

2022

BALDWIN COUNTY FALL

# Sports Preview

A LOOK AHEAD

FOOTBALL

VOLLEYBALL

CROSS COUNTRY

SCHOOLS INCLUDED

BALDWIN COUNTY  
BAYSIDE ACADEMY  
DAPHNE  
ELBERTA  
FAIRHOPE  
FOLEY  
GULF SHORES  
ORANGE BEACH  
ROBERTSDALE  
SNOOK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY  
SPANISH FORT  
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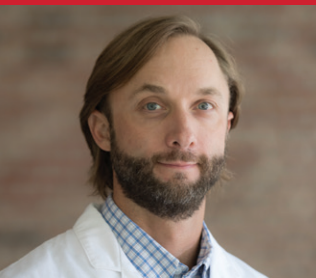
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# Dolphins poised to tackle step to 5A

Gulf Shores' college program looks to pay dividends in Hudspeth's 2nd year

BY COLE MCNANNA  
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GULF SHORES — “Gulf Shores U” has been coming to life on the island. Entering year two under head coach Mark Hudspeth, the Dolphins are poised to take on a new classification in 5A.

The former Louisiana-Lafayette head coach has been former Iowa State head coach Paul Rhoads coordinating the defense and former Troy and South Alabama offensive coordinator Kenny Edenfield calling the shots in that huddle. But it's the college-style system that Hudspeth says has led to the biggest developments seen in Gulf Shores. “We get them every



MICAH GREEN / GULF COAST MEDIA

**Mark Hudspeth and the Gulf Shores Dolphins close their first official practice of fall camp Aug. 1.**

morning at just about 7, and they don't go to class until 9:30 a.m., so we're having meetings, film, workouts, doing video, team meetings then we feed them a team breakfast before they go to class,” Hudspeth said at the Baldwin County Media Day event over the summer. “Then we feed them a dinner to go every day in the evenings, so we're getting to feed our guys three meals a day, and that is adding to the development of our players. We've gained a lot of weight, a lot of strength in our off-season program, and that

part's been a big plus.”

Defensive lineman Caidyn Clark (6-1, 215 pounds) has seen the overhaul firsthand being a native of the city.

“I've lived in Gulf Shores my whole life, so I've always been a part of the Gulf Shores program. My first two years we were going 1-9, 2-8 until Coach Hud got here and flipped it all around,” Clark said. “We all started being disciplined. We had rules that we had to follow, and it just helped us all get more disciplined and take better care of the things we got and really respect everything.”

Safety JR Gardner (5-10,

185 pounds) said that as much as the team has been learning from Rhoads, they've also been teaching the veteran coach a thing or two.

“Coach Rhoads brings a lot of energy to the defensive meetings and on the field,” Gardner said. “He's one of the smartest people I know and has been giving us all of his intelligence. He says that we're teaching him stuff at the same time, so it's all going great.”

Offensively, Gardner will also factor into the weapons that will now surround Ronnie Royal (5-11, 170 pounds), rated the No. 1 Class of 2024 all-purpose back in the nation by Rivals, to alleviate the pressure he faced last year.

“Last year, we really only had one true offensive weapon, and that was Ronnie, so all 11 on defense had all 22 eyes on Ronnie, so that made it a challenge,” Hudspeth said. “This year, we're more balanced in more posi-

tions, so I think that's going to help.”

Some of that balance is also provided by dual-threat quarterback Brendon Byrd (6-1, 195 pounds), who transitions into running the Dolphins' offense after quarterbacking the Spanish Fort Toros to the playoffs last year. For Clark, he likes Byrd better in Gulf Shores' colors.

“I've got a nickname for Brendon. I call him the White Michael Vick because he's a lefty, he's No. 7, and he can run. He's definitely one of the fastest dudes. He was my first career sack last year actually,” Clark said. “I'm happy now that he's on my team, I don't have to worry about having to chase him, but it was definitely different when he first showed up. It was just kind of like well we're used to going against this guy and trying to hurt him, but now he's a part of us and he's one of our brothers; me, him and JR, we all work together

so we're always together so our bond is pretty dang good.”

A similar bond has been formed throughout the entire roster where the Dolphins have banded together to buy into the culture Hudspeth and the experienced coaches are selling.

“We pride ourselves on what we talk about with being tough, being disciplined and playing with relentless effort. If they can give me those three things, I can take care of the rest,” Hudspeth said. “But these guys have bought in to the culture that for us, that's the discipline of our program. It's the way we do things, the way we dress, the way we act, the way we play, the way we take care of our facility; and like you saw last year our, facilities have been totally renovated by the city and it gives our kids a lot of pride every day showing up to our facility.”

# DuBose brings winning ways to Orange Beach

Makos will build around the unit, not just one player, says three-time state championship coach

BY COLE MCNANNA  
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ORANGE BEACH — Jamey DuBose has won everywhere he's been, so not even a two-step up in classifications back in Alabama can ruffle the feathers of the three-time state championship coach.

The new, head man of the Makos football program oversees just the third varsity season and first on the Class 4A stage after the first two years at 2A. But all these kids know is work, DuBose said, as he's enjoyed what he's seen so far from the new-look Orange Beach squad.

“Football season is a marathon; it's not a sprint, so we don't want to get out there and start looking ahead. We're a team that I expect to get better week by week. I expect us to be better Aug. 19 than we were Aug. 1,” DuBose said at the Baldwin County Media Day event in July. “I talk to our kids every day about one day at a time. I ended practice the other day saying, ‘All I want you to do is go home and let's be that much better, that 1% better the next day.’”

Orange Beach went out and won its division at the Hoover 7-on-7 Tournament over the summer and received votes in the Alabama



MICAH GREEN / GULF COAST MEDIA

**The Orange Beach Makos go through a tackling drill during the second day of padded practice Aug. 2.**

Sports Writers Association's preseason poll for Class 4A. DuBose's winning ways and calm, confident demeanor already look to be rubbing off.

“Winning is what we're supposed to do, and winning is what we're going to expect to do,” DuBose said. “We've won wherever I've been. I expect to win here; simple as that, that's all I can tell you. Our kids expect to win. They had a good season last year, I wasn't there, but that

group coming back that lost in the first round, I think that was a disappointment. They felt like they were good enough to win that ballgame, and our guys can win.”

A pair of those returners with a bad taste in their mouths joined DuBose at the podium in defensive standouts Chris Pearson (6-3, 190 pounds) and Trace Clayton (6-1, 190 pounds). Pearson is listed as a safety – and committed to UAB over the summer – and Clayton an outside linebacker; but all defenders in the defense are semi-hybrid.

“Our style of defense is wanting to be almost a four-safety type deal on the field,” DuBose said. “We're going to do some different things with them and a lot of man coverage. We've got some athletes that can run

in those areas, so and we're going to be pressing from different spots at different times, so I expect these two guys to do a great job for us there.”

With other athletes such as Cash Turner (6-1, 170 pounds), John Wallace Holaday (6-1, 165 pounds) and Chandler Wilson (6-4, 205 pounds), DuBose said there won't just be one stud who rules above the rest.

“Defensively, we're going to stand up and we're not going to build on just one player, whether it be offensively or defensively. We're going to build on the unit and that's where we're at,” the head coach said.

Also in the trenches, the offensive line features a group of five returners who have long paved the way for the Makos offense, some of whom include Gabe

Motichek (6-3, 275 pounds), Artis James (6-1, 275 pounds) and Jackson May (6-1, 240 pounds) as well as incoming freshman Charlie Edgeworth (6-6, 290 pounds). They're just a few of a 17-senior group who set the tone for a growing Orange Beach team.

“It's a full senior class, and we've got some talented kids; I've been really impressed by them. We're going to have five offensive linemen that have started that are seniors that have been in the program the whole way,” DuBose said. “A lot of people don't understand; we've got 17 seniors right now, so for a 4A team I think we're pretty good. Our numbers when I got there – again no knock on the past – we had 28, 29 and this morning we departed with 70 on our varsity football team.”



# St. Michael Catholic Cardinals look to dominate backyard

## Offense focused on ball security; defense's top priority is forcing turnovers

**B COLE MCNANNA**

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**FAIRHOPE** — After coming just shy of making the playoffs last season, the returning Cardinals from St. Michael Catholic were itching to put the pads on and erase the bad taste in their mouths.

"A lot that we were excited about last year, a lot to be happy about, but at the same time we ended on a sour note not getting in the postseason so this senior class, and these guys are hungry to get going," second-year head coach Philip Rivers said at Baldwin County Media

Day July 13. "We didn't do a traditional spring this year, so these guys, especially 33 (Clay Barr), are itching to put the shoulder pads on."

Rivers, the 17-year NFL quarterback, has sparked the offense, but it's the athletes who make it work, including quarterback Josh Murphy (6-1, 170 pounds) and backs Braylan Green (5-6, 155 pounds) and Ezra Sexton (5-10, 165 pounds).

"Ezra had two games where he carried it 30 times last year," Rivers said. "These guys have played a lot of football, and now they're one more year into the system and how we do it. If I had to miss a day, I believe they could handle knowing what to run and how to get lined up and could run the practice, and that's huge because we ask a lot of them offensively to adjust

on the fly and be flexible and change plays at the last minute."

On the other side, the head coach saw a strength in the front seven including linebackers like Barr (6-1, 210 pounds) and defensive end Zach Taylor (6-2, 220 pounds). Defensive back Justin Helper (5-11, 185 pounds) leads the way in taking the ball away, but the chief concern amongst the Cardinal offense is ball security.

"We talk a lot defensively about taking the ball away and offensively, these guys tease me about saying let's be the best ball security team in the nation," Rivers said. "But I'm saying, if we take care of the football, we're going to win. You look at last year and the games we didn't take care of it, we got beat. The games we did, we won. Some of the same ways you win do not

change from high school to college to pros; it's the same, and our guys believe that, and now our guys have seen that."

Sexton reiterated that at the podium where he also included some of the other team goals.

"We have three goals that we talk a lot about in practice. First off is to have the least amount of turnovers in the state. The second goal is to beat Gulf Shores Week 0, and the third goal is to win Region 1," Sexton said.

Barr agreed the team has been putting in the work to accomplish those goals, and the new pieces have been working into the mix seamlessly.

"Everybody's been working a lot harder. Everybody got stronger and faster, and it pays off in practice so the energy has been up more and just been a lot more compet-

itive overall," Barr said. "We've got some younger kids coming to fill some senior shoes from last year. I think they know what we expect out of them and so far they've been living up to the expectations."

Rivers understood the local competition would be tough but that even champions need a solid foundation to build on.

"It's a heck of a region. I was obviously biased in north Alabama my whole life, but then you get down here, you go, Holy smokes, in Region 1 all the way down there is a bunch of good football being played!" Rivers said. "There was a big sign on the wall in Charger Park when I was a rookie that said, 'Championships start in the division.' And it's the same in high school. Championships start in Region 1 for us."

Those winning habits

are just one of the things Rivers and his staff has been able to contribute toward the culture of the program at St. Michael Catholic, but the coach said the players have taken ownership of establishing some of the other items.

"I do like to be involved in just about everything, and I think you should as a coach, especially in high school, but I also like for them to have ownership, and I hope they feel that ownership they have," Rivers said. "It was a good start last year but certainly something we can build on. I know we certainly didn't leave that Vigor game satisfied, and not playing in the postseason was rough. Football being over before Halloween is a little rough so I know this group and our whole team has their sights set on playing past Week 10."

# Smith returns to lead The Toro Way

## 30-member senior class takes the torch, looks to carry on Spanish Fort tradition

**BY COLE MCNANNA**

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**SPANISH FORT** — Spanish Fort roots have manifested a homecoming for new head coach Chase Smith and the reloading of a 30-member senior class with another 30-senior group of Toros who have been eating, sleeping and breathing The Toro Way.

Smith was an assistant coach at Spanish Fort High School from 2007 until 2010 when the Toros won their first state championship under head coach Bryant Vincent. Smith also made the jump to the college ranks with Vincent at South Alabama from 2011 to 2013, and



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

**Justin Bonner and the Spanish Fort defense celebrate a turnover at the Foley 7-on-7 Showdown June 29.**

while Vincent ended up at UAB, the Spanish Fort connection led to a comfortable landing spot for senior slot receiver Jacob Godfrey.

Godfrey of course put the work in and impressed coaches at the UAB Prospect Camp in July to earn an offer

where he ultimately committed to the Blazers. Despite his 5-foot-9, 175-pound frame, Godfrey owns the position and follows it up with his play.

"I feel like a lot of people would think speed, but my mom, she always taught me I may be 5-9 but I play like I'm 6-5 so I feel like that's my biggest strength," he said at the Baldwin County Media Day July 13.

He backed that up in the weight room this offseason where he recorded a max power clean of 300 pounds and maxed out in the squat rack at 500 pounds in March.

Godfrey is just one of the senior leaders of the team who has been entrenched in The Toro Way.

"The strength that I knew coming in was the standard and the epitome of what it is to be a Toro, what we say is The Toro Way, which I was

blessed to be a part of starting that years ago," Smith said at the media day event. "These kids, their mindset, their standard of excellence and what they bring every day with their commitment and the competitive nature and grit of what it means to be a Toro."

In addition, the journey has led to a strong camaraderie among the group.

"They've been here.

They've been a part of that tradition and, I just see a real closeness with this group," Smith said. "A lot of love and respect and just a good work ethic, so I'm excited to see what that turns into this fall."

Offensively, 6-foot-2, 200-pound Brayden Walker has been running the show at quarterback and has been turning his preparation into reality after studying behind last year's starter Brendon

Byrd.

"I'm really excited about our offense; I feel like we have a lot of athletes who can play multiple positions. I'm excited about Brayden, our quarterback. I think he's really poised and a great leader," Godfrey said. "Being behind our old quarterback (Brendon) Byrd, I think he learned a lot, and I think that pushed him to be the best version of himself."

On the other side of the ball, senior strong safety Josiah Hixon (5-8, 185 pounds), senior defensive tackle Yorell Williams (6-5, 290 pounds) and junior outside linebacker Cole McConathy II (6-5, 225 pounds) are key cogs of what Hixon believes could be a special unit.

"We're going great," Hixon said at media day. "I expect shutouts every game. That's the expectation. It's just one game at a time, one day at a

time."

With an offensive line that features returners like Bree Blackmon (6-2, 285 pounds) and Reeve White (6-1, 275 pounds), even if the offense stalls there will be a boot waiting in the form of kicker Cameron Lytle (5-9, 145 pounds), ranked a four-star kicker by Kohl's Kicking Camps.

Still, Smith said he feels as though the champions are made in the offseason and since his arrival in March, he's liked what he's seen.

"I'm a big believer that it all starts in January in the offseason," Smith said. "They know this is what we're doing now that's going to pay off in August because, I've been through it, and I've seen it with my eyes. Seeing is believing so it's a mindset of, 'We've been here, we've done that and now this is what we do.' It is an X-factor."



# Baldwin County Tigers eye return playoff trip

## Tigers hoping to bottle, replicate success from last year's run

BY COLE MCNANNA

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BAY MINETTE — The last time the Baldwin County High School Tigers won a playoff game, this year's senior class hadn't even been born. Last year, Baldwin County returned to the postseason for the first time in 14 years and in 2022, the returning members look to capture that energy and mount a return trip to the playoffs.

"We have really used that as a motivation to get back into the playoffs and do some things. I've been saying, 'Why not us?'" third year head coach Scott Rials said at media day. "Somebody's going to be playing in that thing in December. Somebody plays in it every year, no reason it can't be Baldwin County. We can do it; we've got the guys to do it."

Rials was joined by two of the guys he'll look to get the job done in wide receiver and Troy commit Ky McNulty (6-3, 185 pounds) and safety Diondre Jackson (6-0, 180 pounds). They're among six returners on both sides of the ball that will lead the way for the Tigers.

"He is, to me, the best safety in the state of Alabama, maybe the whole United States. I'd take him over anybody, every day of the week and twice on Friday nights," Rials said of Jackson. "The other guy I have is Ky McNulty. He's our starting receiver, a really great player with a really strong upside, got 15 or 20 offers and just committed to Troy." Offensively, Baldwin



**Baldwin County senior Kevontae Mason bends around a bag in the obstacle course during the Jubilee City Big Man Tournament in Daphne on Thursday, July 14.**

COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

County will have a new signal-caller after last year's quarterback, Ty Mims, signed with Southern Mississippi. Rials said a few different athletes rotated in throughout the summer and fall camps, including last year's backup Todd Powell (6-1, 170 pounds) and move-in Preston Kiper (5-11, 190 pounds). On the other hand, Jicar Baldwin (5-8, 185 pounds) returns for his third year as a starter.

"He had over 1,000 yards last year, so it's not like he just showed up, but he's really worked hard. He understands he'll have to take a little more of the burden having a new quarterback, but we're excited about our offense," Rials said of Baldwin. "Daylan Martin, one of our starting tackles, he's a junior this year but he started as a freshman. He's pretty special, a big

ol' kid, hard worker and leads our offensive line for us."

Martin (6-2, 305 pounds) is joined by classmate Jaleeh Rodgers (6-3, 305 pounds) at guard and seniors Guy Parker (6-3, 285 pounds) at tackle and Kenny Milstid (6-0, 245 pounds) at center in building other parts of the Tigers' trench attack.

Opposite them, Rials is a fan of the Baldwin County defensive

linemen who will be tasked with the same responsibilities in trench warfare, including tackle Kevontae Mason (5-9, 285 pounds) and ends Ty Tunstall (6-3, 245 pounds) and Elisha Jones (6-0, 200 pounds).

"Our front four could be as good as anybody. We've got four really solid guys up there, got some size speed and quickness and they can dominate the line of scrimmage. As

everybody here knows, if you can control the line of scrimmage, you've at least got a chance to win so those guys have a chance to control the line of scrimmage," Rials said.

The Tigers making each other better is part of the reason how McNulty refined his skills to earn his spot at the next level, he said.

"Growing up with him, we stay not too far from each other, so that's what I've been doing my whole life is competing," McNulty said of Jackson. "That's all we can do so it feels good."

He felt a similar sense of sports' priority on the Troy campus and said that helped lead him in that direction.

"Troy feels like home to me," McNulty said. "Coming from Bay Minette, there ain't much to do but play sports, and that's all they do up there."

Jackson said the team has drawn inspiration from last year's season and indeed hopes it helps carry them into this season.

"We've got a lot of motivation from last year just because it was our first time making a playoff run," Jackson said. "I feel like we'll have a lot of success going forward into this year."

Jackson said he puts more time in the weight room and hopes to manifest that into even more interceptions than his total of nine from last year.

"Really been getting it every day," Jackson said, "and my goal is to get more picks than I had last year."



# Foley development ahead of schedule

Lions ready to roar against 7A competition with weapons on both sides of the ball

BY COLE MCNANNA  
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FOLEY — Entering year three at the helm of the Foley Lion football program, head coach Deric Scott feels as though the team is ahead of where he hoped they'd be by this point.

He gave all the credit to the athletes who have taken Foley from a team that threw the ball four times a game to one that can stretch the field with explosive players.

"Everything that happened last year was attributed to our young people and assistant coaches that were on the sideline," Scott said. "Do I think we're where we need to be yet? That remains to be seen, and I hope the sky is the limit for us, but I do not

want to get ourselves looking too far ahead."

Third year starting quarterback Reece Tynes (6-2, 205 pounds) has seen the change materialize on the practice field.

"The first year, we weren't together as a team. We would go to practice just to be there," Tynes said. "Now, I feel like everyone wants to be there, has a lot of energy to compete a lot in practice every day."

One of the explosive players who has breathed new life into the offense is rising junior wide receiver Perry Thompson (6-4, 205 pounds) who committed to the University of Alabama in the offseason after turning heads at camp and earning an offer.

"We're excited for him and that opportunity. For us as a program, it helps us



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

**Foley receiver Perry Thompson secures a touchdown pass from Reese Tynes during the Lions' game against Pine Forest at the Foley 7-on-7 Showdown at the Sports Tourism Complex in OWA June 29. The Lions kicked off the 2022 campaign against the Prattville Lions and begin play within Region 1 Sept. 2 against the MGM Vikings.**

identify that we have talent in Foley," Scott said.

The first step was identifying the local talent, and the next step was developing that talent, a process in which Scott says the Lions have exceeded the timeline.

"Everyone seems to think Foley, Alabama, is full of Julio Joneses walking

around, and while he's an outstanding player and of course Foley is where he's from, what Foley, in my opinion, is built off of is development and developing talent," Scott said. "There is talent in the city, but it's more important to be developed, and that's our stamp, if you will, was to develop

the talent that was there."

He noted the gains in the weight room that have brought the Lions on more even ground with their competitors.

"When you see a senior on the field, most of the time that senior has been in the weight room for four years," Scott said. "When I got to Foley, our seniors had been in the weight room about four months when we went to play."

One example of that is two-way lineman Cameron Schultz (6-5, 260 pounds) who added 20 pounds in just two months of summer. He joined other returning linemen like center Greyson Cooper Robinson (6-0, 245 pounds), guard EJ Thomas (6-0, 350 pounds) and tackle Logan Jollenbeck (6-6, 340 pounds) in establishing the Lions' trenches.

They'll look to provide the time Tynes needs to dissect the defense and find other offensive weapons like Harrison Knight (6-1, 185 pounds) and Makai Mitchell (5-11, 150 pounds).

Opposite them, Scott cited linebacker AJ Prim (6-3, 255 pounds) as one of the returning leaders of the defense and Knight agreed they make each other better in practice.

"They're looking pretty good, a tough defense. They've got some good guys on that side of the ball," Knight said. "They get after it, got some tough guys that get dirty so they're looking good on that side."

Scott said with the strength of teams competing against the Lions in Region 1, Foley needs to control its own neighborhood before it can worry about the others.

"You've got to be the king of your backyard first. If you can't win region championships, it's very hard to talk about state championships," Scott said. "Once you have consistently become a person that has to be dealt with in your region, then you have an opportunity to talk about really being relevant in the state landscape."

# Golden Bears to take to the sky

Robertsdale spreading out offensive attack through the air but remain ground-heavy

BY COLE MCNANNA  
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ROBERTSDALE — After being one-dimensional last year, the Robertsdale Golden Bears will look to the air this year and work more passes into their Wing-T offense this season. Fourth year head coach Kyle Stanford said with the focus mainly on Taven Curry — now a UAB Blazer — last year, this year's offense will find more athletes out on the perimeter.

"It was no secret we had one of the better running backs in the area and we were going to feed him the ball," Stanford said. "This year, instead of being a one-running-back-centered

offense, it's how many different guys can we get the ball to."

Stanford listed receiver Braydon Davis (6-1, 190 pounds) and running back Glenn Williams (5-10, 150 pounds) as some of the weapons quarterback Henry Harvison (6-1, 180 pounds) will be searching for, although he said not to be surprised if Williams takes snaps at quarterback as well.

"(Williams) went to the West Florida camp last week (over the summer) and he was the fastest kid in their camp. Very explosive player. We're going to use him all over the field. He's going to take some snaps for us in the wildcat. He's



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

**Head coach Kyle Stanford answers a question during July 13's Baldwin County Media Day at Daphne High School previewing the upcoming season. He was joined by seniors Braydon Davis and Christian Abrams in representing the Golden Bears, who kicked off their season against the Theodore Bobcats Aug. 26.**

going to be a running back. He's going to be at receiver," Stanford said July 13. "I told (Harvison) this morning that he has come miles since this time last year, and he's allowing us to do a lot of things on offense."

All of the big guys up front return offensively, Stanford said, anchored by tackles Ian Bailey (6-2, 310 pounds) and Jaedon Hill (6-7, 285 pounds).

Defensively, five starters return, and Stanford said the strength will lie in the first and last levels at the defensive line and defensive backfield. The unit will be led by four-year starting cornerback Christian Abrams (6-1, 185 pounds) and three-year starters in defensive back Konner Tims (6-0, 185 pounds) and lineman Mecca Yost (5-9, 240 pounds).

"Starting here with

Christian, he's a great cornerback. That's where you'll see him primarily. We've got a three-year guy in Konner Tims. He'll kind of be our quarterback of that defense," the coach said. "Our defensive line is going to be anchored by Mecca Yost. He's also going to be a three-year returning starter for us and does an absolutely great job. He'll move from both sides of the line and play at nose."

Davis said he has benefited from going against the strong defensive backfield in practice and acknowledged spreading out the offensive attack.

"I'm really confident in our offense this year. This is our first year without Taven, but it forced us to balance things out and get the ball in the air more to give some other guys the chance to get the ball," Davis said. "Every day in practice going against guys like Christian who are really good DBs really prepares me for those games."

Davis said the Golden Bears took advantage of a quick start to the offseason and have used that time to iron out the minor details.

"Started our summer really early, got spring going and rolled right into our summer," Davis said. "Being up there early I think has helped us a lot getting everything installed and getting the minor details down and perfecting them."

Altogether, the aura around the program has changed from when Stanford arrived, and he said he feels as though the team is right on the verge of a play-off berth.

"We've had great gains in the weight room, great attendance and have grown our program at the junior high level as well as our level," Stanford said. "The state of our program now, compared to three years ago, I think is totally different. We don't come into games wanting them to be over with, we're coming into games ready to compete."





# DAPHNE TROJANS

## 2022 DAPHNE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/19	Saraland	HOME
08/25	Carver Montgomery	AWAY
09/02	Bryant	AWAY
09/09	Davidson	HOME
09/16	Baker	HOME
09/23	Spanish Fort	AWAY
10/07	Fairhope	HOME
10/14	Montgomery	AWAY
10/21	Foley	AWAY
10/28	Hillcrest	HOME

NOTE: Some open dates and others may be rescheduled. Visit school websites and GulfCoastMedia.com for updates.



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## 2022 ELBERTA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/19	Bayside Academy	HOME
08/26	Faith Academy	AWAY
09/02	Williamson	AWAY
09/10	LeFlore	HOME
09/16	Northview (FL)	AWAY
09/30	UMS-Wright Prep	HOME
10/06	Gulf Shores	AWAY
10/14	Vigor	AWAY
10/21	B.C. Rain	HOME
10/29	Citronelle	HOME

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## 2022 BAYSIDE ACADEMY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/20	Elberta	AWAY
09/02	St. Michael Catholic	HOME
09/09	Wilcox Central	AWAY
09/16	Jackson	HOME
09/30	T.R. Miller	AWAY
10/07	Orange Beach	HOME
10/14	Escambia County	AWAY
10/21	Satsuma	HOME
10/28	Alabama Christian Academy	HOME

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## 2022 BALDWIN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/19	Davidson	HOME
08/26	Foley	HOME
09/02	Spanish Fort	AWAY
09/08	Theodore	AWAY
09/16	Blount	HOME
09/23	Montgomery	AWAY
09/30	McGill-Toolen	AWAY
10/07	Saraland	HOME
10/13	Murphy	AWAY
10/21	St. Paul's Episcopal	HOME
10/28	Robertsdale	HOME

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# Creel's time in Fairhope

## Pirate signal-caller, seniors ready to attack final season

BY COLE MCNANNA

cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

FAIRHOPE — W. C. Majors' impact on the Fairhope football program still rings today as the Pirates play at a field that bears his name.

Now, a descendant of Majors, dual-threat quarterback Caden Creel (6-0, 200 pounds), will embark upon his senior season in blue and gold alongside 30 of his classmates, many of whom have been teammates from the start.

"Being able to play on that field and it being named after my great-grandfather is definitely something special. Not every player gets to do that," Creel said at Baldwin County Media Day. "Me and Qualin (McCants) have been playing together since I think first grade — me, Qualin, (Lashavion) Sha

Sha (Brown), Fredrick Bradley, Mickey Herrick, Cory Devole, we've got probably one of the strongest bonds just because we've been playing the sport for so long, and everyone else that's joined along the road has not been a problem."

The 32-member senior class features many returners from last year's squad that went undefeated through play within Class 7A's Region 1, and head coach Tim Carter looks for many of the same faces to do even more damage this year.

Ben Moseley (5-10, 160 pounds), Jack McCormick (6-2, 170 pounds), Greg Bowman (5-7, 140 pounds) and Abe Soloman (5-10, 150 pounds) were other offensive skill players returning while a six-man group of experienced linemen will

rotate into the five positions to provide depth.

Carter listed Barrett Cain (5-10, 220 pounds), Clayton Noblitt (6-1, 205 pounds), Marshall Azar (5-10, 240 pounds), Mickey Herrick (5-10, 255 pounds), Josh Gillen (6-0, 210 pounds) and Jakob Northrop (5-10, 220 pounds) as the group that will look to give the offense time to operate.

Tight ends Sanders Daniell (6-3, 215 pounds) and Dallas Boothe (5-10, 175 pounds) will also factor into an offense that will look to be more versatile compared to last year's offense that was described by Carter as "close to the vest."

"In high school football, late in the season, the weather turns bad down here and it gets wet. You have to play on a cold night. Sometimes the passing game doesn't always work.



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

**Senior Ben Moseley reaches to try and haul in a pass attempt from Caden Creel during the Pirates' pool-play game against the Daphne Trojans at the Jubilee City 7-on-7 Tournament at the Al Trione Sports Complex July 14. Moseley and the Pirates started the season against the Spanish Fort Toros and will open region play in Semmes against the MGM Vikings Sept. 9.**

You've got to be able to run the football," Carter said.

The other side of the ball features vacancies also left behind by those moving onto the college ranks, but Carter said defensive end Parker Beach (5-11, 205 pounds) has stepped up to lead the defensive front.

"We've got four seniors that are playing linebacker—Brooks Brasfield at outside linebacker; inside Cory

Devloe returns for his third year as a starter for us as the mike position; and we've got Hollon Brock who plays for us and Hunter Hughes," Carter said. "All of those guys have starred, and not only are they good football players, but they're also really good leaders."

In the secondary, Carter said Sha Sha Brown (6-2, 195 pounds) is the Pirates' most versatile weapon, and he

may be joined by the likes of Maddox Davis (5-10, 170 pounds), Ameyr Adams (5-10, 175 pounds) and Nolan Phillips (5-11, 155 pounds) although the coach said things are still shuffling back there. At the end of the day, Carter wants his best athletes on the field no matter what.

"I really believe in giving guys an athletic chance to make plays and utilize the talents of our team," Carter said. "You may see this guy (points to Creel) back there fielding punts, I don't know. We're going to do what it takes to win."

While the Pirates look to do that, their hearts and minds will carry the memory of CJ Edwards, a former Fairhope running back who died in a shooting over the summer.

"He was very close to many people on our team such as Ameyr Adams, Sha Sha Brown and myself," McCants said. "It's a hard loss, and we will represent him every time we step on that field."

# Bayside Academy to lean on more young players

## 16th-year Admiral head coach Lazenby searches for 200th career victory in '22

BY COLE MCNANNA

cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

DAPHNE — For all of Phil Lazenby's experience entering his 16th year at Bayside Academy and 26th overall as a head coach, he faces a challenge where around half of his roster is quite inexperienced.

"Twenty-one of our kids out of 43 have never played a down of varsity football. So, it's going to be young. We're probably going to have four or five freshmen starting," Lazenby said. "It's not the fact they're not going to be good football players. They are. It's just going to take a little while. ... They were really good in middle school. They beat teams like Saraland and McGill-Toolen."

Senior linebacker Coo-

per White (6-0, 215 pounds) has been on the welcoming committee and offering advice that the work the team puts in together will materialize down the road.

"We want to guide them in the right direction and show them what you have to do before the season to be successful because if you don't work in the offseason you can't expect results by the time the season rolls around," White said. "We're trying to get them where they need to be, get their heads where they need to be to develop them as fast as possible because they're going to be key."

All of the Admirals will also be adjusting to Class 4A although Lazenby — who enters the season with an overall coaching record

of 194-103 — said Bayside Academy was only reclassified up by a student and a half.

"We're not a 4A school as far as numbers. We're barely a 3A school, but with that being said, it's going to be exciting playing people that you haven't played before," Lazenby said. "We don't know what to expect. A lot of times it's what you see on video, but it might be last year's stuff. Just like Orange Beach, they changed their defense so anything I've looked at before is not going to be the same."

The Admirals' offensive huddle will certainly look different this season after the SportsCenter sensation Zach Kittrell (Pensacola State) and Jay Loper (University of Alabama) went off to the college ranks.

Still, Lazenby said the signal-caller they've looked to, Tait Moore (6-2, 170

pounds) who was the top receiver and backup quarterback last year, has the it-factor.

"Tait Moore is a winner," the coach said. "He's always been successful at whatever position he's played, and he's got the character for it. Nobody's going to outwork him, period. All of our kids have confidence in him and so do the coaches."

Running back Jacob Stewart (5-10, 165 pounds) is another returning piece from last year's offense and said what Bayside Academy gives up in size, the team's conditioning makes up for the difference.

"With us maybe being a smaller team, we've conditioned a lot more than bigger teams so that's helped us because we were very conditioned compared to the other teams earlier in the season last year," Stewart said.

On the other side of the ball, White said other defensive returners including linebacker Teague Broadhead (6-1, 185 pounds) and lineman Graham Uter (6-5, 260 pounds) will play major roles in the unit.

"The biggest key I think is Graham Uter, he's going to be a big piece. On the defensive line, hopefully wreaking havoc like he should be," White said.

Special teams-wise, the Admirals will return Joey Jones (5-9, 150 pounds) who took a year off to focus on soccer and promptly was named to the Super All-State team and helped Bayside Academy hoist the Blue Map trophy.

"He came to me and said, 'Coach, I really missed it, I really like it, and I want to come back,'" Lazenby recalled. "He's a good one. Pretty consistent at 45, 50 yards; it's a weapon."

White added the team's

mentality has been showing strong signs in the wake of departures from the likes of Kittrell and Loper.

"Going into the season, the mentality in the locker room is a lot better than I thought it would be in the spring after losing all those guys," White said. "It's come a long way, and all the guys, I think, we have our mind where we need to be to have a winning atmosphere."

With Lazenby entering this season only six wins shy of 200 for his career where 109 have come in Daphne, he has ensured the Admirals do indeed employ a winning atmosphere.

"I was only supposed to be here for five or six years. That didn't work out," he said. "I love it. I've enjoyed it. Every year I enjoy it, every day I enjoy it. We've got a new head of school, and he's a big sports guy, and we are really pleased to have him."



# Daphne defense looks to shine bright

Trojan athletes Boykin, Blackshear likely to create headaches for opposing coaches

BY COLE MCNANNA

cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

**DAPHNE** — Despite changes to the coaching staff and roster, Daphne Head Coach Kenny King said he doesn't mind having his Trojans looked at as the underdogs.

"We want to be the underdogs. It's fine. We've had changes with people leaving, people coming. We've had coaching changes, but we're excited for the

opportunity; we want to go out and play football. That's what we're here for," King said.

Possibly chief among the changes was the quarterback swap with the Saraland Spartans, who also served as the Trojans' season-opening opponent.

KJ Lacey (6-0, 160 pounds), who started the last six games of Daphne's season last year, is now enrolled in

Saraland while Gabe Reynolds (5-10, 175 pounds), who threw for more than 1,700 yards and quarterbacked the Spartans to two playoff wins in 2021, is now enrolled in Daphne.

The rest of the teams still had to play a game, however, and defense looked to be one of the strengths of Daphne's entering the season.

"A strength this year will be definitely on

defense. We have more returning starters. We have some guys that have some significant reps there, so we're excited about our defensive returners," King said. "Cam Long, Al Woodard and Tent Tews are all returning starters from last year and have done a great job in the past, and in the summer they've stepped up."

Senior linebacker and another one of the

returning defensive starters, Garrett Childress (5-10, 200 pounds), has noticed a different feel around this team compared to previous years.

"I feel like we're getting closer and closer every day, and I feel like this team is the most committed team I've played on," Childress said. "We're not having to tell them what's right and wrong all the time because they've been learning and been following in our footsteps and sticking with the program."

Offensively, King said a couple of the Trojans' likely leading weapons were lifting with the lineman and the heavy lifters at their annual lift-a-thon, including running back Nick Clark (5-8, 195 pounds) and wide receiver Stacey Boykins (6-2, 190 pounds).

"I do think you're going to see that old-school running the ball from Nick Clark. We're excited about what he brought to the table last year and what he can do this year again," King said July 13. "We had our lift-a-thon last night and he was with our big lifting group, which is ironic when you have all the linemen, which are the big lifters, but we also had Stacey and Nick Clark that lifted with the big guys so they definitely got stronger in the offseason."

Childress has also noticed the extra emphasis behind Clark's runs and appreciates practicing against such

strong competition.

"It's a good standard to set yourself against when you're going in the game because not as many people run as hard as he does," Childress said. "There's not a lot of guys that run with that mentality to carry the ball with the will to embarrass the person in front of you, so I feel like it's a good thing to have on your team and I think it's a good thing to practice against to help you prepare for games."

Childress sees that preparation paying off this season.

"I feel like with our experience and us uniting under one goal of winning state, we'll be able to give any team problems," Childress said. "If we just stay together, it'll be hard to score even a touchdown on us."

Meanwhile, on the other side of the ball, King also mentioned Stephon Blackshear (5-11, 180 pounds) will likely factor into scoring touchdowns for the Trojans one way or another.

"We're excited to talk about what Stephon has done for us in the spring. He moved from wide receiver to quarterback with no problem," King said. "We want to get the ball to our playmakers and those two guys (Stacey and Stephon) we consider our playmakers so we're going to try and get them the ball and see what happens."



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

Daphne senior Kamdyn McAdams sprints toward the finish line to complete his leg of the obstacle course during the Jubilee City Big Man Tournament at the Al Trione Sports Complex July 14. McAdams and the Trojans kicked off their season against the Saraland Spartans and open region play Sept. 2 against the Alma Bryant Hurricanes.

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08/26	Gulf Breeze (FL)	AWAY
09/02	Choctawatchee (FL)	HOME
09/09	Montgomery	AWAY
09/16	Davidson	AWAY
09/30	Foley	HOME
10/07	Daphne	AWAY
10/14	Bryant	HOME
10/21	Baker	HOME
10/28	Briarwood Christian	AWAY

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# FOLEY FOOTBALL

## 2022 FOLEY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/19	Prattville	AWAY
08/26	Baldwin County	AWAY
09/02	Montgomery	HOME
09/09	Baker	AWAY
09/23	Saraland	HOME
09/30	Fairhope	AWAY
10/06	Bryant	AWAY
10/14	Davidson	HOME
10/21	Daphne	HOME
10/27	Jackson-Olin	HOME

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# 2022 GULF SHORES DOLPHINS



## 2022 GULF SHORES HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/18	St. Michael Catholic	AWAY
08/26	Citronelle	HOME
09/02	Faith Academy	HOME
09/09	UMS-Wright Prep	AWAY
09/16	LeFlore	HOME
09/23	Murphy	HOME
09/30	Williamson	AWAY
10/06	Elberta	HOME
10/20	Vigor	AWAY
10/28	B.C Rain	AWAY

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# MAKOS



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09/02	Jackson	HOME
09/09	Satsuma	AWAY
09/16	T.R. Miller	HOME
09/23	McIntosh	HOME
09/29	St. Michael Catholic	AWAY
10/07	Bayside Academy	AWAY
10/14	Wilcox Central	HOME
10/21	Escambia County	HOME
10/27	Fruitdale	HOME

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# ORANGE BEACH HIGH SCHOOL

# Warriors, McDaniel ready for year three at 5A

Elberta missed stepping up to 6A by one student, still spent offseason punching above its weight class

BY COLE MCNANNA

cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

ELBERTA — For a newer school entering just its fifth year of varsity competition, the Elberta Warriors have some established athletes they'll look upon this season.

One of them, Cason White (6-0, 285 pounds), has anchored the offensive line since day one and enters his fifth season as a varsity starter.

"My first varsity game I was 13 years old. I started against Pleasant Home and then moving forward from there it's just continued to build. It's gotten better and better, especially with Coach (Nathan) McDaniel and the amazing coaching staff we have," White said at the media day event. "We've made strides, and it's absolute night and day from where we started my freshman year to where we are now."

McDaniel enters his third



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

**Elberta seniors Cason White (76) and Tyshaun McDaniel (3) are joined by head Coach Nathan McDaniel in representing the Warriors at Baldwin County Media Day.**

year at the helm of the Elberta program that is still the new kid on the 5A block but due to rapid growth in the area nearly stepped up another classification this year.

"Elberta was dealt a really difficult task starting as a ninth-grade program, a JV program, then jumping right from 1A football to 5A football," McDaniel said. "These guys have handled it so well. They've come a long way in two years. Everything around the program is growing. Our numbers – we

missed 6A by one kid."

Still, the Warriors spend the summer offseason punching above their weight class where they played their spring game against the 7A Foley Lions, competed in an organized team activity (OTA) with the 6A Saraland Spartans and saw those teams and similar foes at 7-on-7 tournaments as well.

"What we're trying to do now is say, 'Look, we're not going to hide out in Elberta. We're not going to hide from anybody.' Why in the world

would Elberta go and play Foley in the spring game?" McDaniel posed. "Because I want our kids to see the very best because if you're going to go play Vigor, play Williamson, all those guys, you better see the best or they're going to expose you real quick."

Another cog that will help the Warriors' machine running is Tyshaun Washington (6-0, 165 pounds) who returned to the sport after focusing on basketball for a few years. Now, Washington contributes as a defensive back and wide receiver as well as fills a leadership role.

Washington said McDaniel was certainly part of the sales pitch to return to football, but it was soon he rediscovered a passion.

"Coach Mac put an emphasis on me coming out. I was doubting it at first, but when I got there for the first time it was like I never missed a beat because I played when I was younger," Washington said. "I got out

here, and I was like, 'I love it again.'"

They've been working with quarterback Hunter Powers (6-0, 170 pounds) who returns for another year as the Warriors' signal-caller.

"Hunter has really grown tremendously as a leader and as a quarterback," the coach said. "He's doing little things, the intangible things that you like to see from a quarterback that he wasn't showing last year. Some things he's been showing at 7-on-7 that he's seeing before Coach ever has to tell him."

Powers' protection features White as well as some other familiar faces.

"Our right guard, Tristan Ferrera, he's about 6-foot, 250. He's made very big strides. He'll be a junior this year. He's made very big strides from being a freshman to a junior. I'm excited to see how he plays," White said. "Our left tackle is Austin Strehle. He's smaller than your conventional

tackle. He's probably about 5-10, but he gets it done. You couldn't tell the difference between him and someone who's 6-2. He gets it done and he'll be a good player."

That group is part of 15 returning starters – seven on offense and eight on defense – who still have control of their own destiny regarding their legacy. While it's still establishing its tradition, Elberta's football history is currently being shaped by these student-athletes.

"I tell the kids all the time, every school around here has got tradition and they've got the foundation. We're doing that now, so what do you want your legacy to be?" McDaniel said. "Would we love to win a state championship? Absolutely, 100%. But I want Elberta to be the best it possibly can be, and I think if we do that – which we've shown through the things we've done this summer and spring – I think we can play with anybody."

## Snook Christian Eagles will rely on experience

Many from last year's squad return on both sides of the ball this fall

BY COLE MCNANNA

cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

FOLEY — Out of all the veteran coaches in Baldwin County, Keith Smith may just take the cake entering his 33rd year.

This year, he enters year six as the Snook Christian Academy Eagles' head coach having started the program in 2017. He has many of last year's stars back on the roster, including the entire offensive line.

"We are very excited about our offensive line," Smith said. "All five starters return: Hayden Joiner, Sam French, Tommy

McKee, Kile Votaw and Matthew LaFrenier. Chase Joiner and Dallas Wyatt also return to give us depth on the line."

French (6-3, 275 pounds) is the largest and has been a starter since 2018. Smith will look to him to be the anchor of the group in front of returning starting quarterback Robert Dunn (5-8, 185 pounds). Last year, Dunn set a Snook Christian Academy record with 37 completions on the season despite a shoulder injury.

Also returning around the signal-caller are weapons that include receiver Corbin Hall (5-7, 160

pounds), tight end London McDonald (5-8, 180 pounds) and Philip Butts (5-8, 170 pounds), who did a little bit of everything for the Eagles last year while also battling injuries.

In place of Dunn at quarterback, Butts completed 18 passes – including the longest offensive scoring play in school history, a 99-yard passing connection with Hall. Butts was the Eagles' second-leading rusher, receiver and scorer on top of being the punter and place kicker. He added 86 tackles as a linebacker on defense as well.

Smith said many of the returners will similarly have an impact on both sides of the ball, but another two-way returning

starter has found his way back to the Snook squad in fullback/linebacker Kendrick Koen (5-8, 250 pounds) who played in 2018 and 2020.

"He suffered a serious ankle injury in the first game of the 2020 season but still made a big impact on the team, including a fine performance in the victory over Meadowview that season," Smith said of Koen. "He has worked hard during the offseason and can bench press 300 pounds."

On the other end of the spectrum, Smith said a group of new faces will also look to make an impact on the Eagles' roster in 2022. The coach said Connor Parish (5-10, 205 pounds) and Elijah Moore

(6-1, 215 pounds) will provide quality depth on the line while Kareem (6-1, 155 pounds) and Roshad (5-10, 140 pounds) Harris will factor into the skill position rotation.

"Kareem and Roshad Harris are new additions at receiver, and both have looked good in that role," Smith said. "Braiden Walker has looked very good at tight end and linebacker. Ben Zimlich has shown a lot of potential at linebacker and receiver."

Among the senior leadership on the coaching staff includes Smith's father, Lester, who was a longtime head coach of the Foley Lions after Ivan Jones and has coached the Snook quarterbacks since

the start. In 21 years at the helm of the Lions' football program, Lester Smith owned a 127-85-2 overall record and was inducted into the halls of fame at Foley High School, Baldwin County and the Alabama High School Athletic Association.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and in 16 years as the middle school head football coach in Foley, Keith Smith's teams claimed seven county championships.

He'll look to lead the Eagles back to the playoffs in the Alabama Independent School Association's Region 2, which features last year's state runners-up, the Jackson Academy Eagles.



## VOLLEYBALL

# Bayside Academy Lady Admirals looking to build on national record

Eastern Shore team seeking 21st consecutive Blue Map after after fourth reclassification

BY COLE MCNANNA

cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

DAPHNE — What the Bayside Academy volleyball team and head coach Ann Schilling have carried out has never been done before.

The Lady Admirals claimed their 20th consecutive state championship last fall – a national record – and start this season in their fifth new classification following a competitive balance factor promotion.

Yet, they are still motivated.

“We’ve got a lot of new faces, but I like this group. They have a little chip on their shoulders,” Schilling said at Aug. 1 a media day event. “I think they’re working really hard, and I’m liking what I’m seeing out of this group.”

Bayside Academy is the only school in the Alabama High School Athletic Association to win Blue Map trophies in every classification from 1A to 5A, as well

as all the years they played in Class 3A (10), Class 4A (2) and Class 5A (2). The 20-championship string started in Class 2A following a runner-up season after a string of three titles.

Altogether, Schilling – a member of AHSAA’s Hall of Fame Class of 2018 – has led the Lady Admirals to 27 championships and four more state runners-up trophies to give Bayside Academy another national record with 30 total state titles.

In their transition to Class 6A in 2022, Schilling said the Lady Admirals lost a handful of seniors from last year’s team and



will have just one on the roster this year, middle blocker Lillie McInnis, but are eager for the season.

“I think we’re ready for 6A. We are bonded, and we really love each other,” McInnis said.

They replaced the Gulf Shores Dolphins in 6A Area 2, the second-place finisher behind Spanish Fort, who won the region with an 8-0 record last year. Baldwin County (2-6) was third, and Robertsdale (1-7) was fourth. Both the Toros and Dolphins fell in the quarterfinal round of the regional bracket last year.

Despite the fresh faces on the varsity roster,

they’re not new names in the program because Schilling can have middle schoolers on her junior-varsity roster. Because of that, some freshmen may step right into a key role.

“They play a little bit faster pace of game and because we’re all one school, we’re able to do things like that to prepare them a little bit better than them playing middle school and jumping right to high school,” Schilling said. “We’ll probably have three freshman that are going to have to help us this year.”

It’s just part of the process of the Bayside Academy

program where junior setter Blakeley Robbins now sees herself among the upperclassmen setting the standard she used to follow.

“They’ve had really good examples since they’ve been in the program, and same with me. We’ve had lots of seniors who have shown us that working hard, gets you places,” Robbins said of working with the younger players. “We see that they’re in the gym every day working hard and then we encourage them a lot because we know we’re going to need them, so it’s lots of encouragement and telling them

to keep working hard.”

The championship streak has now entered their mentalities, of course, but Robbins said it’s those at the beginning of the line that provides more motivation.

“It’s more for the people who have won in the past to keep the streak going because last year we won in three sets but normally it’s a fight to the fifth set,” Robbins said. “It’s really for them who have fought so hard to keep it going for us so that we could have a chance to get to this high number of 21 this year.”

Schilling agreed there was no secret formula to

reach this point in national history, just a tight-knit bond that has performed exactly when called upon.

“They all buy in to what we’re doing and what we stand for. I think our culture is really good. Our program has a lot of love, and they truly love each other and respect each other,” Schilling said. “There’s a lot of hard work involved, but I think I’ve had some players make some big-time plays in some big-time moments when we needed it, but we give all honor and all of our glory to the big guy upstairs for everything, so He’s also been a big part of this whole thing as well.”



# SPANISH FORT FOOTBALL



## 2022 SPANISH FORT HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/19	Fairhope	AWAY
08/26	Blount	AWAY
09/02	Baldwin County	HOME
09/09	Saraland	AWAY
09/16	Theodore	HOME
09/23	Daphne	HOME
09/30	St. Paul's Episcopal	AWAY
10/07	McGill-Toolen	HOME
10/14	Robertsdale	AWAY
10/21	Murphy	HOME

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## 2022 ST. MICHAEL CARDINALS

### FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/18	Gulf Shores	HOME
08/26	Chickasaw	HOME
09/02	Bayside Academy	AWAY
09/09	Escambia County	HOME
09/16	Satsuma	AWAY
09/23	McGill-Toolen	AWAY
09/29	Orange Beach	HOME
10/07	Wilcox Central	AWAY
10/13	Jackson	HOME
10/21	T.R. Miller	AWAY

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# ROBERTSDALE GOLDEN BEARS



## 2022 ROBERTSDALE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/26	Theodore	AWAY
09/02	Blount	HOME
09/09	McGill-Toolen	AWAY
09/16	Saraland	HOME
09/23	Bryant	AWAY
09/29	Murphy	AWAY
10/06	St. Paul's Episcopal	HOME
10/14	Spanish Fort	HOME
10/21	Montgomery	HOME
10/28	Baldwin County	AWAY

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## 2022 SNOOK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

### FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/19	Cornerstone Christian	AWAY
08/26	Rocky Bayou Christian (FL)	HOME
09/02	South Choctaw Academy	HOME
09/08	Clarke Prep	HOME
09/16	Hooper Academy	AWAY
09/30	St. Patrick (MS)	AWAY
10/07	Jackson Academy	AWAY
10/14	Wilcox Academy	AWAY
10/20	Sparta Academy	HOME
10/27	Crenshaw Christian Academy	HOME

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# DAPHNE LOOKING TO PURSUE '22

Trojans have united under Craig, eye deep run in Class 7A playoffs

BY COLE MCNANNA  
cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

DAPHNE — Although only entering her second year at the helm of the Daphne volleyball program, head coach Casey Craig feels as though these Trojans have already bought into the staff's vision of re-establishing the program among Class 7A's best.

"We are in constant pursuit not just for that state title but to be one of the top teams in the state year in and year out," Craig said. "Our girls are hungry to play and prove everyone wrong. They want

to put Daphne volleyball back on the map."

This group will try to help the program get there, although the coach said everyone on the roster can step in and contribute at a high level.

"I am in a very fortunate situation that our varsity team consists of 13 players who are all able to contribute to our success this season," Craig said. "Everyone pushes each other and competes at practice for those six starting spots."

Returning players from last year's squad include senior middle blocker Janiyah King — fresh off



the North-South All-Star game earlier this summer — and senior libero Madison Hammond although Craig said it's junior setter Lucy McCoy who is the Trojans' offensive court

leader. They're joined by an explosive talent in junior outside hitter Kacey Quinnelly.

"King was named to the South All-Star team this year and is someone who

we anchor our offense around. Madison Hammond leads us on defense and serve receive and is an exceptional leader on the court and in our program," Craig said. "McCoy is our 'quarterback.' She runs our offense and is another great leader for us on the court. Kacey Quinnelly is one of the most explosive players I have in my program, hands down."

To supplement their efforts, freshmen outside hitter Ella Lomax and middle blockers Lilly Langford and Charlotte Mekkers have shown early on they can rotate in and provide some of that quality depth.

"She displays a level of maturity I have never seen in a 14-year-old. She was able to come in and imme-

diately start playing at a very high level with our varsity team," Craig said of Lomax. "And our two freshmen middle blockers Lilly Langford and Charlotte Mekkers, we are going to be asking a lot of them as freshmen to contribute on the offensive end as well as with our blocking, but I think they are more than ready to accept their roles."

Altogether, Craig feels that there's a chance only those in Daphne will have correctly predicted the Trojans in the final bracket of the season.

"By the end of the season," Craig said, "I see us being that 'sleeper' that nobody expected to be at the state tournament."

# Familiar face, new title

Young hits the ground running as new Orange Beach head coach

BY COLE MCNANNA  
cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

ORANGE BEACH — Even though Sunne Young was only named the Orange Beach Makos' head volleyball coach July 31, she has a familiarity with the group having coached many of them in the club circuit.

She didn't skip a beat and adds fuel to the burning desire to win Blue Map trophies for Orange Beach High School.

"We are fortunate to have coached a lot of these girls in club, about 10 of them, so we are very familiar with these girls but right now they have been working hard," Young said at the Meet the Makos event Aug. 12. "They have bought in to our coaching culture and

philosophy, and they are so coachable. They are implementing the things we are coaching, and they are all-in. They are all-in, and they're ready to take home the Blue Map."

Orange Beach fell just shy of the Class 2A title last year but make the step up to Class 4A this year following the biennial realignment of the Alabama High School Athletic Association. Young said the team's tenacity will help them against the new competition.

"We expect to perform just as well and to be just as tough. It'll be an exciting season for sure because they're going to be fighting harder than ever, even harder than last year," Young said.

"They've got a lot of heart, they've got a lot of Mako grit and we're thrilled."

In the step up, Orange Beach joins the Satsuma Gators, St. Michael Catholic Cardinals and UMS-Wright Prep Bulldogs in Class 4A's Area 1. The Cardinals claimed the last two area titles undefeated, but none of this alignment's teams were their opponents.

A few of the returning contributors from the Makos' squad last year, including some who were indeed the best on the court when it mattered the most, are ready for another crack at the post-season.

"We have five returning starters, one that came from another school that was an all-state libero, and we have a few players that are returning from the all-state tournament team," Young said.

Still, the coach saw a



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

The Orange Beach volleyball team were among the fall sports squads introduced to the community at the Meet the Makos event Aug. 12 at the Sportsplex.

strength on the defensive side of the net, and Orange Beach only bolstered it in the offseason.

"Our defense is stellar, probably one of the tops in the state, if I do say so myself," Young said. "We have a lot of veteran players that play year-round. We have a new right side

that came from out of town from Minnesota. She's 6-1 and an amazing person; she will be a big block up front for us."

By the end of the season, Young has strong visions of adding to the Makos' trophy case.

"They're showing a lot of heart, a lot of fight, and

practices have been going absolutely wonderful with fire, intensity and determination," Young said. "I see us taking state, we're headed to state. We want the Blue Map, and we want to bring it back to Orange Beach and be another state champion along with our softball team."



# Spanish Fort continues to play “More Than Me”

## Toro volleyball team remains Berry Strong, eyes state championship



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Spanish Fort volleyball seniors look to lead the Toros back to the state championship while focusing on the bigger picture in their last go-around.

BY COLE MCNANNA  
cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

SPANISH FORT — The Spanish Fort Toro volleyball squad has plenty of motivation entering the 2022 season outside of just adding to the program's three state championships.

The team is constantly reminded to play for the bigger picture in the wake of Caroline Berry's death in 2018. Head coach Gretchen Boykin said it was not long before another puzzle piece found a fit.

“The ‘More Than Me’ motto came about after losing our team manager, Caroline Berry, to childhood cancer. Our program decided that from there out, our program was going to play for people and things bigger than themselves,” Boykin said. “After losing Caroline to

cancer, the next season we had a special needs student requesting to be involved in the volleyball program, and it was a perfect fit. This year will be Emma Pablo's fourth year with our team, and she reminds us every day to play for people and things bigger than ourselves.”

A group of embattled returners who have seen that process come to life will help lead Spanish Fort's offense while a pair of newcomers will be looked upon to lend a hand on the defensive side.

Senior captain Bailey Hope is joined at the outside hitter position by junior Elise McKinney and junior Alexis Belarmino returns at the setter position. Boykin also cited junior middle hitter Reece Varden as a returning contributor from last year's team.

On the other side, sophomore Delaney Clough and freshman Victoria Holley will shoulder a load as defensive specialists/liberos to provide an extra layer of support.

Altogether, they'll look to play with the motto on their minds and Berry in their hearts.

“Our full motto for this season is ‘More Than Me – DCA.’ The DCA came from the first season I came to Spanish Fort. I wanted to change the culture of the program and our focus was: D – Disciplined in Details, C – Committed to the Culture, A – Accountability,” Boykin said. “We are keeping the ‘More Than Me’ because that is what our program is all about. We are remembering how we got to be a state championship program by living the principals of DCA.”

The Toros made a pair of

back-to-back state championship trips – in 2015, Boykin's first year, and 2016 as well as 2018 and 2019 – and returned with three Blue Map trophies as the Class 6A champion. Boykin collected her 800th career win after the 2020 season when she was also named Alabama's volleyball coach of the year by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

In looking at the 2022 squad, Spanish Fort's eighth-year head coach could see a similarly long season ahead of this group.

“There is no doubt I see this team competing for a state championship at the end of the season,” Boykin said. “I have a lot of highly competitive players, and I know their expectations of themselves and of the program and that is to finish the season on top.”

# Cardinals free to fly under new coach

St. Michael volleyball seeking third-straight undefeated regional championship

BY COLE MCNANNA  
cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

FAIRHOPE — St. Michael Catholic's new head volleyball coach, Ashlyn Roberts, wanted

her new squad to have all the freedom in the world entering her time at the helm of the Cardinals' program.

“I did not want them nervous or standoffish when it came to their training,” Roberts said. “Freedom to train ugly, freedom to make aggressive errors, freedom to be able to communicate and to be honest with teammates and with me.

Our focus is relentless pursuit whether it be to chase down a ball, to score the point, or to win the match. We will have freedom with everything we do and will hold nothing back.”

She said this St. Michael squad is the most athletic she has coached and that she looks forward to tracking their development over the course of the season.

“I know the sky's the limit with what they can do,” Roberts said. “I see this team looking nothing like how I found them (by the end of the season). The rate at which they are improving is unreal.”

Returning contributors including middle blocker Ava Bowie, and outside hitter Lina Ramos and setter Regan Bushaw were cited as some of the

Cardinals' standouts in their pursuit of a third consecutive undefeated region championship. In addition, setter Reese Skipper and opposite hitter Lauren Nicoud were listed as rising stars in the program.

Roberts said that concoction has set St. Michael up for plenty of success returning to the Fairhope campus.

“I can see my girls

making it to the final four and even finishing No. 1 in 4A if they keep trusting the process and taking care of business in the weight room, on the field at conditioning and on the court,” she said. “We have established a new culture this season and are on the right track for greatness whether it's this season or five years down the road.”

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## CROSS COUNTRY

# Bayside Academy cross country, fresh off sweep, steps up to 5A

## Admirals' top 5 runners must average fastest in program history to keep up in transition

BY COLE MCNANNA

cole@gulfcoastmedia.com

DAPHNE — After the Bayside Academy cross country teams swept the Class 4A state championships last year, head coach Joseph Swagart said the top-five runners' average times will need to be faster than they've ever been if they want to repeat as champions.

However, due to the competitive balance factor, the Admirals took a step up to Class 5A for this season, which creates further cause for the time improvements.

While many of the same Bayside Academy runners who pushed the team to the final meet of the season will look to do so again, a couple of other familiar names – new to cross country – could make a run at being in their team's top five.

"We will have four seniors this fall who will be great contributors for our men's program. They are Ty Postle, John Thomas Neill, Ashton Rowland and Trey McKean," Swagart said. "Our women's program is very young. A majority of our team

will be sophomores, but our top two young women to watch for are Annie Midyett and Catherine Doyle. Annie Midyett won the individual 4A AHSAA state title last year."

All were the Admirals' top finishers at last year's state championship. Midyett finished her race in 18:59.35 to claim the individual title while Catherine Doyle was not far behind in fifth place overall with a time of 19:42.03.

Postle crossed the finish line as the men's individual runner-up in

16:29.10. Neill (17:12.42 for 12th), Rowland (17:28.12 for 19th) and McKean (17:37.83 for 25th) all recorded top-25 finishes.

In addition to those athletes, Swagart said some other experienced, yet young, runners will join Bayside Academy's cross country roster.

"Nolan Tkac will be making his first year with cross country. As a freshman, he ran a sub five-minute 1600 meter during the indoor season," Swagart said. "Grace Dawson has committed to run cross country this fall.

Although new to cross country, Grace has competed in track and field over the last two years and could potentially make a difference in our top five this fall."

Swagart also cited Kyle Cooper (18:09.69 for 35th), Shelby Fargason (20:21.06 for 10th) and Amelia Wells (22:30.60 for 42nd) as other returners who will look to bring the top average times down.

The head coach estimated the Admirals would have to record the program's fastest average top-five 5K times – around 16:45 – to

compete among the best in Class 5A. Similarly, he estimated the Lady Admirals will have to shoot for their top five's average time to be faster than 19:45, which would also be the fastest in program history.

Still, the season goals were to build on each other, where Swagart said Bayside Academy will have to take care of one before two.

"Our hopes are to win the Baldwin County Championships, our 5A Section 1," he said, "and to have an opportunity to win the 5A AHSAA state title."

# Orange Beach eyes return trip to state in 4A

## Mako cross country runners have been putting in the work to prepare for the step up

BY COLE MCNANNA

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ORANGE BEACH — Despite some youth on the roster, the Orange Beach cross country team gained plenty of experience in their run at the state championship meet last season.

In 2022, head coach Rachel Ellsworth said the team has been putting in plenty of miles to prepare for the step up to Class 4A following the biennial realignment of the Alabama High School Athletic Association.

"We're going to push them," Ellsworth said at the Aug. 12 Meet the Makos event. "It's lots of hard practices and pushing past the point that they feel comfortable with.

They're excited. They know it's new and different but, everyone's got a real positive attitude."

While some returners were part of Orange Beach's efforts in the boys' team, as well as two individual Lady Makos qualifying for the state meet, a group of newcomers provide some exciting potential in Ellsworth's eyes.

"We have two returning seniors, and we have a lot of new runners this year," Ellsworth said. "A young team with lots of potential. I'm really excited to watch this team grow. It's a new program, and we've got some big shoes to fill from last year, but I think we can do it."

Last season, the boys' team qualified for the state meet while two female



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

Claire Atkins and the Orange Beach cross country team were among the fall sports squads that were featured at the Sportsplex where the community met the Makos Aug. 12.

runners, Claire Atkins (22:18.31 for 30th) and Perry Webb (23:05.86 for 47th), qualified individually. The Makos finished sixth in the team competition behind the individual state runner-up Xander McLaughlin (16:58.25).

The coach also listed returning runners Dorian Price and Sanders Semik-

lose as those who have been putting in extra work this summer. But another male runner, Eli Haber, has been doing so before he's even in high school.

"Eli Haber was a seventh grader last year but ended up being one of my stars. He has put in a lot of hard work this summer, not only being at

our practices but also attending two camps," Ellsworth said. "He went to the South Alabama camp and to the University of Arkansas camp. I see him and a new seventh-grader out on the road putting in extra miles when I haven't even asked them to."

It's that work ethic, paired with the strong

returners from last year's team, that gives Ellsworth the feeling that Orange Beach will be back at the final meet of the season, even in Class 4A.

"I think we'll get to state again," Ellsworth said. "We're in a different division, but hopefully we can be right there with that or even better."



# Gulf Shores runners put in the work

Dolphins cross country teams hope to see hard work pay off at end of season

BY COLE MCNANNA

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**GULF SHORES** — The Gulf Shores Dolphins may have graduated several members from last year's teams, but the younger members of the squads have picked up the slack and are poised to carry the

torch on the course this season.

Head coach Britt Shaw says the three senior members of the squad have led the group through the summer where the Dolphins logged plenty of miles.

"We have several runners we feel are primed for

a breakout season and we want them and any future runners to know it is because of the work they put in this offseason," Shaw said.

Shaw listed juniors Ethan Sharkey and Kevin Ellis as well as sophomore Beck Montiel as promising male runners to look out

for. On the female side, he looked toward seniors Jacey Hughes and Maggie Snider as well as junior Amara Morales and sophomore Bryanna Borders to carry the load.

"All these runners plus a few more have put in a lot of miles this summer," Shaw said. "One runner

in particular we are very excited about is freshman Harrison Wright. He is another who has put in a lot of work this offseason, and we're anxious to see what he can do on a 5K course."

This year's Dolphin runners have been preaching hard work pays

off, and they hope to see the fruits of their labor at the final meet of the season.

"We do feel like we have talent and potential on this team," Shaw said. "Our first and main goal will be to get both the girls' and boys' teams qualified for the state meet."

# Future is bright for St. Michael cross country

Cardinals look to "Run as One, Train as a Team, Finish as a Family"

BY COLE MCNANNA

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**FAIRHOPE** — The St. Michael Catholic cross country team has a specific goal in mind for the 2022 season.

"Our team motto is 'Run as One, Train as a Team, Finish as a Family,'" head coach Shannon Blythe said.

"The captains chose our theme, and it is so appropriate. We are growing tremendously and have over 50 on the roster."

That growing roster features a blend of strong returners from last year's squads that both qualified for the state championship as well as promising newcomers.

"On the girls' team, Izzy Garriz, Zoe De-Salvo, Lexi Kruse and Anna Kiernan are all running strong and well together," Blythe said. "On the boys' side, my

top five are looking extremely strong. Patrick Andrews, Ryan Lankford, Samir Crooker, Oliver Hemby and Jake Andrews ran in a tight pack last year, and I anticipate that is really going to pay off this year."

Last year, the Cardinals registered fifth at state, and the Lady Cardinals finished 15th overall. Many of those same faces will look to do damage again this year.

At the 2021 AHSA state championship, recent graduate and Augusta University signee Tripp Miller led the way in 10th, but not far behind him was that pack of returners.

Lankford took 34th (18:05.78), Patrick Andrews (18:10.97) and Crooker (18:11.67) finished respectively in 36th and 37th ahead of Hemby (18:24.70) in 43rd and Jake Andrews in



COLE MCNANNA / GULF COAST MEDIA

The St. Michael Catholic cross country teams aim to finish as family in 2022 and end at the state meet once again, where both teams qualified last year.

53rd (18.43.46).

Returning on the girls' side, last year Garriz recorded 36th overall (22:07.85). De-Salvo crossed the finish line in 73rd (23:44.79) and Kruse registered 107th (25:41.04).

Moving forward, the

future program seems to be in the capable hands of the younger runners who will complement the established returners.

Heading into this season, Blythe sees a cohort of underclassmen who might waste

no time in making an impact on the varsity level.

"I have three new girls that I believe are going to make an immediate and dramatic impact: Sofia Prouty, Elizabeth Stroud and Elisa Christensen," Blythe said. "There is

also a great mix of new runners that will make an impact on my boys' side as well as experienced runners that should have us making a run for state. There are four or five newcomers that have the potential to become standouts."



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