August 25, 2022

FOOTBALL Preview 2022

Featuring

EAST SURRY
EAST WILKES
MOUNT AIRY
NORTH STOKES
SOUTH STOKES
MOUNT AIRY
NORTH STOKES
SOUTH STOKES
STARMOUNT
NORTH SURRY
EAST WILKES
ELKIN
STARMOUNT
SURRY CENTRAL
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Buckin’ Elks look to rebound from rocky 2021

By Zach Colburn
Special to The Tribune and Yadkin Ripple

TEAM
Elkin Buckin’ Elks

HEAD COACH
Scott Wood, 59-80 record at Elkin (13th season with Buckin’ Elks)

LAST SEASON
3-7, 2-4 conference, tied for fourth place in Northwest 1A Conference (lost in first round of the NCHSAA 1A playoffs)

KEY LOSSES
Elkin graduated 11 seniors from last year’s team and will have some spots to fill, including one left by Thomas McComb, who was the Northwest 1A Conference’s Specialist of the Year. All-conference wide receiver and cornerback Raejay Hincher also graduated. Also gone are all-conference honorable mention selections Ryan Nance and Landon Bohner.

KEY RETURNERS
Despite the graduation of some key skill players, Wood pointed to several players who he hopes will lead the way for the Buckin’ Elks this season. One of those players will be senior quarterback Jackson Sturdivant, who returns with a year of experience under center. Other senior players Wood noted were wide receiver/linebacker Maecyn Brooks, wide receiver/defensive back Beau Callahan, lineman Wesley Rumple

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Elks

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Nations, placekicker Adam Settle and linebacker/running back Will Briggs. Settle, who succeeds McComb on special teams, was a North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association all-region selection last fall.

One senior newcomer Wood also mentioned was Triston Shoeder. Also back are junior inside linebacker/lineman James Steele and sophomore outside linebacker Drew Kupner.

2022 SEASON OVERVIEW

“We're looking to lots of newbies to fill roles on both sides of the football,” said Wood. “Look for a strong kicking game from Brooks and Settle; we look to get better everyday as the season progresses.”

BIG GAMES

After a 2021 season which saw Elkin end the season on a six-game losing streak and play just three non-conference games, it'll look to end that skid when it travels to North Wilkes — one of its three wins last season — in the opener.

The Buckin’ Elks will then host former Mountain Valley 1A/2A Athletic Conference foe West Wilkes the following week. The two teams did not play last year due to COVID-19 Protocols in the Blackhawks’ camp.

Elkin will look to keep the Battle of the Bypass trophy for a second-straight year when it travels to East Wilkes on Sept. 23.

After a nonconference tilt at Surry Central on Sept. 30, the Buckin’ Elks will travel to Starmount for The Battle of the Bridge showdown on Oct. 7. It will also be the third of four-straight road games.

Elkin closes out the season at home against Mount Airy and South Stokes.

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Buckin’ Elks

Schedule

(kickoff set for 7:30, unless noted)

Friday, 8/19 @ North Wilkes
Friday, 8/26 vs. West Wilkes
Friday, 9/2 vs. North Surry
Friday, 9/9 OPEN
Friday, 9/16 vs. North Stokes*
Friday, 9/23 @ East Wilkes*
Friday, 9/30 @ Surry Central
Friday, 10/7 @ Starmount*
Friday, 10/14 @ Alleghany*
Friday, 10/21 vs. Mount Airy*
Friday, 10/28 vs. South Stokes*
*Conference
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Rams leaning on returning experience

By Zach Colburn
Special to The Tribune and Yadkin Ripple

TEAM
Starmount Rams

HEAD COACH
Sandy Grinton, 24-23 record at Starmount (fifth season with Rams)

ASSISTANT COACHES
Ryan Boles, Ian Patterson, Dillon Reeves

LAST SEASON
8-5 overall, 5-1 conference, second place in Northwest 1A Conference (lost in third round of the NCHSAA 1A Playoffs)

KEY LOSSES
Starmount graduated some very talented seniors, which included Davion Coleman and Jared Stokes—both of whom were all-Northwest 1A Conference selections last fall.

- Coleman (31 catches for 282 yards and a touchdown) and fellow graduate Jalyn Adams (nine catches for 211 yards and two touchdowns) were two of the Rams’ top three receivers last year. The duo was also Starmount’s top two kick returners.

- In all, the Rams graduated seven seniors and included placekicker Diego Zuniga also.

KEY RETURNERS
The Rams return plenty of talent from last year and is headlined by Zack Dezern—the conference’s Offensive Player of the Year. The senior accounted for just shy of 2,000 yards of offense last fall, which included 1,610 yards and 21 touchdowns on the ground. He also caught 27 passes for 269 yards and a touchdown.

- Earlier last week, Dezern was listed as one of the running backs on HighSchool OT’s Watch List for the 336 area coade.

- Luke Kimmer, who handed and passed him the ball a majority of last season, passed for 1,034 yards and four touchdowns (on 100-of-180 passing). The senior was recently one of three quarterbacks from the conference named one of the top 1A passers by HighSchoolOT.com.

- Seniors Ryan Kimmer and Mason Moxley (caught 14 passes for 126 yards and a touchdown), along with juniors A.J. Pardue (eight receptions for 171 yards) and Preston Williams (64 carries for 190 yards and three touchdowns), are also slated to be key cogs in Starmount’s offense this fall.

- A trio of all-conference selections in seniors Caden Abernethy and Zack Armstrong and junior Mason Anthony will anchor the Rams’ offensive and defensive lines.

- Abernethy (42.5 tackles, 10.5 tackles for a loss and three sacks) and Anthony (24.5 tackles, two sacks and interception return for a score) are slated to be featured on both sides of the ball. Armstrong, who is also listed at linebacker on defense and punter on special teams, had 59 tackles and 2.5 sacks last year.

- Steven Sullivan, an all-conference honorable mention pick, had 34 tackles (nine for a loss) and had a fumble recovery in 2021. He is listed on both sides of the line.

- Dezern (20 tackles, 8.5 tackles for loss, two sacks and an interception) and Ryan Kimmer (12.5 tackles, four interceptions and eight pass breakups), who was also an all-conference honorable mention pick, will also see time on defense.

- Seniors Xavier King and Darren Shore return on defense after solid campaigns last year. Shore, who is listed at linebacker, finished with 26 tackles and a pair of pass break ups; King, who could also see time at receiver, joins Kimmer in the Rams secondary after a trio of interceptions (including one for a touchdown) to go along with pair of pass breakups. He also had 23 tackles.

- Pardue joins Shore at the linebacker position after he recorded 35 tackles (eight for a loss) and a pair of sacks last year.

BIG GAMES
After getting off to a 1-3 start last fall (and 2-4 going into the month of October), Starmount ran off six-straight wins before a loss to Mount Airy in the third round of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association 1A playoffs.

- This year, the Rams will kick off the season with a pair of away games against East Surry and Community School of Davidson — its only nonconference win last fall.

- The Rams will host Forbush on Sept. 2 in search of its first Unifi Bowl victory since 2019 before closing out nonconference play with Pine Lake Prep.

- Starmount opens up Northwest 1A Conference play with a pair of road games at North Stokes and Mount Airy before hosting Elkin in the annual Battle of the Bridge. The Rams won last year’s battle, 34-9.

- Starmount closes out the regular season at home against East Wilkes.

Rams Schedule
(kickoff set for 7:30, unless noted)

- Friday, 8/19 @ East Surry
- Friday, 8/26 @ Community School of Davidson
- Friday, 9/2 vs. Forbush
- Friday, 9/9 vs. Pine Lake Prep
- Friday, 9/16 OPEN
- Friday, 9/23 @ North Stokes*
- Friday, 9/30 @ Mount Airy*
- Friday, 10/7 vs. Elkin*
- Friday, 10/14 @ South Stokes*
- Friday, 10/21 vs. Alleghany*
- Friday, 10/28 vs. East Wilkes*

*Conference
By Zach Colburn
Special to the Tribune and Yadkin Ripple

TEAM
East Wilkes Cardinals
HEAD COACH
Jonathan Wilmoth. 19-24 record at East Wilkes (fifth season with Cardinals)
LAST SEASON
5-7 overall, 2-4 conference, tied for fourth place in Northwest 1A Conference (lost in second round of the NCHSAA 1A Playoffs)

KEY LOSSES
The Cardinals lost just five seniors from last year’s team, which included All-Northwest Conference wide receiver Titus Miller.
All-conference honorable mention pick Kole Lambert is also gone, as are defensive staples Joshua Elmore, Kaden Handy and Ryan Sanders.
Hayden Durham, who is a senior this season, will miss the season due to injury.

KEY RETURNERS
Despite low numbers in the Cardinals camp during the preseason, All-Northwest Conference selections and seniors Briggs Gentry, Brody Martin and Brennan Ardner return this fall.
Gentry will be in his third season at quarterback while Martin returns at running back and Ardner will be back for the Cardinals defense.
Ethan Cass, an all-conference honorable mention, returns on both sides of the ball.
Senior Hank Porter is slated to return as East Wilkes’ placekicker.
Other players also back for the Cardinals are seniors Eric Adams and Weston Brown, who both could see time on both sides of the ball.
Other notable returning seniors are Will Martin, Gavin Dowell, Tyler Mash and Easton Martin while junior Tristan Alkire is back at the outside linebacker position.
Also looking to make a return this fall is senior Ledger Blackburn, who has missed a majority of the last two seasons with injuries.

BIG GAMES
Like last year, the Cardinals will open up the season against Wilkes County foe West Wilkes. After not playing last year due to COVID-19 issues, East Wilkes will renew its

See CARDINALS | 9
EAST WILKES CARDINALS

Cardinals

Schedule

(kickoff set for 7:30, unless noted)

Friday, 8/19 @ West Wilkes
Friday, 8/26 vs. Surry Central
Friday, 9/2 vs. North Wilkes
Friday, 9/9 @ Wilkes Central
Friday, 9/16 @ Mount Airy*
Friday, 9/23 vs. Elkin*
Friday, 9/30 @ South Stokes*
Friday, 10/7 vs. Alleghany*
Friday, 10/14 @ North Stokes*
Friday, 10/21 OPEN
Friday, 10/28 @ Starmount*
Friday, 10/30 @ South Stokes*

*Conference

Cardinals

From page 8

matchup with another county foe in North Wilkes. The Cardinals close out nonconference play on Sept. 9 at Wilkes Central.

After it opens Northwest Conference play at Mount Airy on Sept. 16, East Wilkes will square off with Elkin in the second edition of The Battle of the Bypass the next week.

The Cardinals will be looking for their first win in this series — between two schools separated by just five miles — since besting the Buckin’ Elks back in 2018.

Following its open date on Oct. 21, the Cardinals will close out the season at Starmount.
THE 2022-23 EAST WILKES VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM

Shanda Gentry | Special to the News
## 2022-23 Varsity Golden Eagles Football Team

### Golden Eagles Roster

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>NAME</th>
<th>YR.</th>
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<td>Marcus Opsal</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>5'4 130</td>
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</table>
Young Eagles ready to leave the nest

TEAM
Surry Central Golden Eagles

COACHES
Monty Southern: Head Coach, Offensive Backs, Linebackers Coach
Stephen Priddy: Co-Defensive Coordinator, Defensive Line Coach
Wes Evans: Co-Defensive Coordinator, Defensive Backs Coach, Athletic Director
Stephen Young: Offensive Line Coach
Zack Crisp: Outside Linebackers Coach
Marty Behrens: Receivers Coach, Defensive Backs Assistant
Karson Crouse: Inside Linebackers, Running Backs Coach

LAST SEASON
6-5 overall, 4-2 conference, tied for Foothills 2A Conference Runner-Up, qualified for the 2A State Playoffs

KEY LOSSES
Surry Central graduated a whopping 17 seniors from last year’s team. This includes the 2021 team’s three All-Conference players on offense, 4-of-5 All-Conference on defense and both two-way Honorable Mention players.

“This year looks a little different that’s for sure,” said head coach Monty Southern, who enters his 16th season as the Eagles head coach.

Offensively, the Golden Eagles – who operated primarily on the ground in 2021 – graduated four of their top five rushers. Running back Karson Crouse and quarterback Avery Wilmeth combined for 260 of the team’s 368 total carries, as well as 1,617 yards rushing out of a total 2,309. Logan Priddy added 299 yards rushing on more than 10 yards per carry, but missed portions of the season due to injury.

Wilmeth’s 40 completions for 585 yards passing accounted for more than 98% of the team’s total passing offense. His leading receiver was fellow 2022 graduate Dakota Mills, who finished the year with 338 yards receiving and six touchdowns. Central graduated all five of its leading receivers.

Andres Gonzalez was one of two Eagles named All-Conference on both offense and defense, doing so on the offensive and defensive lines. While Surry Central will return a few key players on the defensive line, the team graduated 4-of-5 starting offensive linemen from last season.

Five of Surry Central’s six top tacklers from 2021 also graduated. Linebackers Crouse and Kade Norman each surpassed 100 total tackles, followed by defensive backs Memphis Bolatto and Mills as well as Dante Watson at linebacker.

Bolatto leaves a big hole on defense as Surry Central’s leader in interceptions. His 10 ints led the 2A division, were second in the state among all classifications and tied for No. 15 in the nation. Priddy, also in the defensive backfield, was the team’s leader in pass deflections.

Mills, Crouse, Priddy and Bolatto were the team’s primary returners. Wilmeth was the team’s punter, and fellow graduate Jacob Edmonds handled kicking duties. Edmonds converted 27-of-32 PATs and was 4-of-7 on field goals. He also set the Surry Central school record for longest field goal with a 47-yard make.

2022 SEASON OVERVIEW
Despite losing such a big chunk of contributing players to graduation, Southern said he and the coaching staff are really excited about the upcoming season.

“We’ve got a lot of multi-sport athletes that, even though they might not have the most experience with varsity football, have excelled in other areas and shown what they’re capable of,” Southern said.

Surry Central’s lone returning All-Conference player is expected to play a big role – both figuratively and literally – for the Golden Eagles this upcoming season.

Senior Graden Spurlin, listed 6’4” and 360 pounds, was named All-Foothills 2A Conference in 2021 as a defensive tackle. He was fifth on the team in total tackles with 49, the most of any defensive lineman, while also forcing two fumbles and recovering one.

“The defensive line is definitely our most experienced group, and we feel like that will be the strength of our team,” Southern said. “Graden is a known quantity and we’ve seen the kind of impact he can have. Then there’s Mason Cox, who started played 70-75% of snaps as last season progressed and has really looked good in offseason.

“Last year, Enoc Lopez was a kid that we really felt like we needed to get on field more but just weren’t sure where he would best fit. He started out playing linebacker opposite Karson Crouse, and was good there, but it wasn’t until he moved to DL and really felt at home.”

Blaise Gwyn is another player Southern mentioned would be competing for reps on the defensive line.

Moving to linebacker is where players with less varsity experience come into the fold more. Southern named juniors Ayden Wilmoth and Eli Scott as the two starters on the outside, while sophomores Lucas Johnson and Wyatt Wall will likely handle the primary reps at inside linebacker.

Another name Southern mentioned at linebacker was Isaiah Galyean, who was used as both an inside and outside linebacker on JV. The coach also highlighted senior Jarrell Nay, who played JV for the Eagles as a freshman and sophomore but took a year off last season.

Senior Clay Whitaker is the...
leader of the defensive backs.
“As a junior, the longer the season went the more and more playing time he got,” Southern said. “He’s definitely one of our leaders. He’s a four-year player in both football and baseball, holds a lot of weightlifting records and I think the kids look up to him.”

Whitaker will serve as one of the team’s starting safeties, and junior Evan Wall will likely occupy the other safety spot. Allen Huffman is another name Southern mentioned at safety.

At cornerback, Southern said there are, “three really talented guys fighting for two spots,” those being Cole Snow, Brian Williams and Kyle Inman.

“I could see it coming down to which of those two guys are the freshest at any time,” Southern said.

Michael Tucker, a first-year player, also has the athleticism to lock down opposing receivers, Southern said.

The offensive line only returns one starter: Reid Danley. Danley joined the starting lineup as a sophomore in 2021 and was critical to the Eagles’ rushing game.

Joining Danley on the line is first-year player Maddox Martin.

“He’s another one of those that had good size, is really athletic and has made his mark in a few other sports here,” Southern said of the 6’7”, 250-pound rising junior. “He’s one of those we wish we could’ve had for his entire high school career.”

Danley will start at guard, and Martin is expected to start at tackle. Other than that, Southern said, the remaining three spots are going to be filled based on the Eagles’ scrimmages.

Central’s skill position feature some of the youngest, but not necessarily most inexperienced, players on the team.

“We’re young, but I feel good about the group as a whole,” Southern said. “It’s a savvy group; they want to learn and get better. I feel like we’ll compete really well, but won’t know for sure until we get out there.”

Mason Jewell was the JV team’s quarterback as a freshman last season and is expected to take the reins for the varsity squad this year. He’s also joined by his top two receivers from the JV team: Evan Wall and Kyle Inman.

“We’re going to try and mix the offense up,” Southern said. “When Jewell is on he throws the ball pretty well. Our receivers are fairly, what I would call, unknown at the varsity level, but there is a lot of talent there. Evan is a three-sport kid that was Mason’s top target on JV, and Kyle was the No. 2 receiver. They’ve all had a pretty good connection this summer.”

Snow and Rhylee Anderson are two additional receivers the team looks to incorporate into the offense.

Central will also have a solid group of running backs to run different schemes. Brian Williams, a rising sophomore, spent the most time of any of the potential backs on varsity last season. In eight games, Williams rushed 27 times for 155 yards and two touchdowns and rushed at least once in all eight games.

Aydlen Wilmoth, Lucas Johnson and Allen Huffman were all eight-quarter players that spent time as running backs in 2021. These same players are in the rotation for the return teams, though Southern isn’t ready to name starters in those positions just yet.

With the loss of Edmonds, junior Chris Nava takes over kicking duties for Central. Jewell will handle punting duties.

The Eagles also welcome three new coaches to the school: Zack Crisp, Marty Behrens and Karson Crouse.

On the new coaches, Southern said:

“Coach Behrens, our varsity basketball coach, has been working with kids since right before the first dead period. He played college football and has a really good relationship with a lot of the kids. He’s mainly coaching receivers, but works some with corners.

“Coach Crisp is a community guy and his work schedule allows him to be there. He played high school football in South Carolina and really loves the sport. He coaches outside linebackers and helps with the defensive line.

“Karson is like our graduate assistant having just graduated earlier this year. He’s intelligent and has a really good way of understanding things. He was almost like an extra coach on the field during his junior and senior years, and he helped coach little league the last few years. I think he’ll be a big help as someone who has been an active player so recently.”

BIG GAMES
As far as Southern is concerned, the only game he’s concerned about is Week One versus Alleghany.

“We are so young that we as coaches really hope to get off to a good start against Alleghany,” he said. “With a younger team, you want to get off to a good start early on and build up some confidence for those kids that may be experiencing varsity football for the first time. If we can have some good drives, maybe force a turnover and get on the board quick it will do great things for us.”

Next is an away game at East Wilkes. When playing in 2021, Central led after both the first and second quarters before East Wilkes scored 28 points in just the second half. It’s a game the Eagles wish they could have back, and will finally get another chance in late August.

Surry Central travels to Mount Airy before taking a week off. The next big game on the Eagles’ calendar is at Wilkes Central on September 23. A back-and-forth game in 2021 went the way of Surry Central 38-30, and Wilkes Central returns almost all of its players from last season.

Elkin and Forbush were both games that tested Surry Central’s resolve last season. This year’s team will have a chance to prove themselves in another set of games that will likely bring the best out of both sides.

After traveling to North Wilkes, Central closes conference play with back-to-back games against county foes North and East Surry. Last year the FH2A Conference race came down to the final two weeks, and there’s a good chance this year’s race will be just as close.
# 2022-23 Varsity Granite Bears Football Team Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>POS.</th>
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Bad News Bears are back

**TEAM**
Mount Airy Granite Bears

**COACHES**
J.K. Adkins: Head Coach
Austin Taylor: Co-Defensive Coordinator
Darron Taylor: Co-Defensive Coordinator
David “Murdock” Meredith: Defensive Line Coach
Jordon Tucker: Defensive Line Coach
Weston Miller: Defensive Backs Coach
Richard Grissom Jr.: Defensive Line Coach
Nic Isom: Linebackers Coach
Justin Combs: Offensive Line Coach
Justin Moore: Running Backs Coach
Dennis Moore: Running Backs Coach
Kelly Holder: Wide Receivers Coach
Logan Holder: Quarterbacks Coach
Weston Miller: H-Backs and Tight Ends Coach

**LAST SEASON**
13-1 overall, 6-0 conference, Northwest 1A Conference Champions, 1A West Regional Semifinalists

**KEY LOSSES**
The Granite Bears graduated 13 seniors from last year's team, many of whom were multi-year starters. Zeb Stroup, Reece Deaton, Mason Hill, Nic Isom and Kasen Taylor were all recognized with All-Conference Honors at least twice during their high school football careers.

Mount Airy took the biggest hit on defense. The Granite Wall of last year’s team shut out nine of 14 opponents, only allowed 46 points all year and held 13-of-14 opponents to seven points or fewer.

Deaton, Isom, Taylor, Stroup and Payton Fonville were the team’s leading tacklers that all earned All-Conference Honors in 2021. Deaton, a linebacker, led the way with 132 total tackles and 28.0 tackles for a loss. He also recovered a team-high six fumbles.

Isom also surpassed 100 total tackles with 119, added 26.0 tackles for a loss and led the team with 12 sacks. He was the team’s leader in forced fumbles with four and QB hurries with 15.

Zeb Stroup and Fonville combined for seven interceptions and 10 pass deflections in the secondary.

Zeb was one of only eight players in the conference that earned All-Conference Honors in multiple phases. In addition to being one the team’s top cornerbacks, his 582 yards receiving and eight receiving TDs more than doubled any of his teammates.

Mount Airy found the most success last season running the ball, with the team rushing for nearly 3,500 yards. Only one of their top six rushers graduated, but he – Josh Penn – was an invaluable weapon for the team. Penn had the ability to bulldoze opponents or run in the open field.

The offense moves forward without two of its starting offensive linemen from the 2021-22 season. Mason Hill and Sao Lennon were both All-Conference selections that will continue their careers at the next level.

**2022 SEASON OVERVIEW**
Though Mount Airy lost a good chunk of the historic “Granite Wall” defense, coach JK Adkins is excited to see what this year’s team can do.

Adkins said that the linebacker group of Isom, Taylor and Deaton were as good a group as he’s ever coached.

“We’ve got a plethora of guys to try out there,” Adkins said.

Ian Gallimore is expected to be a stud linebacker for the team. He didn’t play much defense in 2021, instead focusing on being quarterback since the team didn’t need him on defense.

“He’s as good a player as any of those three were,” Adkins said, referencing Isom, Taylor and Deaton.

Caleb Reid is another player expected to play linebacker.

Adkins called Reid one of the biggest surprises of the offseason due to his development as a defensive player.

Blake Hawks, Brison George and Josh Chavis are also players that Adkins looks to try at linebacker, as well as a few JV linebackers that could eventually work their way up to the varsity roster.

The defensive line will be the cornerstone of the Bears’ defense.

“The defensive line will be better than last year,” Adkins said. “A lot of plays will be made up there with those guys. I think they’ll give the linebackers time to get their rotations in.”

Cam’Ron Webster and Deric Dandy are the Bears’ leading returning tacklers. Webster, whom Adkins described as “extremely quick off the ball,” and a “great playmaker” had 64 total tackles and 12.0 tackles for a loss in 11 games. Dandy, who plays on the edge but can be moved inside, finished the year with 60 tackles in just nine games. He also had 18.0 tackles for a loss and 9.0 sacks.

Caden Joyce joins the defensive line after being hurt most of last season, and freshman DJ Joyce will be a contender for minutes on the line as well.

Dandy, Joyce and Landon Cox will get reps at defensive end, with Traven Thompson also an option.

Walker Stroup, Mario Revels, Logan Fonville and Tyler Mason make up Mount Airy’s defensive backs.

Revels led the team in interceptions last season with five while also deflecting eight passes. Walker Stroup was second on the team in interceptions with four, while leading the Bears with 13 pass deflections.

The Granite Bears’ offense returns three players from the offensive line: Cox at center, Hawks at guard and Jonah Bilyeu at tackle. Adkins said Caden Joyce would’ve likely been in that rotation a year ago if it had not been for injuries.

Mount Airy adds a pair of juniors to the line in the form of Hayden Bender and Spencer Baldwin. Bender, a right tackle, suffered a femur fracture and was just coming out of surgery in August 2021. Adkins said he’s healed and ready to go for the upcoming year.

Baldwin is a 6’5”, 250-pound force that Adkins said had “a tremendous offseason.”

Adkins’ goal for Mount Airy’s offense is to have so many dangerous weapons that opposing defenses can’t just focus on stopping one guy.

Six of Mount Airy’s top seven rushers return from last year’s run-dominant team.

Junior Tyler Mason’s 1,242 yards rushing in 2021 are the fifth-most of any returning player in the 1A division. Even more impressive, Mason’s 1,200 yards came on just 92 carries for an average of 13.5 yards per carry. He also showcased his ability as a pass catcher with 10 receptions for 100 yards and a TD.

The team’s second-leading
Bears

From page 15

rusher last season didn't even start
the year as a running back. Reid, who
was expected to be a receiver on the
varsity squad, came in as a sophomore
and rushed for 674 yards, averaging
11.8 yards per carry, and scored eight
touchdowns.

A newcomer to the offense is
freshman Taeshon Martin, who was
described by Adkins as having a simi-
lar skillset to Mason.

“Just watch, and you’ll get to know
him in due time,” Adkins said.

Junior Ian Gallimore returns for
his second season as quarterback in
Mount Airy’s option-based offense.
Gallimore was an excellent distribu-
tor to a variety of backs that could also
carry himself when needed. As a soph-
omore, Gallimore rushed 57 times for
356 yards and nine touchdowns.

Gallimore aired it out when needed
and passed for 113.2 yards per game.
He went 65-of-96 (67.7%) for 1,471
yards and 22 touchdowns, averaging
nearly 23 yards per completion. Ian
only threw five interceptions in his
first year as a varsity QB, and two of
those came in his first two starts.

Landon Gallimore is also available
to split reps at quarterback.

Walker Stroup is expected to take
over Zeb Stroup’s role as a deep
threat, and Fonville is another option
at receiver. Revels was moved outside
from the slot, and Brison George
and Connor Burrell will serve as slot
receivers.

Walker will also handle placekicking
duties for the Bears. He hit 39-of-47
PATs in 2021.

BIG GAMES

The Bears’ nonconference schedule
consists of four games against teams
from higher divisions, including three
games against teams in the Foothills
2A Conference.

“We’ve had a great summer,” Adkins
said. “We had over 50 kids, making
our target number. We’ve lifted and
run, been able to get on the field
some. Our preseason basically started
in June. We’re hopeful that’ll help us
enter into week one sharp; that’s the
plan anyway.”

Mount Airy opens the season at
North Surry, whom the Granite Bears
are 14-0 against since 2007. The Grey-
hounds return almost all of its start-
ing players from last season and are
led by junior and senior classes with a
lot of varsity experience.

The Bears then host the East Surry
Cardinals. Prior to last season, East
and Mount Airy had played annually
for six decades. The two renew their
rivalry a year after both teams fin-
ished 13-1 overall and won conference
titles. Mount Airy seeks its first win
over East since 2018.

“Week one into week two shows us
some of the biggest improvements a
team can make,” Adkins said. “Once
we get that live action, we’ll be able to
tweak some things and hopefully get
off to a good start.

Mount Airy ends its nonconference
schedule with games against Surry
Central and Ashe County. The Bears
shut out both Central and Ashe in
2021.

The Granite Bears face two of
their top threats in the Northwest 1A
Conference in September: Starmount
and East Wilkes. Starmount finished
8-5 in 2021, with its only conference
loss coming against Mount Airy. The
Bears also knocked Starmount out of
the playoffs in the third round.

East Wilkes held Mount Airy to a
season low in first-half points last sea-
son before the Bears exploded for a
45-6 win. East Wilkes returns many of
its key players while also getting back
a few that were hampered by injury
last season.

Mount Airy will be away from Wal-
lace Shelton Stadium for nearly a
month for the back half of the regular
season. The Bears are at South Stokes
on Sept. 23, then play Starmount
the following week at home. Mount
Airy then goes on the road to North
Stokes, has its bye week and then
plays at Elkin on Oct. 21. It’s not until
Senior Night on Oct. 28 that the team
returns home.
The Hounds’ time is now

TEAM
North Surry Greyhounds

COACHES
Jackson Smith: Head Coach
Daniel Draughn: Defensive Coordinator, Strength and Conditioning Coordinator
Sam Williams: Defensive Backs
Tanner Hiatt: Offensive Coordinator, Wide Receivers Coach
Will Hodges: Run Game Coordinator, Offensive Line Coach
Robby Spurlin: Running Backs Coach
Danny Lyons: Tight Ends, Outside Linebackers Coach
Caleb Thomas: Defensive Line Coach

LAST SEASON
5-5 overall, 4-2 conference, tied for Runner-up in the Foothills 2A Conference, qualified for 2A State Playoffs

KEY LOSSES
North Surry only graduated four seniors from the 2021-22 team: Trevor Isaacs, Ryan Simmons, Anthony Brown and Bryson Wilson.
Brown and Simmons were both named All-Conference players on defense last season. Simmons recorded 15 tackles for a loss and tied for the most sacks on the team with eight. He finished the year with 60 total tackles, seven QB hurries, one forced fumble and a pass breakup.
Brown was a defensive back and running back for the Hounds. Defensively, he finished the season with 67 total tackles, two tackles for a loss, five forced fumbles, five pass breakups and one interception.
Offensively, Brown served as a secondary running back. He carried 34 times for 235 yards and a touchdown.
Wilson spent time on the defensive line alongside Simmons, and Isaacs played some receiver for the Greyhounds.
North will also be without its quarterback that started most of the 2021 season: James McCreary. As a junior, McCreary made the Foothills 2A All-Conference squad by throwing for 1,471 yards and 13 touchdowns and just four interceptions. He also rushed 17 times for 97 yards and touchdown.

2022 SEASON OVERVIEW
The new-ish face on North Surry’s offense is quarterback Colton Allen. Allen, a sophomore, started the 2021 season as a backup quarterback before being inserted into the Greyhounds’ second game of the season. Allen went 4-of-5 for 79 yards, threw a passing touchdown and rushed five times for 37 yards before leaving with an injury.
The injury caused Allen to miss the remainder of the football season, but North

See HOUNDS | 20
Greyhounds

THE 2022-23 NORTH SURRY FOOTBALL TEAM

Hope Ward | Special to the News

NO. NAME POS. YEAR HT. WT.
1 Fisher Leftwich RB DB Freshman 5’11 160
2 Malachi Powers RB LB Sophomore 5’11 175
3 Jahreece Lynch WR DB Senior 6’1 178
4 Mathew Senter WR DB Senior 5’9 155
6 Jared Hiatt TE DL Senior 6’4 185
7 Talan Vernon WR DB Senior 5’7 145
9 Jake Simmons RB LB Junior 5’11 205
10 Isaac Webb WR DB Sophomore 5’8 135
11 Wesley Atkins WR DB Senior 5’11 160
12 Kam McKnight QB Sophomore 6’0 165
13 Owen McMillan WR DB Sophomore 6’0 155
16 Colton Allen QB Sophomore 6’4 173
17 Derrick Simmons WR DB Sophomore 6’1 190
18 Jake Beamer WR DB Senior 5’9 140
20 Mason Hicks TE LB Junior 5’10 170
21 Payten Sechrist LB TE Sophomore 5’11 145
23 Makiyon Woodbury WR DB Senior 5’11 165
24 Noah McCloud WR DB Senior 6’2 185
28 Jaxon Ramos TE LB Senior 6’0 200

NO. NAME POS. YEAR HT. WT.
29 Jimmy Burnett K Senior 5’8 145
44 Eric Cabrera TE LB Freshman 6’1 185
50 Ty Gwyn OL DL Junior 5’11 275
52 Konnor Mauldin OL DL Junior 5’10 205
53 Harley Felts OL LB Junior 5’9 178
54 Braxton Montgomery OL DL Sophomore 5’10 220
55 Bruce Shore OL LB Junior 5’10 185
57 Zeke Moore OL DL Senior 6’1 275
58 Joseph Ravit OL DL Junior 5’11 240
59 Jase Hernandez OL LB Senior 5’8 195
64 Eli Ramey OL DL Sophomore 6’0 240
65 Aiden Martin OL DL Junior 6’0 220
70 Steven Snow OL DL Junior 5’11 210
72 Anthony Williams OL DL Sophomore 6’1 240
74 Jaime Martinez OL DL Junior 5’11 220
75 Luis Martinez OL DL Senior 5’11 195
78 Markus Alford OL DL Sophomore 6’3 245
79 Uriah Kearse OL DL Sophomore 5’10 285

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Hounds

From page 17

Surry is ready to roll with him this year.

“We have a lot of faith in Colton,” said North Surry coach Jackson Smith. “He can make a lot of plays with his arm and with his legs. We want to design an offense to maximize his skillset.”

As far as the offense goes, Smith said that he and the coaching staff don’t want to commit to a particular scheme. Instead, he wants to adapt based on the players’ talents.

“If we have the kids that their best chance to score is running a Wing T, we’ll run the Wing T,” Smith said. “If we’ve got eight receivers that we feel like we can use, we’ll run air raid.

“That’s been the goal for us: create an offense that capitalizes on our kids’ skillsets.”

The coach said he’d like to run a spread offense this season, which is similar to the one the former quarterback used during his high school days.

North had the ability to move on the ground or in the air last season. The workhorse of the rushing game is junior Jake Simmons, who Smith called, “the Model T.”

“I can’t speak highly enough on him and his work ethic,” Smith said.

Simmons led the team with 182 carries for 1,156 yards and 18 touchdowns in 2021. He also added nine catches for 160 yards.

Simmons has been able to carve defenses behind a physical offensive line. Rising senior Zeke Moore is a two-time All-Conference selection on the line, and Smith said he’s excited to see Moore dominate not just because of his strength but also his exceptional footwork.

Moore is joined on the line by 2021 All-Conference Honorable Mentions Jase Hernandez and Garrett Shore. Smith also mentioned Ty Gwyn as someone that will help lead the OL.

The linemen have been one of the groups that have benefited most from the training of Daniel Draughn who, in addition to serving as defensive coordinator, is North Surry’s strength and conditioning coach.

“I can’t talk highly enough of Daniel Draughn and Tyler Hiatt for how they’ve promoted and developed our strength and conditioning program,” Smith said. “We really have tried to focus on getting bigger, faster, stronger, and we’ve seen a drastic change from a lot of kids.”

Rounding out the offense is the receiving corps. Jared Hiatt returns as a tight end that Smith looks to incorporate more both as a blocker as well as receiver. Simmons has shown his ability to catch passes out of the backfield or in the slot, and the Hounds will also utilize Talan Vernon as a slot receiver.

Jahreece Lynch returns as a pillar of the team’s offense the past two seasons. Lynch finished the 2021 season with 54 catches for 948 yards and 11 touchdowns, as well as 88 yards rushing to put his total yards over the 1,000 mark.

“We have to find ways to get him the ball,” Smith said. “So you may see a little bit of him everywhere. We don’t want to put him in a corner and take him out of the game.”

Lynch is expected to play a similar role on defense, where he will play wherever the team feels he’s best suited to make plays. This could mean putting him as the single high safety, at corner back or even inside the box at inside linebacker. He led the Hounds with four interceptions, two that were returned for touchdowns, and 12 pass breakups.

Vernon is another player that Smith expects to see make a big impact on defense.

On special teams, Lynch will return as the team’s punter. He will also resume his role as a returner alongside Vernon and Simmons.

BIG GAMES

North Surry begins the season with a pair of rivalry games at home.

The Hounds opener is against Mount Airy. The Granite Bears finished 13-1 overall, won the Northwest 1A Conference Championship and 2A West Regional Runner-up. The Cardinals are led by 21 seniors and haven’t lost a conference game since 2018.

Like West Stokes, North Forsyth also had a battle with North Surry that came down to the wire last season. The Hounds take a break from conference play to travel to North Forsyth, which is also the middle of a three-game road trip for North Surry.

The following week, North Surry travels to Surry Central. The Greyhounds and Eagles have played a pair of close games the past two seasons, and the teams tied for second in the conference in 2021.
THE 2022-23 EAST SURRY FOOTBALL TEAM

An EStablished Force

TEAM
East Surry Cardinals

COACHES
Trent Lowman: Head Coach, Offensive Coordinator
Andy Jessup: Defensive Coordinator, Defensive Line Coach
Steve Whitt: Offensive Line Coach
Austin Fleming: Quarterbacks Coach, Wide Receivers Coach
Randy Marion: Defensive Coordinator, Defensive Line Coach
Devin Slate: Inside Linebackers Coach
Joe Denny: Defensive Backs, Head JV Coach
David Johnson: Special Teams Coordinator, Assistant Offensive Line Coach

KEY LOSSES
The Cardinals graduated 10 seniors in the Class of 2022, seven of which earned All-Conference Honors last season: Trey Armstrong, Layton Allen, Eli Blose, Sam Whitt, Luke Bowman, Isaiah Arrington and Joseph Grezmak.

Blose and Whitt were starters on the offensive line that finished with nearly 6,000 yards of total offense in 2021. The Cardinals rushed for more than 2,500 yards and passed for more than 3,500, averaging 426 yards per game.

Whitt was a four-year All-Conference player that went on to represent East Surry in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas and the N.C. Coaches Association East-West All-Star Game.

Another pivotal part of the Cardinal offense that competed in the East-West game was receiver Layton Allen. Allen led East Surry in receptions and yards receiving, helping him become the school’s all-time leader in receptions while finishing in the top five of every receiving category. His 83 receptions for 1,294 yards were both ranked No. 1 in the 2A division.

Armstrong was a weapon in all three phases. He was named FH2A Specialist of the Year with 14 returns for more than 300 yards, and was a key part of the offense as a hybrid running back/receiver. Armstrong was the team’s second-leading rusher with 842 yards and 15 touchdowns, and was the second-leading receiver with 668 yards and 7 touchdowns.

Armstrong was also one of three Cardinal defensive backs that graduated, with Bowman and Arrington also playing the position last season.

Bowman led the team with five interceptions, Armstrong had three and Arrington one. The trio combined to deflect seven passes, force three fumbles and recover two fumbles. Bowman added two blocked field goals.

Grezmak was East Surry’s only All-Conference player last season, and was also one of three Cardinal defensive backs that graduated. Grezmak was the team’s second-leading rusher with 842 yards and 15 touchdowns, and was the team’s second-leading receiver with 668 yards and 7 touchdowns.

Armstrong was also one of three Cardinal defensive backs that graduated, with Bowman and Arrington also playing the position last season.

Bowman led the team with five interceptions, Armstrong had three and Arrington one. The trio combined to deflect seven passes, force three fumbles and recover two fumbles. Bowman added two blocked field goals.

Grezmak was East Surry’s only All-Conference player last season, but leaves behind a huge hole. He racked up 77 total tackles, 14.0 tackles for a loss, 4.0 sacks, four fumble recoveries and a blocked punt.

2022 SEASON OVERVIEW
For many of East Surry’s players, the gap between the 2021 2A West Regional Final and Week One of the 2022 season is the first real experience a real offensive season for the first time,” said head coach Trent Lowman. “Work for this season all started in the winter in the weight room, which is where a lot of camaraderie and healthy competition is built. This group had as good a winter as anybody...
## EAST SURRY CARDINALS

### Cardinal Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>YR.</th>
<th>HT.</th>
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<td>200</td>
<td>TE/OLB</td>
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### Best of luck to our area teams!

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Cardinals
From page 21

out there.

"It's great to see as a coach. They'll push each other and sometimes fail, but they always encourage each other to keep coming back. It's been fun to watch again, and I hope it pays off this fall."

The Cardinals' return a host of players from its 13-1 season. One of the team's 21 seniors is Folger Boaz, who was named Foothills 2A Conference Offensive Player of the Year in 2021. The dual-threat quarterback returns for a third season as a starter.

"Prior to last season, I'd never returned a starting quarterback in my career," Lowman said. "Having the same QB for three seasons is definitely a blessing for us."

As a junior, Boaz was second in the state among all classifications and No. 26 in the nation in total yards with 4,435. By going 227-of-324 passing for 3,475 yards and 29 touchdowns, Boaz held the Cardinals in the state among all classifications.

Boaz became just the fifth player in state history with a single-season completion percentage greater than 70% with at least 275 pass attempts.

His completion percentage led the state, and he was fourth overall in yards passing. Boaz also led the Cards in rushing with 147 carries for 960 yards and 23 touchdowns.

Boaz and the graduated Trey Armstrong were the team's primary running backs last season. Lowman said there are plenty of players ready to step in and compete for touches. He mentioned Kyle Zinn, who the team expects to use in a similar role to Armstrong as a combo back, as well as Lindann Fleming, the primary JV running back in 2021, and Stephen Brantley.

"And that's a big ol' boy right there," Lowman said of Brantley.

Anchoring the offensive line are three returning players: Kole Pruitt, Gavin Atkins and JT Simmons. Pruitt was an All-Conference selection in 2021, and all three linemen started every game they were available.

Lowman expects three forwards from last season to contend for the remaining starting spots on the line: junior Fletcher Gibson, and sophomores Luke Whitt and Trey Grubbs.

Despite losing its top two receivers from last season, the Cards have a lot of confidence in this year's receiving corps. Colby Johnson, Luke Brown and Brantley were the third, fourth and fifth-leading receivers on the team, and all three scored multiple touchdowns in the air.

East Surry also looks to incorporate players such as Matthew Keener, Gabriel Harpe and Dylan Cox into the aerial offense. Both Keener and Cox are coming off injury seasons.

"Matthew Keener missed a lot of last year, but right now he's working in the starting groups. He's one of the best route runners I've ever coached," Lowman said. "Dylan missed all of last season, but as a sophomore he was one of the key pieces on JV as both a receiver and running back."

East Surry also looks to incorporate Devin Williams, who comes to Pilot Mountain by way of Minnesota, into the offense. Lowman described Williams' role as an athlete that's not a pure running back or receiver, but rather someone that can seamlessly transition between both positions.

East Surry's defense returns six of its top seven tacklers from last season. In 2021, the Cardinals only allowed 14.1 points per game through the entire season. During the regular season, East had three shutouts and only allowed 9.1 PPG.

Brett Clayton was the team's leading tackler with 159 total tackles, 25.0 tackles for a loss and 9.0 sacks. East Surry's other outside linebacker was Zinn, who also surpassed 100 total tackles while posting 16.0 tackles for a loss and grabbing three interceptions.

Inside linebackers Hatcher Hamm and Joshua Parker were third and fourth on the team in tackles with more than 90 each.

"Hatcher was able to start and thrive all last season as a freshman, which is not an easy thing to do," Lowman said.

Hayden Sammons is another player that received significant minutes off the bench as linebacker last season.

Daniel Villasenor and Eli Becker return on the defensive line. Villasenor's 6.0 sacks were the second-most on the team behind Clayton.

East Surry's group of defensive backs is likely the most inexperienced unit on the field after the loss of Arrington, Armstrong and Bowman.

"We've got guys that have played a lot of football, but that have not necessarily played the position a lot at the varsity level."

Johnson worked at DB all through the 2021 season. He finished the year with 47 total tackles, two interceptions for 102 yards and tied Armstrong for the most pass deflections with four. Johnson also forced two fumbles.

Will Jones, Matthew Edwards, Fleming, Williams and Harpe are other varsity players expected to make a name in the defensive backfield.

The Cardinals return a pair of specialists that proved integral to the team's success in 2021: Brantley and Zinn.

Brantley is a five-star punteraccording to Kohl's Professional Camps. He is ranked as the No. 1 punting prospect in the nation and No. 1 in North Carolina. In 2021, Brantley punted 17 times for 682 yards for an average of 40.1 yards.

Brantley is also a four-star kicking that averaged 59.1 yards on his 30 kicks, adding seven touchbacks. He connected on 59-of-72 PATs and 4-of-9 field goals.

Zinn became one of the team's top return options through the 2021 season, even returning two kickoffs for touchdowns.

BIG GAMES

East Surry begins the season by playing the Northwest 1A Conference's top three teams from last season: Mount Airy, Starmount and South Stokes.

Starmount, who travels to Pilot Mountain week one, finished 8-5 last season and reached the third round of the 1A State Playoffs. The Rams return most of their core from last season and will look to contend for a conference title.

The Cardinals then find themselves on the road against rival Mount Airy. The teams broke a streak of more than 60 years by not playing last fall, but look to establish dominance as nonconference opponents.

Mount Airy was 13-1 in 2021 and won the Northwest 1A Conference Championship. East Surry has won its past three meetings against the Granite Bears.

The Cardinals travel to West Stokes in week three to face a team that, like Starmount, returns most of its core from last season. East closes non-conference play against South Stokes the following week.

East Surry then enters Foot- hills 2A Conference play in an attempt to win a conference title for a fourth consecutive season. Two of its biggest obstacles will be North Surry and Wilkes Central, who the Cards happen to play on back-to-back weekends.

North Surry held a brief lead over East in their 2021 encounter, but couldn't slow down the Cardinals in what ended up being a 56-22 game. North returns all but five players from last season, and is led by a very talented and experienced senior class.

Lowman said he also expects to have a great game against Wilkes Central who – like North Surry – comes back with an almost identical team. According to MaxPreps, Wilkes Central's 2021 team did not include any seniors.

“They've got the athletes, they've got players and they've got the coaches,” Lowman said. “They definitely pose a big threat this year."

“I think our league, as a whole, is better this year, and will be closer each week and each game."

SCHEDULE
(Kickoff at 7:30 unless otherwise noted)

Friday, 8/19 vs. Starmount
Friday, 8/26 vs. Mount Airy
Friday, 9/2 vs. West Stokes
Friday, 9/9 vs. South Stokes
Friday, 9/16 vs. North Wilkes*
Friday, 9/23 vs. North Surry* 
Friday, 9/30 vs. Wilkes Central* 
Friday, 10/7 OPEN
Friday, 10/14 vs. Forsbush* 
Friday, 10/21 vs. West Wilkes* 
Friday, 10/28 vs. Surry Central* 
*Conference
Inexperienced Vikings looking forward to the season

By Robert Money Jr.
rmoney@thestokesnews.com

TEAM
North Stokes Vikings

COACHES
Jamie Fortner: Offensive Coordinator/Offensive line
David Anderson: Defensive Coordinator/Linebackers/Quarterbacks
Ethan Barnes: Special Teams Coordinator/Running backs/Defensive line
Elijah Cone: JV Offensive Coach/Receivers/Defensive backs
Dylan James: Secondary/Receivers
Matthew Wise: JV Defensive Coach/Defensive line/Offensive line

LAST SEASON
4-7 overall, 1-5 conference, finished sixth place in the Northwest 1A Conference, qualified for the 1A State Playoffs

KEY LOSSES
North Stokes lost 78 percent of its’ offense from last season. The Vikings said good-bye to 11 seniors including All-Conference players Elijah Cone, Ethan Puckett, Garret Smith, and honorable mention All-Conference Brayden Ring.

SEASON OVERVIEW
The Vikings started strong last season by going 3-1 against non-conference opponents and winning the first homecoming game in a number of years. North played well enough to beat conference teams Elkin (29-20), Starmount (13-0), and South Stokes (14-7), but came out on the short end of the stick.

North returns honorable mention All-Conference player Jamison Wood. Wood will move from receiver to quarterback this fall. He caught 10 passes for 112 yards last year and was 11-for-32 from underneath the center. The Vikings also return Ethan Garcia in the backfield. He carried the ball 36 times for 126 yards.

“We want to be competitive each week,” said second year coach Jamie Fortner. “We are a young team with only six seniors and am thankful to have several playing football for the first time or since middle school.

While we have some inexperience, we also have several players that are underclassmen that started many positions for us last season. This team works hard and has improved each practice. As a staff we are excited to coach this group of young men and look for good things to happen.”

Other key players for the Vikings are Cameron Bullins (OL/LB), Chris Hardin (OL/DL), and Will Greer (OL/DL).

BIG GAMES
Patrick County and South Stokes are always big rival games for North Stokes. The Vikings beat the Cougars 20-7 last season but lost to the Sauras 14-7.

Robert Money can be reached at 336-749-1193.
Rising senior Ethan Garcia (19) looking to help led the Vikings on offense this season.
## South Stokes Football Team

### Roster

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<td>OL/DL</td>
<td>5'9</td>
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<td>Hunter Gentry</td>
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<tr>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Chris Turner</td>
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<td>Cooper Willard</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Kicker</td>
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### Schedule

(kickoff set for 7:30, unless noted)

- Friday 8/19 @ West Stokes Wildcats
- Friday 8/26 Vs. Bishop McGuinness Villains
- Friday 9/2 Vs. McMichael Phoenix
- Friday 9/9 @ East Surry Cardinals
- Friday 9/16 @ Alleghany Trojans*
- Friday 9/23 Vs. Mount Airy Bears*
- Friday 9/30 Vs. East Wilkes Cardinals*
- Friday 10/14 Vs. Starmount Rams*
- Friday 10/21 Vs. North Stokes Vikings*#
- Friday 10/28@ Elkin Elks*

*Northwest 1A Conference Games
# 10/21 – Home game for North Stokes due to track being installed
SOUTH STOKES SAURAS

Hairston to lead young Sauras

By Robert Money Jr.
rmoney@thestokesnews.com

TEAM
South Stokes Sauras

COACHES
David Diamont: Head Coach/Offensive backs/Quarterback/Offensive coordinator
Stephen Bruner: Offensive/Defensive line
Justin Rogers: Co-defensive coordinator/defensive backs
Cory Wood: Wide receiver/linebackers
Julius Smith: Offensive/Defensive coordinator

LAST SEASON
6-5 overall, 4-2 in the Northwest 1A Conference, finished third in the conference, advanced to the second round of the state playoffs.

KEY LOSSES
South Stokes will lose 70 percent of its offense with junior quarterback Barry Hairston Jr. returning for a second year. The Sauras lost All-Conference player Jesse Carrick, Nic Heavener, Wyatt McBride, and Carson Hall. South also said good-bye to D J Goolsby and Matthew Waters, and team players Anthony Campbell and Michael Fallin. South took big hits when they lost three veteran assistant coaches for this fall as well.

SEASON OVERVIEW
Along with Hairston, South Stokes will return All-Conference player Brenden Bradford. Hairston threw for 1,432 yards with 16 touchdowns and Bradford had 38 catches for 629 yards and five scores.

The Sauras also returns defensive players Dez Galloway (Honorable Mention), Jaryd Galloway, Aryln Durrell, and Daniel Martin. Jaryd Galloway is the leading tackler with 52 from last year.

Other key players according to head coach David Diamont are Deuce Chalmers, Alex LaRoche, Dalton Hutchings, Landon Johnson, Elijah Tilley, Moises Santana, Bryce Epperson, Parker Barron, Jordan Fulp, and Noah Booe.

BIG GAMES
North and West Stokes are always a big game for the Sauras. South Stokes squeaked by the Vikings last year 14-7 but lost to the Wildcats 49-6.

Robert Money can be reached at 336-749-1193.

Photos by Robert Money | The Stokes News
South Stokes’ quarterback Barry Hairston Jr. (1) will help led the charge for the Sauras this upcoming season.

For more information visit: Kristinclickett.com/Immune

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leaning on experience

TEAM
West Stokes Wildcats

COACHES
Chris Johnson: Head coach
Luke Mickey: Outside linebackers
Tanner Lomax: Defensive backs
Brian Mabe: Defensive line
Patrick Taylor: Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks
Brandon Dawson: Running backs
Charles Brewer: Tight ends
Luke Bowen: Wide receivers
Josh Mickey: Offensive line

LAST SEASON
5-5 overall, 3-3 conference, finished fourth in the Mid-State 2A Conference, qualified for the 2A State Playoffs

KEY LOSSES
The Wildcats will have to replace offensive lineman Ben Smitherman, Austin Blackburn, and Bryan Gordon from last year's team. Along with Gordon, the Cats lost All-Conference players and two-way starters Brighton Berthong and Zaid Dobson. The Wildcats also said goodbye to three-year varsity kicker, Jerry Adkins who was 17-for-17 in extra-point tries last year.

SEASON OVERVIEW
The Wildcats will look much improved from last season returning 93 percent of its' offense and three of its' top four defensive players.

The Wildcats returned to the playoffs last season after missing it in the spring of 2021, the first time since 2003 that West didn't make the cut. West Stokes had one of the toughest schedules in the state playing two state champions and one runner-up. The Cats started the season 5-1 before losing four straight games to Reidsville, North Forsyth, Galax, Va., and J.M. Robinson.

West Stokes struggled at times offensively last year with only 1,023 yards on the ground and another 718 in the air. Junior quarterback Mason Cain threw for 566 yards with seven touchdowns, while running for another 373 yards and three touchdowns.

Junior Jasir Gaye was one of Cain's favorite targets completing 17 passes for 320 yards and four touchdowns. Another favorite was sophomore

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Wildcats
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receiver Keyon Rawley, he pulled down 20 receptions for 295 yards and three scores. The team’s second leading rusher, Dillon Stanley, will also return from last season. Stanley raced for 367 yards and six touchdowns.
One of the Wildcats biggest wins last year was its season opener against county-rival South Stokes. West beat the Sauras 49-6 after being upset in 2019 by the score of 12-8, the year that Cats made it to the regional finals, just one game away from the state championships.
West Stokes beat North Surry 21-20, Morehead 20-14, T. W. Andrews 20-12, and Walkertown by forfeit. The team lost to McMichael, Reidsville, North Forsyth, Galax, Va., and Robinson in the first round of the state playoffs.
Senior James Spainhour will help anchor a solid offensive line this season. The 6’5” blindside tackle has committed to the College of William and Mary and has been selected to play in the Blue/Grey All-American Bowl in January.
Defensively, Dakota Barker led the team with 74 tackles in seven games, followed by Orasha Graham’s 78 tackles, and Dillon Stanley’s 49 tackles. Barker had 17 tackles for a loss and five sacks, Graham had nine tackles for a loss, three fumble recoveries, and four passes defended, and Stanley had two interceptions, two fumble recoveries, and four passes defended.
All-Conference returners are Baker, Stanley, and Gaye.
“We look to be much improved,” said Wildcat coach Chris Johnson. “We want to maximize our potential and play to this year’s motto of “Play Smart, Fast & Physical.” If we do that then will have a successful season.”
BIG GAMES
South Stokes and East Surry are natural rival games with each school within 15 minutes of each other. The Wildcats look to build on its 49-6 victory over the Sauras from last season. The Cardinals and Cats are deadlocked at 2-2 in its’ last four meetings and will look to gain momentum with wins.

Robert Money can be reached at 336-749-1193.
Forbush Falcons look to continue recent success

By Zach Colburn
Special to the Tribune/Ripple

TEAM
Forbush Falcons

HEAD COACH
Jeremy Funderburk, 14-5 record at Forbush (third season with Falcons), 77-53 in 11 total seasons as a head coach

ASSISTANT COACHES
Shane Compton, Jeremy Helton, Jake Hoots, Kyle Matthews, Joe Sikes and Matthew Tuck.

LAST SEASON
8-4, 4-2 conference, tied for second place in the Foothills 2A Conference (lost in second round of the NCHSAA 2A playoffs)

KEY LOSSES
Forbush graduated nearly a dozen talented players from a program that won 14 games between the 2020 and 2021 seasons and won the Western Piedmont 2A Conference championship in spring 2021.

In addition to graduating the Foothills 2A Conference Defensive Player of the Year Ayden Gardner, the Falcons will also have to replace a pair of 1,000-yard rushers in Derek Matthews (279 carries for 1,851 yards and 26 touchdowns), who is currently a member of the Wake Forest University football program, and Luke Bennett (114 carries for 1,074 yards and nine touchdowns). Both players were all-conference last year.

Also gone are all-conference performers Joe Hennings, Wesley Trivette, Devin Diclemente, Luke Hurley, Nate Hampton and Baylee Ramey. Gardner and Trivette have signed to play for Ferrum College while Ramey has signed with Brevard College.

KEY RETURNERS
Several players who have been key contributors return, but they could also see time on the offensive side of the ball.

Jesse Wooten was all-conference on defense last year. The senior defensive end collected 82 tackles last year, good for third on the team, and was second in solo tackles with 54. Wooten also rushed for 72 yards and a touchdown on offense.

Regan Ramey (12 carries for 78 yards and one touchdown) is the Falcons’ top-returning rusher. But on defense is where Ramey is expected to be a key contributor as he had 1.5 sacks and 75 total tackles (51 solo) last year.

Senior Ezra Hutchens returns on both the offensive and defensive lines. Fellow lineman Reese Matthews will also be back in the trenches for his senior season.

Ethan Pipes should take on a bigger role in the Falcons defense after he finished with 28 tackles (16 solo).

Senior Andrew Hutchens (40-of-76 passing for 555 yards and five touchdowns and seven interceptions) and junior Holden Moxley (22-for-41 for 185 yards and one touchdown and three interceptions) both saw at action quarterback last year. Hutchens also rushed for a touchdown on the ground.

Senior David Guadarrama also returns as the Falcons placekicker. Last year, he was 1-for-2 on fields and 39-for-44 on extra points.

2022 SEASON OVERVIEW
“We had a large group of successful seniors graduate, so our current juniors and seniors must step up quickly to fill the spots they have left,” said Funderburk. “We have talented, hard working players who are ready to become the leaders for 2022. We can be very successful if these guys find cohesiveness and become a team early on.”

BIG GAMES
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Falcons

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Of the Falcons’ four defeats last fall, two of them came against defending conference champion East Surry; it included a 37-20 defeat in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association playoffs.

But before that clash on Oct. 14, Forbush opens up the season at home on Friday, Aug. 19, against former Western Piedmont 2A Conference member North Forsyth.

The Falcons will also travel to Starmount for the annual Unifi Bowl. After not playing during the 2020 season, the Falcons earned a 21-6 win over the Rams last fall.

Forbush will also look to avenge 2021 defeats when it hosts Thomasville and Surry Central on Sept. 9 and Oct. 7, respectively.

Schedule
(kickoff set for 7:30, unless noted)

Friday, 8/19 vs. North Forsyth
Friday, 8/26 @ Trinity
Friday, 9/2 @ Starmount
Friday, 9/9 vs. Thomsville
Friday, 9/16 OPEN
Friday, 9/23 @ West Wilkes*
Friday, 9/30 @ North Surry*
Friday, 10/7 vs. Surry Central*
Friday, 10/14 @ East Surry*
Friday, 10/21 vs. North Wilkes*
Friday, 10/28 vs. Wilkes Central*

*Conference
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ELKIN
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336-526-4500

SPARTA
233 Doctors Street, Sparta
336-372-3003

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