

Marshall County Tigers



Experience, depth to lead the way for Tigers in '22

By Chris Siers
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All throughout the summer months, the Marshall County Tigers have turned out in droves to participate in preseason workouts leading up to the August 19 kickoff against Columbia Central.

While the staggering numbers of the players who participated so far are enough to make any coach happy, it's been the core players who have been in the program for several years that have the Tigers ready to take on a challenging Region 4-AAA slate.

"I feel like we're a team that's got a bunch of guys that can contribute on a varsity level. As a coach, you can never have enough depth, but compared to the last two or three years, we've got more depth than we've had," Tiger coach Thomas Osteen said.

That senior class has seen tons of varsity-level snaps, which Osteen says has helped the Tigers advance farther during summer work than in past years.

"We've got a senior class that's played a lot of football. Some of those guys were playing as sophomores, maybe before they were ready, but that's paying big dividends now," he said.

Leading the way for the Tigers out of the backfield is senior Demari Braden, who rushed for 763 yards and nine touchdowns a year ago.

The Tigers also sit loaded at receiver with AJ Jones and Jayden Randolph both making an impression through the summer months.

"Demari has played a lot of football. I expect him to have a big year for us.

Offensively, two guys I feel like are going to spearhead our receiving corps, are AJ Jones—a sophomore—who has had a really good summer. Jayden Randolph had a good year last year as a sophomore. He's had a great summer. He's got a big body and a big catch radius," Osteen said.

"We can mix in with those guys Antomme Cowthorn. He's going to start on defense for us, but he's a guy we need to get the ball in his hands a good bit. I feel like we've got a pretty good collection of guys to get the ball to."

The Tigers will also feature John Morgan Thomas at tight end, as both a



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The Marshall County Tigers open the 2022 season at home against Columbia Central.

pass-catching tight end as well as a blocking tight end.

"We've got John Morgan Thomas returning at tight end. He's probably the best blocker on the team. He can catch the ball as well. He's a very valuable option. Sometimes you don't see his stats on the chart as much, but he's a returning all-region player," Osteen said.

Junior Silas Teat will get the nod at quarterback for the Tigers.

"We're also tickled to death to have Silas Teat at quarterback. You can tell he's spent a lot of time, not just with us, but on his

own working and being a quarterback, year-round," Osteen said.

Up front, second-team all-region center Elijah Wentzel will anchor the offensive line that, despite being underclassmen, has seen plenty of snaps as freshmen and sophomores.

"Elijah Wentzel returns as a second-team all-region player for us at center. Not the biggest guy, but an excellent high school football player. We're still young, to a certain degree, on the offensive line. We're going to be mostly juniors," Osteen said.

Defensively, the coaching staff is excited

to get Montai Vaughn back on the field after he sat out last season.

"Montai Vaughn is a senior that didn't play last year. We're tickled to death he's back out. He's going to start at outside linebacker for us," Osteen said.

The Tigers will kick off the 2022 season against non-region opponents Columbia and Shelbyville in the first two weeks and after that, will begin a grueling eight-game region slate.

"It's definitely a grind. I wouldn't say as a coach, it's necessarily harder from a

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