ‘Gas’ in Year 3 Under Brand

## 2022 YELLOW JACKETS

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 A.J. Brand            | 36 Nathaniel Nicandro |
| 2 Malichi Smith         | 38 Zymere Hamilton    |
| 3 Jaylen Schoolfield    | 41 Nicholas Bell      |
| 4 Isaiah McClary        | 31 Amir Green         |
| 5 Eric Tucker           | 44 Larenz Durham      |
| 8 Caleb Alexander       | 45 Aspen Rivers       |
| 9 Telvin Smith          | 47 Michael Lima       |
| 10 Demarkio Campbell    | 50 James Love         |
| 12 Terin Bowman         | 52 Omari Mills        |
| 13 Emmery Bostick       | 54 Dashuan Perales    |
| 14 Taevion Brown        | 57 Bryant Ham         |
| 15 Mason Burdette       | 58 Bryson Moore       |
| 16 Xavier Montgomery    | 60 Vernon Hairens     |
| 17 Jylil Favor          | 61 Marquis Daniels    |
| 18 Phillip Williams Jr. | 65 Ethan Gamble       |
| 19 Anton Jones Jr.      | 72 Marcus Hill        |
| 20 Jaylen Spencer       | 75 Elijah Williams    |
| 22 Javares Brown        | 76 Jaylen Wingard     |
| 23 Matthew Blocker      | 80 Will Kelly         |
| 24 Jonathan Rhett       | 81 Brady Murphy       |
| 25 Marquell Lewis       | 85 Cooper Seyfer      |
| 26 Zade White           | 89 Finn Qualis        |
| 28 Quantrell Mitchell   | 95 Omavi              |
| 30 Malkiytesdeq Clay    | Stone-Marshall        |
| 32 Joshua Howell        |                       |
| 35 Zachary Carter       |                       |



## 2022 SCHEDULE

- Aug. 19** – Chapin  
**Aug. 26** – at Lancaster  
**Sept. 2** – at River Bluff  
**Sept. 9** – Idle  
**Sept. 16** – Hartsville  
**Sept. 23** – at Airport  
**Sept. 30** – at Richland Northeast  
**Oct. 7** – Ridge View  
**Oct. 14** – at A.C. Flora  
**Oct. 21** – Westwood  
**Oct. 28** – Lugoff-Elgin

**BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

It has only taken two seasons for Irmo football to get back on “Brand.” As promised, Yellow Jacket head coach Aaron Brand has approached the challenging of returning the program to prominence with “gas,” which has become a galvanizing refrain for the program.

Last year, in year two, Irmo won a share of the Region 4-4A title and advanced to the third round of the playoffs for the first time in 12 years.

Still, Brand believes the Yellow Jackets could have accomplished more.

“We let it get away from us last year, especially in that Westward game,” said Brand on the 42-37 loss that resulted in the three-way tie for the region title. “But we have made corrections from that. We made them getting on the bus coming back to Irmo that night and finished our season off on a pretty good win streak before we lost to a really tough Greenville team.”

Brand returns this season with even higher goals.

“We all relocated our families to come down here and make Irmo and put Irmo in this situation,” he said. “Our community wants it. Our fan base wants it, and our guys want it more than anybody. So,



THOMAS GRANT JR. | CHRONICLE

**In two seasons, head coach Aaron Brand has revived the Irmo football program.**

we are happy to have it somewhat back. We are not all the way where we want to be. We won’t get there until we win the state championship, and we expect to do that here in the near future.”

Irmo will look to fulfill that promise without three catalysts of last year’s success in quarterback Izayah Whiteside, wide receiver DeAree Rogers and University of South Carolina safety Nick Emmanwari.

“I don’t know if you can replace a homerun threat in DeAree Rogers,” Brand said. “A lot of times, especially on the first play of the game, we were scoring, because we felt like Rogers can beat any DB that was around. With the guy like Emmanwari, he just can’t replace him. You’ve got to hope that you know, you can be better as a collective

unit, you know, because he can’t bail you out making 20 tackles a game.

“But we feel like we’re better overall on defense and we feel like we’re going to replace Whiteside at quarterback, it’s just going to be tough to daggone get that home run threat that we lost in Rogers and the leadership from Emmanwari. So. It is going to be tough.”

Brand will turn to his son A.J. to replace Whiteside and his 2,700 passing yards. He is also encouraged by the showing of his younger players on offense this summer and believes they can have an impact similar to the departed seniors.

On the defensive side of the football, Brand believes the players have responded well to the changes made by the

new assistant coaches.

“Having guys like [linebacker] Jylil Favor and having guys like [defensive end] Xavier Montgomery on the edges, it really presents a problem for opposing offenses,” he said. “So, we look to put some pressure on the quarterback and maintain our strength up front and just play sound football.”

If Irmo can limit unnecessary penalties, particularly on offense, and maintain their physicality, Brand believes they will once again contend in the region.

“We’re going to get downhill,” he said, “we’re going to throw the football and we’re going to try to see if you can beat us in the trenches.”



# Lexington Looks to Build on 'Mudcat Football' Success and Turnaround Season



PHOTO | LEXINGTONWILDCATS.COM

After having his season cut short due to injury, a healthy Jonah Norris is back running the football for the Lexington Wildcats.

**BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

During Perry Woolbright's coaching career, he's coached future NFL players and led a team that played four playoff games on the road to a state championship game.

Yet the turnaround he orchestrated last season at Lexington High School has earned him even more plaudits those previous accomplishments. A year after going winless, the Wildcats won nine games, finished second in Region 5-5A and advanced to the third round of the playoffs for the first time since 2016.

Lexington also developed a

blue collar, physical identity that inspired a fitting nickname from Woolbright: "Mudcat Football."

"It's just do things the hard way," Woolbright said of what defines playing football like a Mudcat. "From the way we work out, the way we practice, the way we condition, we do it the hard way."

If the Wildcats hope to finally upend Dutch Fork's reign as region champion, it will take that same mentality and once again identifying team leaders on both sides of the football.

A positive so far are the lack of injuries that have hurt the program the past couple of seasons, especially at quarterback.

With leading rusher Jonah Norris back after last year's foot injury to go with junior quarterback Taiden Mines, wide receivers Kamadi Maxwell and Jarrod Mewborn, and an offensive line led by senior center Luca Feraci, Lexington has a potentially potent offense.

"Taiden's had a good offseason," Woolbright said. "You know, he did a great job last year coming in as a starter as a sophomore and he built on that this offseason. He wasn't satisfied with where he was. He did put a lot of work in the weight room, got a lot stronger. He's

## 2022 WILDCATS

0 Harley Fox	27 Jacob Schrodt
1 Kameron Coulter	28 Ryan Weston
2 Kamadi Maxwell	32 Daniel Bryant
3 Cameron Sutton	33 Jackson Woodhouse
4 Chris Frye	34 Thomas Wemy
5 Brayden Woolbright	36 Broxton Grantt
6 Thomas Carpenter	38 Dajan Monroe
7 Christian Sexton	42 Kris Ancone
8 Tyler Floyd	52 Allen Brown
9 Connor Holmes	53 Luca Feraci
10 Kole Bush	54 Jordan Fryer
11 Jarrod Mewborn	56 Micah Bridges
12 Antonyio Davis	64 Dominic Feraci
13 Duke Cleary	69 Parker Lawson
14 David CiFuentes	70 Tucker Chapman
15 Taiden Mines	72 Mat Wilkie
16 Jacob Gepfert	74 Kade Jeffries
17 Brandon Cromer	75 Ryan McFarland
18 Montrell Byre	77 Josh Hemingway
19 Stephen Dixon	79 Noah Gulasa
20 Jamias Graves	82 Charles Dimarco
21 Jonah Norris	87 Tyler Chavis
22 Tyler Derenizo	92 Jose Haro
23 Landin Alexander	99 Tyler Walker
24 Jayden Kemmerlin	
25 Dylan Bolin	



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** - at West Florence  
**Aug. 26** - at South Aiken  
**Sept. 2** - Stratford  
**Sept. 9** - Blythewood  
**Sept. 16** - Gilbert  
**Sept. 23** - Idle  
**Sept. 30** - at Chapin  
**Oct. 7** - River Bluff  
**Oct. 14** - at White Knoll  
**Oct. 21** - at Aiken  
**Oct. 28** - Dutch Fork



LEXINGTON

FROM PAGE 13

got a lot faster. He really understands the offense now, so we’re looking for a big growth for him this year.”

Defensively, Harley Fox and linebckers Chris Frye and Kole Bush have taken a leadership role.

With Dutch Fork’s loss in the state title game to Gaffney giving hope to other teams looking to close the gap between them and the Silver Foxes, Woolbright sees the region as highly competitive this season.

“It’s gonna be tough as always,” he said. “Dutch Fork is still the top one in our region because no one has beaten them yet. They’re going to be a good team. They’re going to do a great job. But I think it’s going to be about as equal as it always is.

“Dutch Fork, until they are taken down, you got to say they’re top. But the next four teams, I don’t think there’s any difference between us week in and week out. So, it’s going to come down to who does the best execution, injuries. where the ball bounces and things like that. It’s going to be another war.”

Lexington opens the season Aug. 19 at West Florence.



PHOTO | GOFASHWIN.COM

The Lexington and River Bluff cheerleaders at last year’s game in The Swamp

DUTCH FORK

FROM PAGE 9

we lost by three points last year is a big thing.”

Dutch Fork returns healthy running back Jarvis Green to the fold. He looks to improve on last year’s offensive total of 2,125 yards and 36 touchdowns.

Aliam Appier appears slated to take over at quarterback. And while wide receiver Antonio Williams is now at Clemson, Appier will have capable targets in Jacob Hamilton and South Aiken transfer Braylen Bowers.

The offensive line, where the untimely death of Jack Alkhatib served as a season-long source of inspiration last year, is led by returning guard Jacob Beasley and tight end Prince Ross.

Dutch Fork will have one of the most unique and challenging non-region schedules among South Carolina-based teams. The Silver Foxes open Aug. 18 at American Legion Memorial Stadium in Charlotte against Hough (N.C.) as part of Charlotte Kickoff Night.

Both teams were nationally-ranked last season, and the game marks a return to Charlotte for Knotts, where he won eight of his 14 state titles. It’s one of three out-of-state games for the Silver Foxes, who also play at Spartanburg, Stratford and North Augusta.

Dutch Fork still has a 34-game road winning



PHOTO | GOFASHWIN.COM

Dutch Fork football team makes entrance.

streak and 28-game region winning streak.

“Our schedule sucks, our home schedule sucks, but people wouldn’t play us,” Knotts said. “But I give kudos to North Augusta and Stratford. I asked all the other normal powers and no one would play us.

“Might be a little different Dutch Fork season. Ob-

viously, we are shooting for a state championship, but we got six games right at the beginning [that] are really, really tough,” he added.

“We will play anybody, but we don’t want to come out all banged up.”



# Crusaders Ready to Challenge in SCISA Class 2A Varsity Football



THOMAS GRANT JR. | CHRONICLE

Running back Sam Burks is one of the team leaders Northside Christian Academy will rely upon this season.

**BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

Last season saw Northside Christian Academy literally take a “step back” in order to move forward under first-year head coach Dean Howell.

Rather than play a full varsity schedule in moving up from eight-man to 11-man football, the Crusaders competed against other S.C. Independent School Association and S.C. High School League schools as a junior varsity team. The goal was to get experience for the young team small in numbers but big in enthusiasm.

“Last year was a huge challenge in that adding three more guys to the field stresses your depth as well as your knowledge of spacing, rules, etc,” Howell said. “The competition we played was more public school JV teams with a couple of varsity teams mixed in, so they should know what to expect come game time this year.”

With a year under their belt, this year’s Crusaders will play an all-varsity schedule in Region 2-2A. Howell still has concerns with how his team will handle the game speed and making quick decisions, but is

comfortable with having team leaders like lineman Dylan Judy and wide receiver/defensive back Sam Burks.

“I think it is safe to say that in football, it all starts up front,” Howell said. “We have a senior who has gotten in much better shape and is showing great leadership early. His name is Dylan Judy. And we have a plethora of guys that played just about every snap last year on the offensive and defensive lines that we are counting on as well.

“As far as skill goes, we return one of the better players in the

area in Sam Burks at wide receiver and defensive back and we have two guys returning from injuries who should play key roles as well.”

The Crusaders return Jeff McCallum at starting quarterback, with J.R. Kinard as a backup. Howell is also excited about one of his other wide receiver targets in sophomore James James who has “blossomed in the offseason”.

Since taking over at Northside Christian, Howell has continually stressed patience. With school numbers expected to increase and as the young players mature

on the field, the Crusaders hope to find future success.

“The more reps we get, the better we become,” Howell said. “This is a special place and a great group of young men and we hope we can coach them well enough to give them the

best chance possible to be successful, no matter what obstacles they face.”

Northside Christian opens the season Aug. 19 at Calhoun Falls.

## 2022 CRUSADERS

2 JR Kinard	41 Grayson Crim
3 Sam Burks	44 Gavin Ford
4 Matt Diaz	50 Hudson Shick
5 Trevor Hoffman	51 Noah White
6 John Rogers	52 Jameson Bartlett
7 Jake Jeffrey	54 Landon Folks
8 Jordan Martin	55 Zachary Gebhard
9 Braeden Patterson	65 Dave Salas
11 Clayton Hardin	66 Aidan Ortega
12 Jefferson McCallum	74 Dylan Judy
20 James Jones	77 Ian McLellan
21 Logan Taylor	78 E.J. Yaroszewski
40 Logan Gouveia	



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** - at Calhoun Falls  
**Aug. 26** - Greenwood Christian  
**Sept. 2** - at Orangeburg Prep  
**Sept. 9** - New Hope Leadership Academy  
**Sept. 16** - Hickory Grove Christian  
**Sept. 23** - at Williamsburg Academy  
**Sept. 30** - Idle  
**Oct. 7** - GSIC Charter  
**Oct. 14** - at Bethesda Academy  
**Oct. 21** - at Palmetto Christian  
**Oct. 28** - Spartanburg Christian



# Pelion Looks to Maximize Talent Amid Roster Number Concerns

## 2022 PANTHERS

2 Carlos Rivera	50 Kaleb James
3 Ashton Fallaw	51 Andrew Northcutt
4 Lucas New	52 Timothy Knotts
5 Whitmire Brown	53 Shiloh Tindal
6 Talan Gunter	54 Blake Taylor
7 Dalton Blackburn	56 Harrison Galvin
8 Colin Williams	58 Tre'on Williams
12 Tyler Classen	60 Tucker Johnson
14 Hunter Rawl	61 Seamus Jolly
15 Ethan Osmanski	62 Ben Stabler
16 Zyan Davis	63 Jordan Donovan
18 Lance Dawson	64 Daytona Judy
20 Payton Busbee	65 Lazaro Mejia
21 Clayton Walker	66 Lane Brown
22 Matthew Plum	67 William Craps
23 Angel Correa	70 Mason Williams
24 Landon Byrd	71 Luke Keck
25 Peyton Oswald	72 Jason Keech
28 Michael Cottrell	75 Logan Lee
32 Julian Tyler	77 Elisha Craps
33 Michael Mason	81 Nasir Ray
35 Zeke Martirosian	85 Jayden Fields
44 Ty Brown	88 Quan Young
45 Todd Foster	





PROVIDED

Pelion running back Lucas New carries the football against Class 2A runner-up Silver Bluff.

## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** – Chapin  
**Aug. 26** – at Lancaster  
**Sept. 2** – at River Bluff  
**Sept. 9** – Idle  
**Sept. 16** – Hartsville  
**Sept. 23** – at Airport  
**Sept. 30** – at Richland Northeast  
**Oct. 7** – Ridge View  
**Oct. 14** – at A.C. Flora  
**Oct. 21** – Westwood  
**Oct. 28** – Lugoff-Elgin



**BY THOMAS GRANT, JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

Dann Holland enters his sixth season as Pelion High School head football coach this fall. The past four seasons have seen the Panthers reach the playoffs, including a Region 5-2A title in 2020. Despite the recent success, Holland still believes the program can reach even higher heights under his leadership. “Our numbers aren’t where they need to be,” he said. “We have got too many kids that are

walking the halls that should be playing football. You know, football is hard. It is about 90 degrees when we walked out on this field about two hours and 15 minutes ago. Numbers wise, we need to get a little better.” Even with lesser numbers on the junior varsity level, Holland believes depth is a major strength on his varsity team. He especially believes that is true on the offensive side of the football and expects it to be just as good on special teams. He is also pleased with his team’s strength and condition-

ing, crediting Carl Richardson with working diligently with the players during the off-season. Offensively, Luke New and Ashton Walls are competing for the starting quarterback job. Holland has not ruled out the possibility of taking a “by committee” approach to the position and both are expected to play on defense as well. On the defensive side of the ball, safety Dalton Blackburn and linebackers Carlos Rivera and Peyton Oswald, who missed





THOMAS GRANT JR. | CHRONICLE

Pelion players huddle up during a preseason practice drill.

## PELION FROM PAGE 16

last season due to COVID-19, are among the team leaders Holland expects to help get teammates to get in their right positions to make plays.

For the next two seasons, Pelion will compete in the Upper State in Region 3-2A.

“It’s going to be a tough one, no doubt,” Holland said. “Strom Thurmond is always going to be good. Silver Bluff, they just played for the state championship last year. Fox Creek, they have got a bunch of big guys all the time. Batesburg-Leesville, they are kind of rebuilding. So, it is going to be a tough region. There are no easy games.”

Pelion opens the season Aug. 19 at Bethune-Bowman.

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# River Bluff Wants to Get Back to Winning

BY THOMAS GRANT JR.  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

Since arriving at River Bluff High School, head coach C. Blair Hardin has had his program on the upswing.

Last season, however, saw the Gators sink to the bottom of the Region 5-5A standings. Add a six-

game losing streak to end the season and it's not surprising to see the players and coaches anxious to look forward to the 2022 season.

"It's a new team with a new mindset," said Hardin, who will coach from the coaches box this season as he recovers from knee surgery. "We've had some great additions to our staff, coaching staff and these coaches have done a great job of really embracing them. Last year did not go well and we haven't talked about it much. But these seniors that have played a lot together since their sophomore year, we have high expectations for them. They have high expectations, so there's a lot of excitement."

Hardin believes that strong bond among the players and improved leadership will lead to better results.

Parker Murray is the Gators' starting quarterback. While leading receiver Apollos Cook is now with his father and former River Bluff assistant Andre Cook at Airport High School, the team still has outside threats with Thomas Powell, Stephen

Back, Austin Cox and Alejandro Ambriz.

Both the offensive and defensive lines have a mix of veterans that Hardin is anxious to see perform during scrimmages.

Getting back into playoff contention will be a challenge for River Bluff in Region 5-5A with teams like Lexington, Chapin and White Knoll also looking to close the gap with perennial region champion Dutch Fork.

"They reload every year," Hardin said of Dutch Fork. "And you know, just when we have that opportunity to compete against them, we want to be playing really good football at a high level, hopefully remain injury free to compete against a good program.

"Everybody's good [in the region]. I mean, everybody has good players, they're well-coached and our region is as tough as it gets."

River Bluff opens the regular season Aug. 26 at Lugoff-Elgin.

## 2022 GATORS

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Alejandro Ambriz  | 28 Brady Orr        |
| 2 Parker Murray     | 30 Reese Lawrence   |
| 3 Gray Herring      | 31 Ojani Jimenez    |
| 4 Toriaun Leaphart  | 35 Chance Jones     |
| 5 Stephen Collier   | 40 Ethan Cook       |
| 6 Hadi Mostakim     | 42 Kameron Woodruff |
| 7 Jaden Cook        | 50 Austin Wise      |
| 8 Aaron Griffin     | 51 Drew Surratt     |
| 9 Thomas Powell     | 52 Tyler Barton     |
| 10 Connor Clamp     | 53 Caden Hersey     |
| 11 Austin Cox       | 54 Davon Bell       |
| 12 Jordan Grant     | 55 Nathan Shuman    |
| 13 Lane Heldreth    | 56 Pac Petts        |
| 16 Jonathan Cook    | 58 Jordan Allen     |
| 17 Caleb Hart       | 59 Kaleb Long       |
| 19 Alonzo Singleton | 79 Joe Allende      |
| 20 Cooper Johns     | 81 Blaine Blose     |
| 21 Mason Flowers    | 82 Landon Schultz   |
| 22 Daniel Harper    | 83 Hunter Rogers    |
| 24 Xavier Sullender | 95 A.J. Colter      |
| 25 Eric Johnson     |                     |
| 27 Tripp Bryant     |                     |

## 2022 SCHEDULE

- Aug. 19 - at Lugoff-Elgin  
Aug. 26 - Swansea  
Sept. 2 - Irmo  
Sept. 9 - at South Aiken  
Sept. 16 - Lower Richland  
Sept. 23 - at Dorman  
Sept. 30 - at White Knoll  
Oct. 7 - at Lexington  
Oct. 14 - Idle  
Oct. 21 - Dutch Fork  
Oct. 28 - Chapin



River Bluff players team up for tackle against White Knoll.

PHOTO | GOFLASHWIN.COM





PHOTO | GOFASHWIN.COM

River Bluff cheeleaders at last season's game against Lexington



PHOTO | GOFASHWIN.COM

The crowd cheers as River Bluff takes on Lexington.



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PROVIDED

## 2022 TIGERS

2 Ricky Tyler	23 Dante Caldwell
3 Isaiah Dye	24 Jonathan Franks
4 Lydell Zeigler	32 Ahmad Johnson
5 Justin Gissendanner	40 Jeremiah Williams
6 Dontae Amaker	50 Moises Garcia
8 Joshua Sutton	51 Carter Linderman
9 Nick Jones	52 Derek Hartman
10 Jacob Harper	53 Tyson Churchwell
11 Lazarus Mustafah	55 Torna Bonnett
12 D.J. Green	56 Landon Lee
13 Landon Cunningham	60 Kal'Juan Asbery
14 Daniel Graddick	64 Athan Vest
15 Malik Hampton	71 Michael Mills
16 Michael Giddens	72 Charlie Moody
17 Carter Bowan	77 Pearson Sease
20 Teysean Charley	81 Dawson Sandifer
21 Chase Alley	88 Isaac Sandifer
22 Chance Knight	99 William Geddis



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** – at Airport  
**Aug. 26** – at River Bluff  
**Sept. 2** – Idle  
**Sept. 9** – Wagener-Salley  
**Sept. 16** – C.A. Johnson  
**Sept. 23** – Midland Valley  
**Sept. 30** – at Dreher  
**Oct. 7** – at Gilbert  
**Oct. 14** – Lower Richland  
**Oct. 21** – Brookland-Cayce  
**Oct. 28** – at Orangburg-Wilkinson

Members of the Swansea High School football team during a media event in Columbia.

# Swansea Hopes Improved Numbers Lead to More Wins

**BY KEVIN OLIVER**  
sports@lexingtonchronicle.com

There are rough seasons sometimes in high school football.

In 2021, the Swansea Tigers had a very rough season, going 0-8.

Head coach Brent Wilder, now in his fourth year with the football program, admits it was a difficult year. But he sees better times and many improvements in store for the team this season.

“Our numbers are better this year across the board,” Wilder says. “Being in a small rural community, COVID-19 hit us hard and we were constantly reeling from having kids out. We didn’t have enough players to even field a junior varsity squad the last two seasons.

“This year we’ve averaged 65 players participating over the summer practices, and we’ve gained a few more JV players, so we’re prepared to play as well as we have since the pre-COVID years.”

Another thing that gives Wilder some optimism about 2022 is the attitude his players have come back with after last year.

“There has been a lot of buy-in to what we’ve done off-season, and we feel like we had a normal summer, good workouts in the weight room, and all of that will add up to a good year for us,” he said.

The Tigers play in Region 5-3A against competition from Brookland-Cayce, Orangburg-Wilkinson, Dreher, Gilbert and

Lower Richland.

“We play in a tough region,” Wilder noted. “Every game is tough, and last year we had games canceled and rescheduled, so it was hard to get any continuity going – we’re hoping for a more normal season this year.”

There is one big change in the coaching ranks, but it introduces a familiar name to a new position. Former linebackers coach Michael Tindall was promoted to defensive coordinator.

“He’s done a good job with the guys already,” Wilder says. “I feel like that’s going to be a positive move for us, overall.”

In a division where many players operate on both sides of the ball, Wilder says they

should have a better group in the trenches this season.

“We’re going to base things out of a three-man front,” he said. “We have more linebacker bodies up front, so we think that will help us be more balanced out of the 3-5, and we can use our athleticism in the backfield.”

The Tigers have some experience returning to the roster this season with a number of seniors Wilder said should contribute, including a pair of four-year starters.

“Ricky Tyler is an outside linebacker who played some inside last year but he’ll be going outside more this year,” Wilder says. “He got



# SWANSEA FROM PAGE 20

hurt last year and wasn't able to finish the season. But, in his first two games, he'd already had over 40 tackles. He's as good as anyone in the state."

The other four-year starter is inside linebacker Isaiah Dye, who started as a defensive back and moved inside after gaining strength in the off season.

In addition to those team leaders,

watch for

Justin Gissendanner, a transfer last year who'll be playing defensive back and wide receiver, and Josh Sutton, a senior who has experience at several positions and will settle in at running back and safety.

Swansea opens the season Aug. 19 at Airport. It's the season-opener for WACH Fox 57's Sonic Friday Night Rivals.



PHOTO | RAMIE KELLY

The Swansea High School cheerleaders last season at Doug Bennett Stadium

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# W.W. King to Lean on Seniors for Another Playoff Season

**BY THOMAS GRANT JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

From a record standpoint, W.W. King Academy was the second-most improved team in Chronicle Country.

The Knights rebounded from a 1-6 campaign in 2020 to a 7-3 record and a SCISA eight-man playoff appearance. This also included a six-game winning streak, the pro-

## 2022 KNIGHTS

SR	Kevin Crapps
Collin Woodward	
Colby Woodward	FR
Carson Woodward	Smith Kirby
Clayton Turner	Wyatt Burbank
Seth Gross	Dallas Hill
JR	HC-Zach Matthews
Pierce Kirby	(10th year)
Layton Carmean	
Jackson Whitaker	ASST COACHES
Levi Neal	Dennis Gibson
Jesse Parrish	Brian Kneece
SOPH	
Ben Sauls	



## 2022 SCHEDULE

Aug. 19 – Idle

Aug. 26 – Wardlaw Academy

Sept. 2 – at Oakbrook Prep

Sept. 9 – at Jefferson Davis Academy

Sept. 16 – Charleston Collegiate

Sept. 23 – Richard Winn

Sept. 30 – at Newberry Academy

Oct. 7 – at Holly Hill Academy

Oct. 14 – Laurens Academy

Oct. 21 – Oakbrook Prep

Oct. 28 – at Wardlaw Academy



PROVIDED

W.W. King Academy quarterback Collin Woodward

gram’s longest since finishing state runner-up in 2016.

“I was just proud of our guys the way they played,” said head coach/school headmaster Zack Matthews. “I mean, we had five juniors, one [Seth Gross] who got hurt in the third game of the season and he was out for the rest of the year. We didn’t have him, but those guys have played a lot of football for us and last year, they kind of saw a little bit of the benefits of the work they put in as freshmen and sophomores and then we hope to continue that this year.

“All five of those guys are returning seniors for me this year, and they’re gonna be a big part of what we do.”

Matthews credited the mental toughness those seniors — the Woodward triplets Collin, Colby and Carson Woodward, Clayton Turner and Seth Gross — and sophomore running back Ben Saul, developed over two seasons, in getting physically outmatched on a weekly basis.

“They were able to kind of put it together and they stayed the course,” Matthews said. “And we were able to win some ball games that we probably shouldn’t have won just because of that mentality.”

W.W. King will have a unique region schedule in which it plays Oakbrook Prep and Wardlaw Academy twice this season due to travel. The Knights open the season Aug. 26 at home against the Patriots.

“I think we play those two games early enough that we can just kind of learn who we are,” Matthews said. “And obviously, what you do early in the season, it’s maybe a little different in how you play it out later in the year. So I don’t really worry about that. I think we just play another game and a game for us to get better. Because ultimately, our goal is not getting one or two, it’s making the playoffs and making a run there.”



# White Knoll Looks to Build on Playoff Appearance

**BY THOMAS GRANT JR.**  
thomas@lexingtonchronicle.com

“White Knoll football is not for everyone, but it’s for dudes like this.”

The team’s head coach, Nick Pelham, made this declaration as the team celebrated a playoff berth last year, in his first season at the helm.

Not only did the Timberwolves end a four-year playoff drought, they provided Pelham an affirmation of his long-term goals for the program.

“It was incredibly important,” he said. “Our kids needed that. Our kids needed some success. Our kids had fought so hard and worked so hard and if they didn’t really achieve any success, you know, maybe they stopped listening.”

“But that little bit of success that we had and then we played Sumter, we were down 7-2 at halftime and our kids enjoyed that playoff atmosphere and we dressed a whole bunch of kids and they all went down there, didn’t have on shirt sleeves,” he continued, referencing how Dutch Fork head coach Tom Knotts instills toughness by not allowing anybody on his team to wear shirt sleeves under their jerseys in cold weather.

“We did the same thing and our kids love that. Our kids love every bit of that. So that was a great experience just to practice one more week, to believe in it as a springboard for this year.”

That program has carried over into the preseason as Pelham has put together what Pelham calls an “all-star” coaching staff. Among the new hires are former River Bluff offensive line coach Justin Crocker, tight end and H-back coach Caleb



THOMAS GRANT JR. | CHRONICLE

Head coach Nicholas Pelham talks with his team last season.

Clark, wide receivers coach Shaq Young and special teams and offensive line coach Brayton Smith.

“The biggest thing I learned is you need a great staff in football,” Pelham said. “You need a great coaching staff and you need guys who are going to show up and help with lawn and they’re going to show up and they’re going to help with field cleanup. And they’re going to supervise players and they’re going to coach their position and they’re going to contact their position group the night before to make sure they’re on time to practice. It takes a great staff to be a great football program.”

“I’m really lucky, we were able to hire some great new coaches this year to go with the coaches that we brought on last year,” he continued. “I’m really excited about our coaching staff, incredibly excited about our coaching staff.”

As for Pelham’s returning “dudes,” they include sophomore quarterback Landon Sharpe, wide receiver Hassan Lee, back receiver Jaiden Kimble, offensive linemen Ron Briggs, Ty Bennett, Jeremiah Brown and Collin Bradshaw, and outside linebacker Mondo Domenech.

While the Timberwolves’ roster is once again dominated by underclassmen, Pelham takes satisfaction in having to do less teaching and more reinforcement on the details of a game plan.

“Coaches want to coach the details of football, not who’s going to be here this day, who’s going to show up, who’s not going to be here, who knows how to put the pants on right,” he said. “So, I’m excited. I’m really excited to get into the details of football.”

White Knoll opens the regular season Aug. 19 at home against Orangeburg-Wilkinson.

## 2022 TIMBERWOLVES

1 C.J. Earl	35 Tyson Cox
2 Devin Geronomi	40 Evan Long
3 Hayden Cushman	41 Connor Denslow
4 Nate Thomas	42 Connor Burgess
5 Jesse Ross	43 Aden Brown
6 Jalen Watson	44 Sean Evans
7 Charles Plange	50 Sebastian Martin
8 Austin Cunningham	51 Mason Gravin
9 M.J. Jones	52 Jake Sharpe
10 Jaiden Kimble	54 Connor Sharp
11 Evan Henderson	55 Ja’Vion Glover
12 Tyler Stoudemire	56 Luke Chavis
13 Hasan Lee	60 Grayson Martin
14 Javon Griffin	61 Ron Briggs
15 James McCants	62 Ty Bennett
16 Bryson Steele	63 Jeremiah Brown
17 Landon Sharpe	64 Caleb Hatcher
18 Lincoln Ilunga	70 Donovan Sims
19 Malik Walker	71 Collin Bradshaw
20 Jalen Gates	72 T.J. Boone
21 Caleb Geronomi	73 Hayden Hohlwein
22 Demenico Banks	75 Leroy Simmons
23 Wyatt Bowen	76 Thomas Disbrow
24 Marcus Domenech	80 Anthony Bactad
25 D.J. Dingle	81 Zareth Owens
26 Zacorian Johnson	82 Owen Ferrell
30 J.J. Griffin	83 Jacen Pate
31 Jaylen Gerald	84 Mari Hodges
32 Andrew Rowe	91 Maleah Perry
33 Robbie Murphy	
34 Nick Pierce	



## 2022 SCHEDULE

**Aug. 19** – Orangeburg-Wilkinson  
**Aug. 26** – Spring Valley  
**Sept. 2** – Colleton County  
**Sept. 9** – at Westwood  
**Sept. 16** – at South Aiken  
**Sept. 23** – Lancaster  
**Sept. 30** – River Bluff  
**Oct. 7** – at Dutch Fork  
**Oct. 14** – Lexington  
**Oct. 21** – at Chapin  
**Oct. 28** – Idle



2021 HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL YEAR IN REVIEW

# Gray Collegiate Wins First-Ever State Title

BY KEVIN OLIVER  
sports@lexingtonchronicle.com

Dec. 3 at Charlie W. Stadium was Gray Collegiate’s first trip to the Class 2A finals in the program’s eight-year histor.

The War Eagles made it count by defeating Silver Bluff 49-14 to earn the state championship.

After a scoreless first quarter, Gray Collegiate (14-1) got on the board first in the second quarter.

It was a three-yard touchdown run from K.Z. Adams, who used most of the wide side of the field before slicing into the end zone untouched.

On their first series after the ensuing kickoff, Silver Bluff quarterback Maleik Williams threaded his way through the War Eagle defense and broke into the open field for a 94-yard touchdown run to tie the game at 7-7.

From that point on, Gray Collegiate dominated the game on both sides of the ball.

Tory Kelly scored a touchdown off of a blocked punt and the offense added two more scores on touchdown runs by quarterback Tre Robinson and Adams to make it 28-7 at the half.

The second half offered more of the same, with the War Eagle defense stifling the Bulldogs offense on nearly every series and Gray’s offense an-



PHOTO | GEORGE MATSUI

The Gray Collegiate Academy football team after winning the Class 2A title.

chored by a 309-yard, three-touchdown rushing night from Adams.

On its first two possessions of the second half, Gray Collegiate took advantage of big plays and long runs from Adams and Robinson to extend their lead to 42-7. For Silver Bluff (12-1), Williams again scrambled for a score, this time on a red zone play from the 16 to finally get the Bulldogs on the board again at 42-14 with 2:38 remaining in the 3rd quarter.

Adams broke free for another run, this time for 42 yards, at the close of the quarter and then finished the scoring on the ensuing first and goal play from the 2-yard line to seal the title victory.

“It’s an amazing group of seniors,” Gray Collegiate head coach Adam Holmes said. “15 seniors. Guys that are selfless. They played for the names on their chest, not their back. We had five to six guys playing both ways all the time. You see what K.Z. does, Tory Kelly. I mean all of those guys just laid it all on the line for us and that’s what the difference in what this football team did over the course of this year. I’m so proud of those guys.”

PHOTO | GEORGE MATSUI

K.Z. Adams



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A graphic consisting of a horizontal line. Above the line are several 'X' characters arranged in a loose formation. Below the line are several 'O' characters arranged in a similar loose formation. This likely represents a football team's offensive or defensive line.

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# ALL-CHRONICLE FOOTBALL TEAM

## FIRST TEAM

### Offense

**QB** - Davin Patterson (Dutch Fork), Izayah Whiteside (Irmo), Tanner Staton (Brookland-Cayce) and Jayden Bradford (Chapin)

**RB** - Jarvis Green (Dutch Fork), Alias-Graham Woodberry (Gilbert) and Amah-Dre Leaphart (Batesburg-Leesville)

**OL** - Chase Sweigert (Chapin), Levi Gould (River Bluff), Jaxon Hilton and Alec Johnson (both of Gray Collegiate), Ethan Benson and \*Jack Alkhatib (both of Dutch Fork)

**TE** - Gray Leaphart (Gilbert) and Tory Kelly (Gray Collegiate)

**WR** - Antonio Williams (Dutch Fork), DeAree Rogers (Irmo), Skylar King (Brookland-Cayce) and Zavier Short (Chapin)

**PK** - Mason Suber (Chapin)

### Defense

**DL** - Payton Mathis (Lexington), Max Drag (Chapin), Brice Colter (River

Bluff) and Marcellus Lewis (Irmo)

**LB** - Tanner Johnson (Lexington), Owen Plane (Brookland-Cayce), Zach Glenn (Gray Collegiate), C.J. Wicker and Chandler Perry (both of Dutch Fork)

**DB** - Luke New (Pelion), Landon Danley and Jaden Kinard (both of Dutch Fork), Jayson Tolen (Gilbert) and Kamadi Maxwell (Lexington)

**ATH** - Nick Emmanwori (Irmo) and Jacob Osmanski (Pelion)

## SECOND TEAM

### Offense

**QB** - Tre Robinson (Gray Collegiate) and Chance Jennings (Gilbert)

**RB** - Jaden Allen-Hendrix (Gilbert), Tyler Walker (Lexington) and Azwan James (Pelion)

**OL** - Brooks Egle (Lexington), Meosphia Yarbrough (Gilbert), Jacory Jones (Brookland-Cayce), Mark Bothers (Chapin) and Brandon Murphy (Dutch Fork)

**WR** - Apollos Cook (River Bluff), Jahmari Kennerly & Nahzeikiel Mays (both of Brookland-Cayce) and Gage Gunter (Gilbert)

**TE** - Tyler Derienzo (Lexington)

**ATH** - Jaquez Frederick (White Knoll), Errick Tucker (Irmo) and Ziggy Merritt (Batesburg-Leesville)

### Defense

**DL** - Neil Bastian (Gilbert) and Jamari Stroman and Damarion Willaims (both of Wagener-Salley)

**LB** - Grady Johnson (Lexington), Tyler Knight (Swansea), Jackson Caulder (Gilbert), Korey Williams (Batesburg-Leesville) and Michael Fields (Pelion)

**DB** - Chris Frye and Anthony Plotkin (both of Lexington), Harley Boatwright (Gilbert), Justin Powe (Chapin) and Justin Gissendanner (Swansea)

**ATH** - Cameron Davis (Wagener-Salley)

## FINAL REGULAR SEASON SC PREP FOOTBALL MEDIA POLL

### CLASS 5A

1. Dutch Fork (16)
2. Fort Dorchester
3. Gaffney
4. Northwestern
5. Sumter
6. Hillcrest
7. T.L. Hanna
8. Spring Valley
9. Lexington
10. Spartanburg

Others receiving votes: Goose Creek, Byrnes, Chapin

### CLASS 4A

1. Myrtle Beach (12)
2. South Pointe (2)
- 3 (tie). Greenwood
- 3 (tie). A.C. Flora (1)
5. Greenville

6. West Florence

7. May River

8. South Florence

9. York

10. Beaufort

Others receiving votes: Irmo, South Aiken, Laurens, Hartsville

### CLASS 3A

1. Daniel (17)
2. Dillon
3. Chapman
4. Camden
5. Clinton
6. Powdersville
7. Lower Richland
8. Brookland-Cayce
9. Aynor
10. Gilbert

Others receiving votes: Ches-

ter, Oceanside Collegiate

### CLASS 2A

1. Abbeville (15)
2. Gray Collegiate (1)
3. Silver Bluff
4. Marion
5. Phillip Simmons
6. Timberland
7. Saluda
8. Wade Hampton
9. Christ Church
10. Cheraw

Others receiving votes: Chesterfield, St. Joseph's, Barnwell, Andrew Jackson

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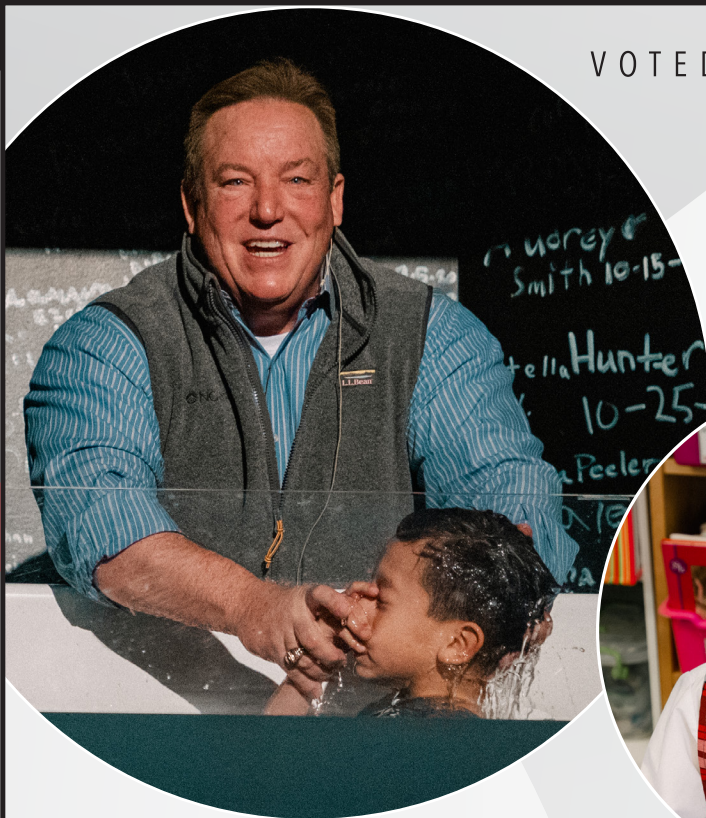
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