

Anson High School

Richmond Senior High School

Scotland High School

# 2021

# FOOTBALL

# PREVIEW



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A year after a 13-1 season, the Raiders expect to be title contenders once again. Photos by Neel Madhavan | Daily Journal

# Raiders hope to stay healthy to chase championship ambitions

## Raiders' Varsity Schedule

- Feb. 26 vs. Scotland (Postponed)
- March 5 at Pinecrest
- March 12 vs. Jack Britt
- March 19 vs. Hoke County
- March 26 at Lumberton
- April 1 at Seventy-First
- April 9 at Purnell Swett

**Neel Madhavan**  
Staff Writer

ROCKINGHAM — At long last, high school football is finally back in North Carolina.

A year after a conference championship and a run to the 4AA state playoff semifinals, the Richmond Senior High School varsity football team expects to be able to contend with the best in the state again, according to head coach Bryan Till.

If they ever get to start their season. "If we can stay healthy, not just traditional football terms, but also keep from being quarantined, I think the sky's the limit," Till said. "It almost seems surreal to be playing and practicing with all the protocols and everything that's going on. We're just trying to do every

little thing right on the way there so that those expectations are not in vain."

Originally, the Raiders were scheduled to open on the road at Purnell Swett, but then positive COVID-19 cases on the Rams' team postponed the game while they entered quarantine. Then, the Sandhills Athletic Conference athletic directors flipped the schedule around due to both Purnell Swett and Lumberton being in quarantine, which meant Richmond would instead open against rival Scotland.

Less than a day later, the Scots had to quarantine due to a positive COVID-19 case on their team, and so Richmond's game against Scotland was also postponed.

Now, Richmond has an open slot in Week 1 with its first scheduled game set

to be on the road against Pinecrest on March 5. Till said they're exploring the possibility of scheduling a game against an out-of-conference opponent to fill the Week 1 open slot.

"I've talked with two or three other coaches who have open dates — we want to play (this) week," Till said. "We struggled back and forth. Is it right to replace the game and worry about, well what if we get quarantined and don't get to play a conference game because we played an out-of-conference game?"

"But, these kids only have the opportunity to play a few times," Till continued. "I'm not going to make a decision based on fear of what's going to happen, I'm going to make a decision based on what I think is best, and the best thing is to give these kids an opportunity

to play if we can't get a conference game. I think our kids will appreciate the opportunity to play."

On offense, the Raiders will stick to their spread run-pass-option attack led

See AMBITIONS | 3

Right: A Richmond quarterback hands off to a running back during an offensive drill during preseason practice.



Left: Richmond's linemen work on plays and drills during a preseason practice.



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# The Heir Apparent

## Junior Hood takes over Raiders' QB job

Photos by Neel Madhavan  
Daily Journal



Richmond junior quarterback Kellan Hood throws a pass on the run during preseason practice.

Richmond junior quarterback Kellan Hood looks to throw during preseason practice.

**Neel Madhavan**  
Staff Writer

When former Richmond Senior High School starting quarterback Caleb Hood decided to graduate early and enroll early at the University of North Carolina, many wondered who would lead the Raiders' offense this season.

In stepped Hood's brother — junior Kellan Hood. Kellan will take over the Raiders' starting quarterback position, spearheading the Raiders' spread run-pass-option attack that has been one of the best and most explosive in the state the last couple seasons.

"I'm excited taking over the quarterback position," Kellan said. "I'm ready to see where it takes me. I'm just going to go out there and show how good of a quarterback I can be."

As soon as the elder Hood made his announcement that he was headed to UNC, senior receiver Tremel Jones said he and Kellan instantly took to the field to throw and run routes to work on improving timing and building the QB-WR chemistry that they'll need this season.

"He would even manage to get some of the younger guys out there when we would go to the field," Jones said. "It's going to be fun seeing a former receiver throw the ball. I have high expectations for him and the coaches do too. There's a lot of potential in him."

"The wide receivers and running backs that I have now, I played with on JV, so we still have our chemistry," Kellan said. "I also grew up playing with them so they've helped me a lot whether it's motivating me or telling me what I could improve on."

Head coach Bryan Till said Kellan earned the job due



The Raiders' junior quarterback Kellan Hood (left) prepares to take the snap during preseason practice.

to his past experience as quarterback for the junior varsity team his freshman year and his familiarity with the offense from playing wide receiver for the varsity team last year.

"The big thing is, he already understands how to read coverages," Till said. "Some of our offensive schemes are based on what coverage guys are in and understanding where to go with the football depending on what (the defense) is in. We're a very option-oriented offense where he has multiple choices to make plays, so knowing that he knows where a lot of that is, is helpful."

Both Till and quarterbacks coach Jay Jones said they've both been impressed with how Kellan's arm strength has improved since he was the junior varsity quarterback as a freshman.

"He's made some impressive throws already this year," (Jay) Jones said. "He's very athletic. In our system, he's exactly what we want in a quarterback."

Kellan said he's adapted fast and that (Jay) Jones has been working on a lot of form-related things with him in preseason practices.

While Kellan brings a similar level of athleticism to the position that his brother did, he doesn't necessarily have the same physicality and stature, which means the Raiders probably won't call the same number of designed inside quarterback runs that they did with Caleb.

"With Caleb, you could probably run (inside) 10-15 times per game," Till said. "(This year), it'll be more read-based. Kellan might run it quite a bit more one night, but that's just the read he's getting as opposed to designed runs."

In terms of knowledge and understanding of the offense, Till said there's pretty much no difference between Kellan and Caleb. But, he added that Kellan is a more vocal leader amongst his teammates than Caleb was.

Shortly before he left for UNC in January, Caleb said his brother has been behind him his whole life, and now he feels like it's his turn to take over and lead the Raiders.

"I know he's going to step up and give it all he has," Caleb said.

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## Ambitions

From page 2

by new starting quarterback junior Kellan Hood. Hood played receiver last year and was quarterback of the junior varsity team as a freshman, catching 24 passes for 262 yards and a touchdown, but will take over the offense this year.

"Coach Denson and I have been ecstatic to see how he has progressed," said Raiders quarterbacks coach Jay Jones. "The only thing I was concerned about was the fact that he hadn't had live reps at quarterback in a couple years. He did some early in the year last year. You can see his improvement daily. I feel like over a short time, he's become very comfortable playing quarterback."

Joining Hood in the backfield is senior Jaron Coleman at running back. With last year's leading rushers Jaheim Covington and Caleb Hood graduated, Till said Coleman's role this season is going to "skyrocket" and he'll be taking on a much greater workload than he has in the past. Last year, Coleman had 740 rushing yards and 10 touchdowns on 70 carries, while averaging about 10.6 yards per carry.

The Raiders offense also returns three key offensive linemen in the trenches in seniors Caleb Wilson and Jaleel Davis and junior Braxton Butler. Till said he expects junior Jaiden Covington, Austin Moore and Jeff Linton to be a factor on the offensive line, as well.

"When you have a new quarterback and tailback, it's really big that the offensive line is able to perform," Till said. "Having Jaleel, Caleb Wilson and Braxton back is big, but those other two spots are new, and those guys being able to come along is going to be big for us this year."

Richmond lost an important piece when senior Jakolbe Baldwin decided to enroll early at North Carolina State, but the Raiders have no shortage of weapons out wide.

Senior Dalton Stroman led the team in receiving in 2019 with 716 yards and nine touchdowns on 31 receptions, plus senior Tremel Jones returns at the slot receiver position. Jones had 485 receiving yards and three touchdowns on 31 catches.

Tremel Jones said his chemistry with (Kellan) Hood continues to improve day-by-day, and while the base offense remains largely the same, they've added new formations, plays and schemes in preseason practice.

"It surprises me how everyone is understanding the playbook so fast and we've had less time than usual to prepare our younger guys," (Tremel) Jones said. "If there's one thing I can say, then I would say that I'm proud of how everyone is doing everything they

can to be a better role player on the field and how our offense clicks together despite losing Caleb (Hood) and Jakolbe (Baldwin)."

Defensively, linebackers coach James Johnson has taken over the defensive coordinator role for the Raiders. Till will continue to coach the cornerbacks, but Johnson will be calling the defensive plays.

Johnson has also implemented a new 4-2-5 defensive set, according to senior linebacker CJ Tillman. Tillman said the new defense gives the Raiders more variety and options with what they can do.

"There's more looks we can give the offense," Tillman said. "When we get to the playoffs and play against better opponents, it'll be more helpful to change it up and give them more looks. We want to get the best matchups at every position as much as possible. Basically we're saying, we are putting our best against your best and let's see who wins it."

Tillman was Richmond's leading tackler a season ago, and figures to be the heart and leader of the Raiders defense this year.

On the defensive line, the Raiders lost defensive end Javon Little to graduation, but return junior J.D. Lampley and senior Kaleel Brown-Palmer at defensive tackle. Lampley and Brown-Palmer each had a sack last year, while Lampley also

had 25 tackles and Brown-Palmer had 29 tackles.

The Raiders' secondary is a largely new and untested group after four two-year starters graduated.

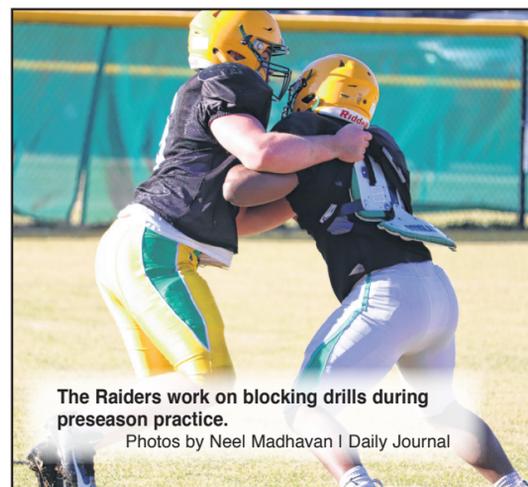
"Some of them have come up from JV, some of them were backups last year," Till said. "They're energetic, they're athletic, but early on it's going to be important how well they play."

Even with all the changes this season brought on by the pandemic, including the requirement for masks during practice and games, the Raiders are maintaining their optimism for the season ahead.

"We expect great things of ourselves, such as winning the state championship, being conference champions and making progress throughout the season and getting better and better each week," (Tremel) Jones said. "Practice has been fun even while wearing masks. The coaches take care of our teammates and do a great job of keeping us safe. Guys have been amped to be on the field and you can tell that everyone is out there because of their passion for this sport and this school."

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The Raiders work on blocking drills during preseason practice.

Photos by Neel Madhavan | Daily Journal



Richmond receiver Dalton Stroman (2) goes up for a catch in the end zone against a defensive back during a preseason practice.

*"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; <sup>12</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."*

**Psalm 91: 11&12**

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## 2021 Richmond Senior High School Varsity Football Roster

# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade	# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade	# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade
1 Tremel Jones	5'10	175	WR	12	22 Jaron Coleman	5'8	170	RB	12	68 Jaiden Covington	6'4	310	OL	11
2 Dalton Stroman	6'4	200	WR	12	23 Emerson Wall	6'0	170	DB	10	71 Lance Shepherd	5'10	235	OL	11
3 Amir Webb	5'8	155	DB	12	24 CJ Tillman	6'0	225	LB/RB	12	72 Justin Colon	5'10	260	OL	11
4 Tom Thomas	6'0	165	WR	11	25 Brandon Askins	5'8	155	RB	10	75 Austin Moore	6'4	285	OL	12
5 Emoni McBride	6'0	165	QB/WR	10	26 Nasir Crumpton	5'8	165	RB	11	77 Jeff Linton	6'4	315	OL	10
6 Gabriel Altman	6'1	240	LB/DL	11	27 Z'yion Baldwin	6'2	185	LB	11	82 Diondr'e Morman	6'2	180	WR	11
7 Kellan Hood	6'0	175	QB/WR	11	28 Jamarion Short	5'10	200	LB	12	86 Trevor Moss	6'2	160	K/P	12
8 Cason Douglas	6'0	185	DB	11	29 Bryan Stevens	5'8	155	DB	11	94 Ahmad Morrison	6'1	215	DL	11
9 J.D. Lampley	6'3	290	DL	11	30 Mack West	5'8	155	K/P	12	97 Jayme Allen	6'2	215	DL	11
10 Malcolm Wilson	6'0	165	WR	12	34 Derrick Everette	6'2	230	DL	12	98 Elijah Hooks	6'2	220	DL	11
11 Kelay Lindsey	5'10	160	DB	11	39 KeSean Ingram	6'0	190	LB	11	99 Randy Hailey	6'2	310	DL	11
12 Chris Ellerbe	5'10	150	WR	11	42 Will Dawkins	6'3	220	TE/LB	11					
13 Jaylan McDonald	5'10	165	WR	11	47 Kaleel Brown-Palmer	5'9	285	DL	12					
14 Xavier Wall	5'10	155	DB	10	48 Evan Ingram	5'9	240	DL	12					
15 Jarod Morrison	6'2	180	WR	12	49 Seth Carpenter	5'9	160	DB	12					
17 Dominic Leviner	5'8	160	DB	12	50 Jordan Carlyle	6'1	270	OL	11					
18 Isaiah Jones	6'0	165	DB	12	60 Caleb Wilson	5'10	255	OL	12					
19 Mikey Baldwin	5'10	175	DB/LB	11	62 Jaleel Davis	6'5	310	OL	12					
20 Traveon Short	5'9	165	DB	11	65 Braxton Butler	6'4	315	OL	11					
21 Jamari Broady	5'9	160	DB	11	67 Turner Howell	5'10	300	OL	12					

Head Coach — Bryan Till  
 Assistant Head Coaches — Greg Williams and Hal Shuler  
 Offensive Coordinator — Brad Denson  
 Defensive Coordinator — James Johnson  
 Varsity Assistants — Andy Shuler, Chris Campolietta, Memphis McSween and Milton Swinnie

# Raiders' biggest fan left mark on athletes, coaches

**Neel Madhavan**  
 Staff Writer

ROCKINGHAM — If you've attended Raider football games in the past, chances are you've seen a familiar face roaming the sidelines with a green hat and a giant smile on his face, carrying water bottles for the players. That wasn't a coach, player or member of the team's staff, but Richard "Ricky" Jacobs — one of the Raiders' biggest fans.

Jacobs, pastor of Southside Freewill Baptist Church, also affectionately referred to as "Rev.," was a mainstay of Richmond Senior High School athletics for more than 25 years.

Jacobs passed away in the early morning hours of Oct. 3, 2020 after battling COVID-19 in the hospital for about a month, according to the church's Facebook page. He was 68.

"We will miss him praying before games with players, officials, and coaches and with everyone after games," said football head coach Bryan Till. "Mostly, we will all miss his infectious smile and pure joy in the moment — win or lose."

Till added that the players and coaches will miss Jacobs' playfulness on the

sidelines, saying that Jacobs would sometimes jokingly spray guys down with water when they weren't expecting it. "Get you some water, baby!" Jacobs would say. Till will also miss having to tell Jacobs not to argue calls or call timeouts on his own on the sideline.

Brad Denson, the offensive coordinator and an assistant coach for the football team, has known Jacobs since he was young and spoke at the funeral on Tuesday on the field at Raider Stadium. His father and Jacobs were close friends and rode to football games together. Denson's father also coached Jacobs' son in junior high school and at Richmond.

Jacobs' Raider fandom wasn't limited to just football. He would attend Raider baseball games, basketball games and more. He would even attend middle school sporting events to show his support.

"He did the water for us, but Rev did way more than that," Denson said. "He showed up on Mondays and Tuesdays. He visited our offices. He would go to the ninth-grade games on Thursdays and do the devotion and pregame meals. He'd be at games at least five days a week!"

There was an outpouring of emotion

and memories on social media from those who knew Jacobs in the wake of his passing, including school principal Jim Butler, who posted on Facebook the day of his passing. "Raider athletics lost their greatest fan today. Preacher Jacobs was quick with a smile and a pack of gum. Raider games will not be the same without him. We will feel that loss for a long time. But I feel sure that when it comes time to play, he is going to have the best seat in the house. The Raiders know that he will still be watching."

As a preacher and man of God, prayer was naturally a significant part of Jacobs' life.

"There are multiple generations that have been through here and knew that Rev was going to be around every week," Till said. "His prayers were special but what was amazing is I — and others — got them every week. He was incredibly consistent in his love and faith. He watched people and could always tell when you needed a prayer. He prayed with me every time he came to my office."

Jacobs wasn't selective when it came to prayer. He would pray with anyone and everyone, even with players and coaches from opposing teams.

Pinecrest High School coaches Chris Metzger and Sam Cole posted their memories of Jacobs on Twitter.

"He prayed over me when I was playing football and even had a stick of gum for me when I became a coach," Cole said. "Even though our schools competed against one another, Rev. Jacobs never left my mind over the years as a man who

kept the perspective to what was most important in my life: faith."

Metzger said, "He touched thousands of lives. He always let us know he cheered for us hard every game but one."

Scotland High School and Hoke County High School also tweeted their condolences to the Raider football team about Jacobs' passing.

For Denson, the conversations and prayers he'd have with Jacobs when he came to visit the coaches' offices at the school are what he said he'd miss the most.

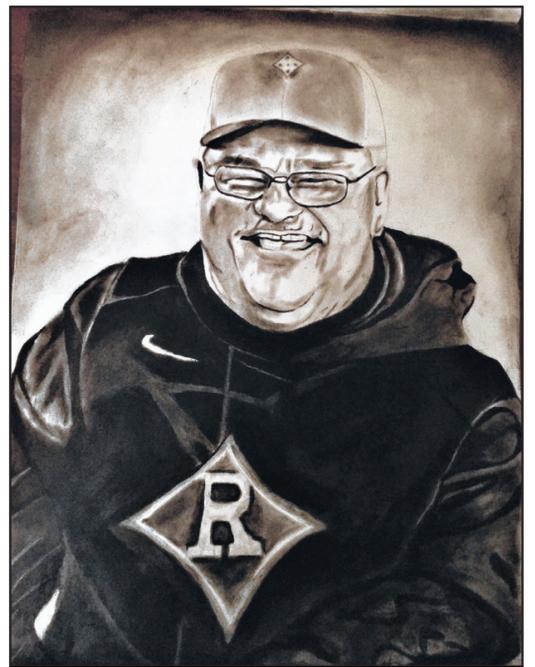
Both Till and Denson said there's been discussions amongst the team about how to honor Jacobs when the season finally rolls around. At the end of January, a stone memorial was erected and dedicated to Jacobs, at one of the entrances to the field at Raider Stadium. "1, 2, 3...Jesus" is inscribed at the bottom of the stone with a picture of Jacobs' smiling face emblazoned on the stone.

Till said he also plans to take Jacobs' green hat out on the field before every game and put it on the bench on the sideline to mark Jacob's spot, and he plans to continue Jacobs' tradition of giving gum to the officials before every game.

"He is truly an icon here in Richmond County," Denson said. "I don't think the public truly understands what all he did for RSHS athletics and just athletics here in the county. This wasn't his job, but this is what he was called to do. And he did a great job with it. He's going to be missed."

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Artwork done by Preston Coker  
 The artwork depicts Southside Freewill Baptist Church Pastor Ricky Jacobs. Jacobs, beloved by many in the Richmond County community, passed away Oct. 3, 2020 after a month-long battle with COVID-19.

**Great Job overcoming this season's challenges to all the Richmond Raiders and coaches!**

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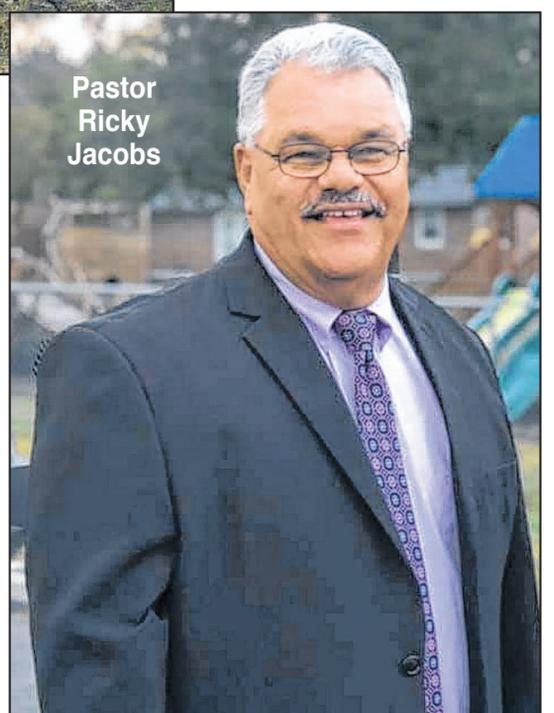


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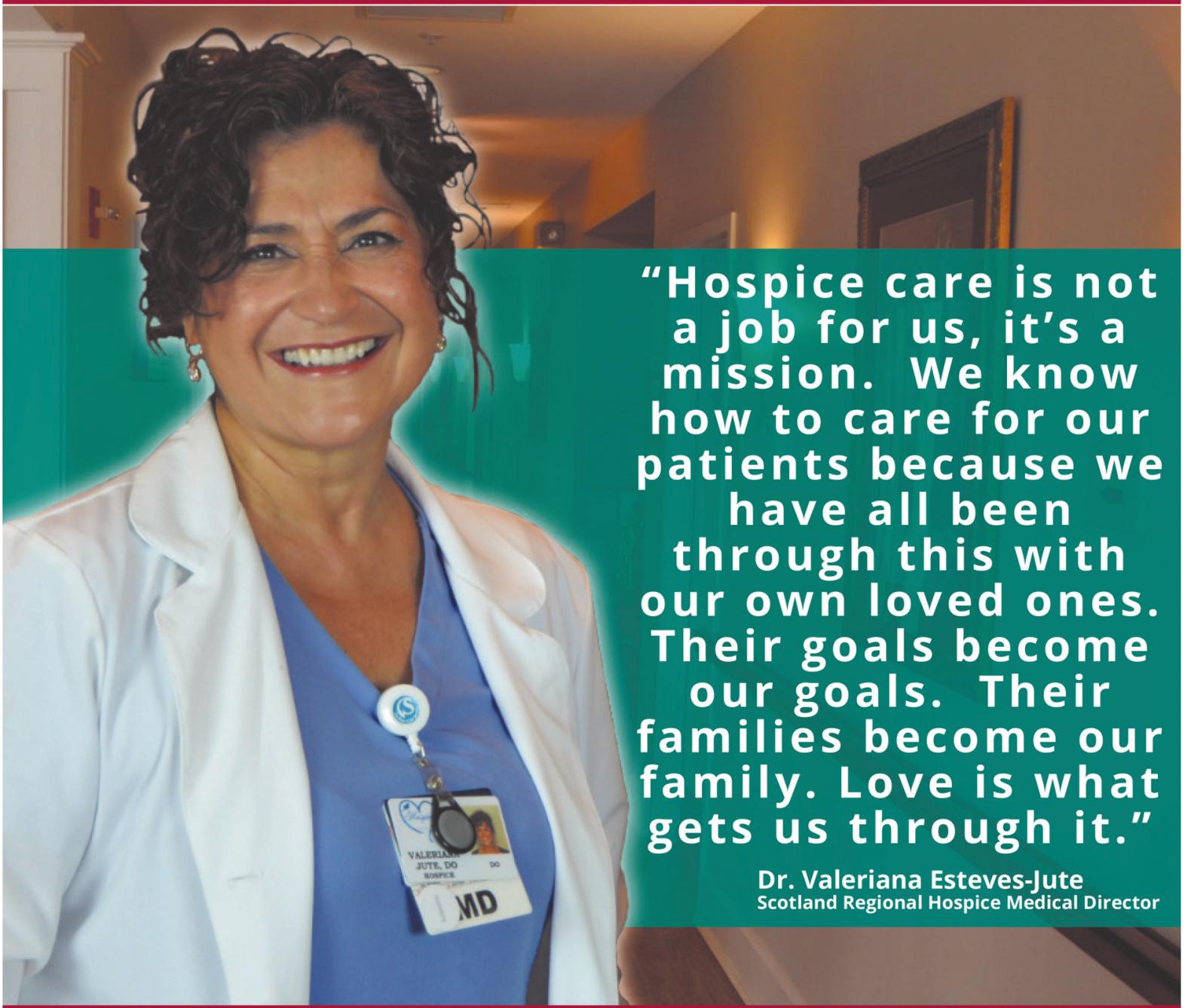
Above: Richard Allen "Ricky" Jacobs  
 Contributed Photos



Pastor Ricky Jacobs

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# Scots deal with new challenges ahead of pandemic-affected season

**Neel Madhavan**  
Staff Writer

Laurinburg — The Scotland High School varsity football team might have to wait just a little bit longer to start its season due to being quarantined, but high school football season in North Carolina has arrived nonetheless.

The Fighting Scots are coming off a 12-3 season, during which they finished third in the Sandhills Athletic Conference behind Pinecrest and defending conference champion Richmond. Scotland made it all the way to the 4A state semifinals before eventually falling to Cardinal Gibbons.

This year, with the uncertainty surrounding the season due to the pandemic, head coach Richard Bailey said preparation for the season and the season itself are a “day-to-day thing.”

“Every day has new challenges,” said head coach Richard Bailey. “More than any season we’ve ever been a part of — it’s literally plan for the day and then see what hits you the next day. I just hope we can get seven games in, anyway, anyhow that we can. We always expect that we’re going to be competitive and that we’re going to have a chance to win every Friday night. Hopefully we can chase the conference championship and chase the state championship, God willing.”

Scotland will have a new offensive coordinator at the helm calling plays this year with Will Clark. Clark graduated from Scotland in 2001 and previously served as an assistant coach on the Scots’ 2011 state championship team. Before arriving back at Scotland this year, he had served as the head coach at James Kenan High School in Warsaw, NC since 2017.

Clark said he plans to continue to build on what Bailey and the rest of the coaching staff have built offensively. He said the Scots will continue to run a spread-oriented scheme, adding that they’ll be able to scheme to run the ball and take advantage of different matchups that the defense gives them on the perimeter.

“There are a lot of similarities for the plays that we will be running, with some changes and tweaks done to them,” said starting quarterback Tyler Barfield. “We are still going to be running the RPO game as well as the passing and running game with some changes done to them.”

Barfield returns under center after throwing for 583 yards and nine touchdowns in 11 games last season.

Joining him in the Scots’ backfield are running backs senior Darrius Dockery and junior RJ Nicholson. Dockery tore his ACL early last season, but is back and fully healthy for the Scots. Nicholson had 732 rushing yards and eight touchdowns on 101 carries as a sophomore.

“COVID actually helped (Dockery) because he got another four or five months of time to heal, so he looks



The Scotland High School football team runs drills during preseason practice ahead of the upcoming season. Photos by Neel Madhavan | Laurinburg Exchange



The Scotland High School football team runs drills during preseason practice ahead of the upcoming season.



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The Scotland High School football team runs drills during preseason practice ahead of the upcoming season.

Scots' Varsity Schedule	
March 5	vs. Purnell Swett
March 12	at Hoke County
March 19	at Seventy-First
March 26	at Pinecrest
March 31	vs. Lumberton
April 5	at Richmond
April 9	vs. Jack Britt

really good and he’s ready to go,” Bailey said.

Out wide, both of Scotland’s top receivers from last year are back to assist Barfield in the Scots’ aerial attack. Seniors Mandrell Johnson and Trey Chavis combined for 45 receptions for 889 yards and 10 touchdowns. At tight end, the Scots will have a number of guys who are playing both sides of the ball, including junior Ladarius McNeill, senior Zy’Mere Reddick and senior Trey Morgan.

However, Reddick and McNeill’s primary positions lie on the defensive side of the ball. In recent years, the Scots have operated under a 4-3 base defense, but this year Reddick said they will be switching to a 3-3-5 stack.

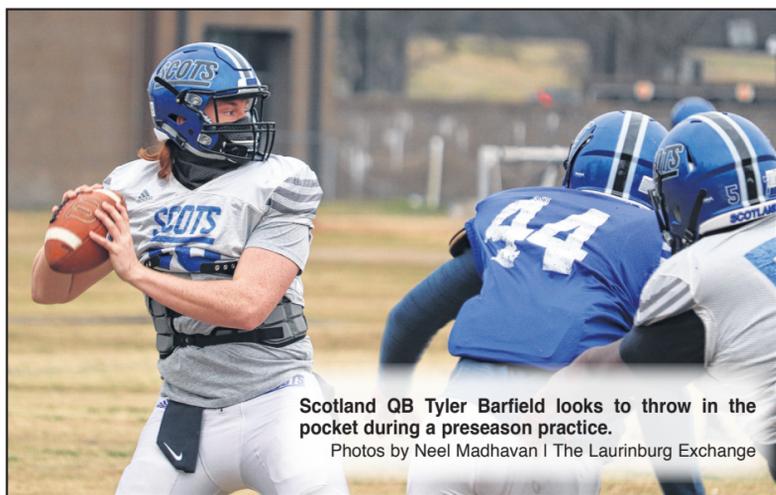
“I’ve had to take on more of a defensive role than I have in awhile,” Bailey said. “I’ve always had my hand in everything we’ve done offensively and defensively, but I’m spending my time with the defense right now. We’ll be multiple on defense — we’ll do some three-man fronts, some four-man fronts.”

Bailey added they’ve become more of a man coverage and pressure team in recent seasons.

“I don’t think that will change,” Bailey said.

Reddick has played defensive end in the past, but the defensive shift will have him playing outside linebacker with McNeill. Senior Devin Chavis, who Bailey said will be the heart and soul of the defense and has started since he was a sophomore, completes the trio at middle linebacker.

See CHALLENGES | 7



Scotland QB Tyler Barfield looks to throw in the pocket during a preseason practice. Photos by Neel Madhavan | The Laurinburg Exchange

**Neel Madhavan**  
Staff Writer

Senior quarterback Tyler Barfield has grown significantly during his time in the

Scotland High School football program. In his first two years on the varsity team as a sophomore and junior, he split snaps and playing time at the quarterback position. Now this year, Barfield will have

# Full-time starter

## QB Barfield looks to make his mark

the starting quarterback job all to himself in his final season as a Fighting Scot.

“It’s a great feeling,” Barfield said. “I have been ready for this opportunity and I’m going to make the best of it.”

Barfield said he’s really become more of a leader on the team this year and has embraced that role now that he’s a senior and finally the full-time starter.

“He’s really worked hard to position himself to have a great year,” said head coach Richard Bailey.

Even though the Scots have a new offensive coordinator in Will Clark, the offense Barfield will be running won’t differ much from what he’s used to running in the past. The Scots’ offense is largely based around a spread system with run-pass-option principles.

Barfield said the transition to working with Clark offensively has largely been seamless so far.

“He is a great coach and he came in with some great offensive plays and changes” Barfield said. “He takes the time with you to make sure you are getting what you need to know and what needs to be done. He’s been a great addition to the team and coaching staff.”

Clark said Barfield understands what they’re trying to do offensively as a program and has done well familiarizing himself with the play calls in preseason practices.

Right now, Clark added that he’s been working with Barfield on speeding up his decision making in the pocket.

“He knows the correct decisions - he’s done that well over the last two years, winning ball games as a starter,” Clark said of Barfield. “It’s just a matter of speeding up the process of making the correct decision and getting the ball to the correct person at the right time.”

Barfield will have plenty of weapons all over the field on the offensive side of the ball.

At receiver, he’ll be throwing to Mandrell Johnson and Trey Chavis.

Johnson was one of the players Barfield has shared snaps with at quarterback in past seasons. In the backfield, he’ll be handing off to Darrius Dockery and RJ Nicholson, and the Scots have a plethora of options at tight end.

“All these players are great teammates and they’re pushing others to work harder,” Barfield said. “I am looking forward to playing with all of them this year as they are great weapons on the field in different ways.”

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Scotland QB Tyler Barfield makes a throw during a drill at a preseason practice.

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# Scots adjust to playing both sides of the ball

**Neel Madhavan**  
Staff Writer

High school football often requires players to play on both sides of the ball, and this year, Scotland High School football will also have more players than usual playing both ways.

Teams have players play both ways for a combination of reasons, such as low participation numbers or player skillset versatility or adaptability. In Scotland's case, the team has fewer varsity and junior varsity players this year due to an increase in the number of players academically ineligible, due to struggles with virtual learning, and because of a couple players opting out for health and safety concerns stemming from the pandemic, according to Bailey.

Bailey also said Scotland's student numbers are down overall, which is why it will be re-classified as a 3A school starting in the 2021-2022 academic year.

"I tell people all the time, our football numbers aren't necessarily down, but the number of quality football players we have is," Bailey said. "We just don't have as big a school to draw from to get those guys. Everybody wants to wear the uniform of Scotland High School and play football, but not everyone wants to do what it takes and have the commitment level that it takes to stay on the football team."

Some of the Fighting Scots that will be playing both sides of the ball this season include, senior Zy'Mere Reddick and junior Ladarius McNeill, who will both

be playing linebacker and tight end, and senior Trey Chavis, who will play wide receiver and cornerback.

"I'm excited to see these guys because I know they're good players on one side of the ball, so I'm excited to see them play both ways," Bailey said. "While it's not great for depth. It does mean we're probably going to put 11 good football players out there as long as we can keep them healthy."

Reddick said conditioning becomes instrumentally more important when you have to play both sides of the ball because you're on the field for practically twice as long each game. McNeill said playing both ways helps him get in shape a lot faster.

"I think I do a good job of keeping myself in shape," Reddick said. "I'm a pretty long-winded guy so that helps."

One of the downfalls of players playing both ways is simply having less practice time on each side of the ball. For example, Bailey said when you have a two-hour practice, instead of practicing the full two hours at one position on one side of the ball, you spend half the practice playing one position on offense and the other half practicing at the other position on defense.

So, a player loses a significant amount of practice time being able to focus on their primary position. McNeill said he'd prefer to be able to focus on his primary position, but adds that he's always willing to do what he has to do that's best for the team.

"When you start playing kids both ways, you have to become a little more simplistic than maybe you'd like to be," Bailey said,



A Scotland football player runs after catching a pass during a preseason practice.

Neel Madhavan | Laurinburg Exchange

"and you don't get as many reps as you'd like to get with the kids."

However, playing both ways can also be helpful to a player and advantageous for a team. The skillsets a player possesses playing one position can often help translate to helping them succeed at a position on the opposite side of the ball.

Chavis' primary position is receiver, so his hands and his understanding of the routes receivers run will help him defend opposing receivers as a cornerback.

"That's been a great advantage for Trey," Bailey said. "I hate to say it but historically we haven't been good at intercepting passes in the secondary. Well now that we have a wide out that's out there playing DB, we'll probably get more turnovers with him playing corner."

"Being primarily a defender," Reddick said, "it helps because I know what certain defenses are set up to do so it makes doing

my job on offense that much easier."

Reddick said the additional logistics involved with playing both ways is simpler than it might seem.

"It's mainly just learning where to line up and the different signals for offense because on defense it's pretty much everybody running the same coverage and what the defensive front is doing," Reddick said. "On offense it's more broken down because you have more people doing different things, but it's all fun when you love the game like I do and with the great coaching staff we have it makes it a lot easier on me."

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## Challenges

From page 6

Reddick led the team in tackles for loss with 10.0 last season, while McNeill had 80 tackles and averaged 5.7 per game and Chavis had 51 tackles a year ago.

The 3-3-5 allows the Scots to disguise their blitzes and where they bring pressure from the second level.

"I started getting a lot of double teams and stuff like that toward the end of the year coming from defensive end," Reddick said, "and now I'm coming from

all different angles at linebacker, so that should help me be freed up more."

Reddick said most of the secondary returns this season, and added that, even though the linemen are young, he has high expectations for them and the rest of the defense.

"We want to be known as one of the best defensive units in the state," Reddick said. "I think the past two years I've been playing varsity, we've been pretty well respected around the state, but you have to go out and earn that respect every week."

There's been no shortage of changes this season brought on by the pandemic, including the shortened season, practice

time limitations, and the mask mandate during practices and games.

With the Scots in quarantine until at least March 1, they won't play Week 1. The conference athletic directors have adjusted the schedules to accommodate Scotland, Lumberton and Purnell Swett's quarantines, and the Scots' new schedule has them opening at home against Purnell Swett on March 5, with the rivalry game at Richmond being postponed to April 5.

But, Bailey said he hopes the Scots can use this time off from quarantine to reflect on the importance of the safety guidelines and precautions so they can return to practice at the end of the quarantine and

begin their season accordingly.

"I told our players," Bailey said, "we need to treat every day like it could be our last day. All we can continue to do is do the best we can as coaches and players and emphasize the protocols. Our fans don't want to hear that, our fans think we're going to win and that's what they expect to happen, and I do too. I fully expect this to be a very competitive football team."

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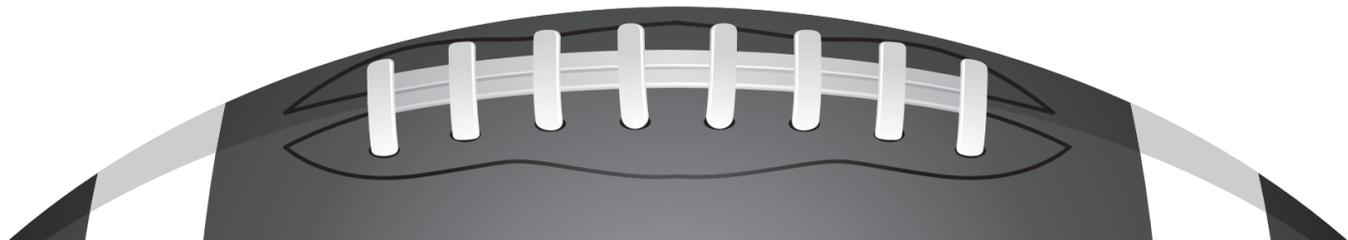
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## 2021 Scotland High School Varsity Football Roster

# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade	# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade	# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade
2 Darrius Dockery	5'9	180	RB	12	25 Trey Chavis	6'1	180	WR	12	74 Ricky Swindell	6'	290	DL	10
3 Carter Revelle	6'2	180	QB	9	31 Kobe McLaurin	6'	165	DB	12	77 Isaiah Scott	6'5	315	OL	11
4 Izeem Graham	6'1	170	WR	10	33 Wisdom Armstrong	6'3	175	LB/DB	11	80 Myles Byrd	5'9	155	H	11
5 Zymere Reddick	6'3	205	LB	12	35 Zion John	5'9	200	LB	11	81 James Watts	6'	175	WR	11
6 Mandrell Johnson	6'2	175	WR	12	36 Trey Morgan	6'	235	FB/DL	12	82 Bryant Grubbs	5'10	200	P	11
7 RJ Nicholson	5'10	195	RB	11	41 Nick Henderson	6'	190	LB	11	83 Demarion Davis	6'2	180	WR	10
8 Jahari Brown	5'10	170	DB	10	42 Hunter Callahan	6'2	230	DE	11	84 Cayden Scott	5'9	155	WR	11
9 Messiah Revels	5'11	185	LB	11	43 Jordan Johnson	5'11	180	LB	11					
10 Christian Cole	5'9	160	K/WR	11	44 Nick Hough	6'3	230	DE	11					
11 Patrick Primus	5'9	155	RB/DB	10	45 Devin Chavis	5'10	215	LB	12					
12 Tyler Barfield	6'2	205	QB	12	53 Zaiyyon Carmichael	6'3	265	OL	12					
14 Ricky Driggers	6'2	170	WR	11	55 Micah Clark	6'	240	OL	10					
15 JJ McLean	5'9	160	DB	12	57 Amari Chance	6'1	290	OL	10					
20 Ja'Qule Parker	5'9	165	DB	12	65 Ethan Best	6'5	275	OL	12					
21 Jhi'Quez Dockery	5'10	205	DB	11	67 Darreus McDougald	6'4	280	OL/DL	9					
22 Ashton Hammonds	5'9	160	WR	11	69 Jamie Johnson	5'8	275	OL	10					
23 Ladarius McNeill	6'2	205	LB	11	71 Kaleb Clay	6'3	275	OL	12					
24 Adonis Leak	5'9	165	DB	11	72 Tyleak Revels	6'2	270	OL	11					

Head coach — Richard Bailey  
 Assistant Coaches — Paul Adams, Bradley Baines, Scott Barbour, Will Clark, Melvin Davis, Dominique Green, Sam Grooms, Charles Gunnings, Thomas Havener, Jay McLaurin, Justin McLean, Megil McLean, John Parker, Michael Sellers, Dawson Shelley



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# Bearcats turn to seniors after year-long football drought

Liz O'Connell  
Staff Writer

WADESBORO — The Anson High School Bearcats finally return to the field after not playing a game since 2019.

The pandemic shook up the sports world and trickled down to the high school level, leaving many teams without practice until the fall of 2020. For Anson, it wasn't until early February that the team start playing contact football.

The Bearcats started practicing in the fall once the Anson County School Board approved of sports returning. This meant football could start practicing under the North Carolina High School Athletic Association guidelines.

"I think it was the right decision because these kids and their safety comes first with me," said head coach Ralph Jackson. "Now that we are going to play, it is my job and my coaching staff's job for us to play football."

Players returned eagerly to the field with masks on and listened to coaches following a social distancing protocol. Jackson said unlike other teams, Anson only started playing contact football on Feb. 13, which could potentially put Anson at a disadvantage.

But to better prepare for the first game of the season, the Bearcats played an hour scrimmage against Albemarle High School on Feb. 19. In the mud pits of the practice field, Anson players were able to get a better feel for a game-like situation.

Referees went over some rules before the two teams kicked off, reminding players to keep masks on at all times.

"Am I happy with what I've seen? No, I'm not," Jackson said after the scrimmage. "But I know that we're going to get better in what we do...I saw great effort. I saw guys really getting after it, those are things we want to see and what I need to see from my guys."

The scrimmage gave his players the chance to get out frustrations and the opportunity to take real hits. Players have to learn how to channel those frustrations, emotions and thoughts during a game, Jackson said, and this scrimmage allowed the coaching staff to help players through those feelings on and off the field.

"We're trying to make these guys understand life is a lot bigger than football," Jackson said. "What you take from football can make life better."

Jackson wants his players to stay focused this season. If players do their job consistently, then everyone else's jobs will be easier. He is turning his focus to some of the seniors for leadership and keeping the focus on, despite the craziness of the world off the field.

Jackson expects Jadynd Dickens, Trey Davis, Shammond Ingram, Darren Harrington, Ronald Capel, Koydarius Burns and Donte Marsh to step up and have a big season.

"Those guys there, they're most of our seniors, I know for a fact those guys have been playing for at least the past three seasons with us so I'm definitely excited for them," Jackson said. "Even through the pandemic they'll find ways to work out and do things as far as trying to become a better athlete and better person."



Defense comes out strong during a scrimmage game, knocking the Albemarle quarterback to the ground.

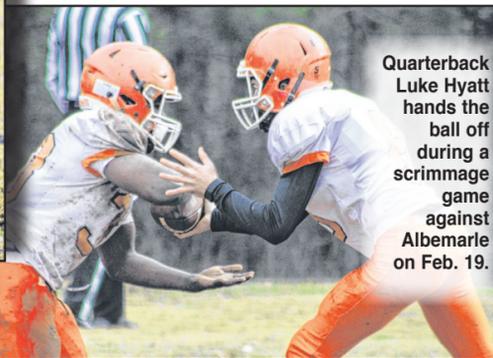
Photos by Liz O'Connell | Anson Record



Anson running back breaks a tackle from Albemarle during an hour-long scrimmage game on Feb. 19.



Bearcats defense braces the mud during a scrimmage against Albemarle on Feb. 19.



Quarterback Luke Hyatt hands the ball off during a scrimmage game against Albemarle on Feb. 19.

Jackson is excited for Ingram to return after playing on the varsity basketball team the past couple months.

The Bearcats finally return under the lights on Feb. 25 as they face Clinton High School.

"Clinton is a real good football team," Jackson said. "They went to the fourth round in playoffs last year. It will be a juggernaut, but we need those type of things. If we're going to get better, we need to play better teams."

To face Clinton, Anson needs to play assignment football, according to Jackson. It circles back to keeping his team focused on their roles of each position. If

every player does his job consistently, the team will have a chance to win games.

"I think we have the chance to be very competitive," the coach said. "But we're going to need more time in terms of what we're doing in practice and getting skills down."

Reach Liz O'Connell at 704-994-5471 or at eoconnell@ansonrecord. Follow on Twitter at @TheAnsonRecord.

## Bearcats' Varsity Schedule

- Feb. 25 vs. Clinton
- March 5 at Goldsboro
- March 12 at Montgomery Central
- March 19 vs. Mt. Pleasant
- March 26 vs. CATA
- April 1 at West Stanly
- April 9 at Forest Hills

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## Senior Dickens balances football, work, hobbies

Liz O'Connell  
Staff Writer

WADESBORO — An Anson High School senior football standout is returning to the field after working towards perfection every single day since March 13.

Jadynd Dickens did not let the pause of the world keep him from continuing to get better at football. Since last March, Dickens and other players on the Anson football team worked out daily to better prepare for an unusual season.

Mondays are usually field work practice, Tuesdays are in the gym and Wednesdays are pool workouts. Every day includes a full body workout, no matter the location, according to Dickens.

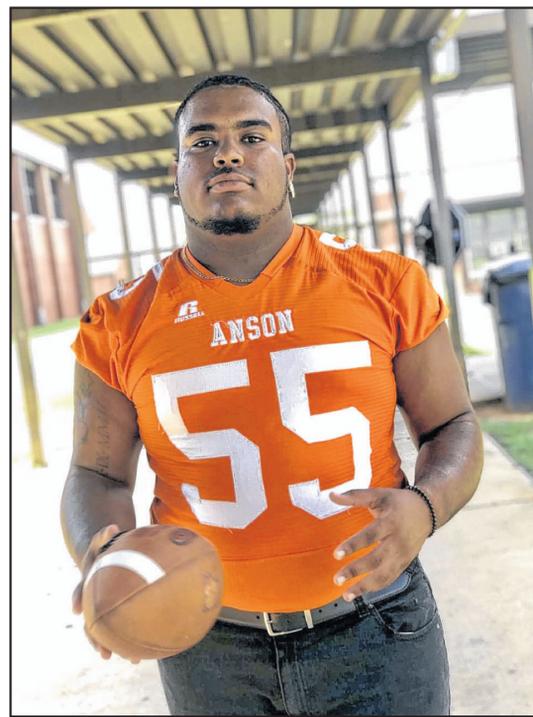
"I've been working out, me and Coach Jackson's son, everyday working out," Dickens said. "Working, after we get done working a job, we go workout at schools, at different gyms, every day non-stop since that day. That will probably pay off with me and some of the other guys with us."

Dickens felt lost in the never-ending cycle with no finish line of when the pandemic would be over. The dedication to keep going dropped. College scholarship offers did not seem to come his way and he was unsure of his next steps. Luckily, football got the green light to return.

But when the first offer did finally come, Dickens continued to push forward. Dickens has since received several offers, but he is still weighing out his options with the hopes of more offers to come as the season kicks off.

"(Coming back) felt like a relief," Dickens said. "It's like when Christmas finally comes around. It's something I was looking forward to."

Dickens started playing football in



Senior Jadynd Dickens returns to the field for Anson on Feb. 26 against Clinton.

Contributed Photo

seventh grade. He admits that basketball was the first sport that sparked his interest, but he was too physical. His father suggested to try out for the football team.

"I didn't like it then because it was too much conditioning," Dickens said. "But then I just stuck with it. I felt like this is where I could get physical."

He quickly became a strong player and was invited to an All-Star game in Myrtle Beach, S.C. during the winter of his eighth grade year. Dickens was recommended and then invited to participate in an All-American game with players his same age from around the country.

These players formed teams, practiced for a week and then competed in games.

"I was kind of nervous going," Dickens said. "I felt like I had something to prove coming from little ol' Anson."

Dickens definitely proved his worth as he secured the MVP award.

## 2021 Anson High School Varsity Football Roster

# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade	# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade	# Name	Ht	Wt	Pos	Grade
1 Donte Marsh	6'0	185	WR/DB	12	15 Joseph Merritt	6'1	205	DL/TE	10	64 Kaleb Wright	6'0	260	OL/DL	11
2 Ranes Little	6'0	160	WR/DB	12	17 Koydarius Burns	5'9	175	WR/DB	12	68 Trey Davis	6'1	260	OL/DL	11
3 Darren Harrington	6'0	210	ATH	12	18 Ronald Capel	5'8	185	LB/RB	12	78 Austin Burns	6'2	330	OL/DL	12
4 Ladavien Simon	6'1	185	QB/DB	12	21 Deondre Crowder	5'8	200	LB/RB	11					
6 Sam Ingram	6'2	185	WR/DB	12	25 Shammond Ingram	5'9	185	ATH	12					
7 Jacob Lomax	5'8	160	WR/DB	10	31 Justin Ledbetter	5'8	170	K	12					
8 Luke Hyatt	5'9	160	QB	9	33 Contavious Little	5'7	190	RB/DL	10					
9 Kobe Teal	6'1	175	WR/DB	12	50 Kole Dutton	5'7	210	LB/OL	10					
10 Joshua Lomax	5'9	160	WR/DB	10	51 Jordan Liles	6'2	215	OL/DL	11					
11 Dexter Jones	5'10	170	WR/DB	11	54 Cencere Garris	5'10	230	OL/DL	12					
12 Tristan Rivers	5'8	185	LB	11	55 Jadyndy Dickens	5'11	290	OL/DL	12					
14 Demetri Clark	6'1	200	WR/DB	11	62 Ashton Jones	6'0	235	OL/DL	11					

Head Coach — Ralph Jackson  
 Assistant Head Coaches — Landon Allen (DC), Travis Ridenhour (OC), Quan Sturdivant (QB), Kellan Rankin (LB), Nelson Rushin (OL), Jeremy Kendall (TE), Jeremy Chandler (DB), Darnell Almond (ST), Steve Adams (Compliance)

### Dickens

From page 10

His experience at the all-star games allowed him to quickly transition to the high school level as he was exposed to more speed and more competitive players.

“Coming from middle school into high school, you got to be more than average to get your name out there,” Dickens said. “It just showed me I need to work harder and play smarter to reach my goals I’m trying to get to.”

His freshman year, Dickens played as a “quarter,” which means he played for both junior varsity and varsity. Although he did not get much time playing for varsity, the experience allowed him to play at a higher level.

Dickens since has grown into a leader on the team. He plays on both sides of the ball, but his favorite position is at center.

“I’m not very sure on how we will be as a team,” Dickens said. “We have all went through things since COVID hit and it’s been hard in different ways. We all lost family members and friends.”

Even through the roller coaster year, Dickens stays focused on reaching his goal of playing college football. On top of his daily workouts and school work, he maintains a job and creates graphics for Anson schools.

Throughout the summer, Dickens worked with Coach Jackson on



Jadyndy Dickens suits up for his senior season on Friday, Feb. 26 against Clinton.

Contributed Photo

landscaping, moving and cleaning. Then he started working at Food Lion at the end of the summer, which is where he still works in between school, practices and graphic designing.

“I actually do all of Anson graphics,” Dickens said. “For the past year or three, I’ve been doing graphics on t-shirts and everything. For the whole school, every sport and anything they need. They just tell me and I’ll get to it. I’ll even do specific players.”

Dickens got interested in graphics

from photography. He always liked taking pictures and the art of a picture. He found graphic designing went hand-in-hand with his photography interest. Next, Dickens wants to learn cartooning and video editing.

He started taking photos for the Carolina Stars, a 7-on-7 football travel organization. Dickens even traveled to Florida, Atlanta and Myrtle Beach with

the team. Then in his multimedia class, he would take those photos and edit into artwork. These projects cultivated his hobby and now he hopes to major in graphic designing.

“Every visit or offer that was made, when I go to the school, I let them know that if they do jobs or internships that I’d like to work for the media team,” Dickens said. “If I can go to the school and study (graphic design), then I can actually put it to use and get money off the team I’m playing for. It could be an easy lifestyle.”

Dickens would like to work for companies in the graphics department, while still maintaining his own business, which he already started. His business, 5fiveproductions, is not an official business yet, but Dickens already started an Instagram account to post some of his work.

He’ll have to put his projects on the back burner as the Bearcats season opener is on Feb. 26 against Clinton. Even through a difficult 12 months, Dickens is ready to come out and play. He overcame giving up and he believes his better days are coming.

“The number one thing I can say I’m excited for is having one more round,” Dickens said. “One more time to play ball with some of the boys I might never see again.”

Reach Liz O’Connell at 704-994-5471 or at eoconnell@ansonrecord.com. Follow on Twitter at @TheAnsonRecord.

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We also know this football season will look a little different but we are very proud to have our hometown team back under the Friday night lights.



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