

THE SOUTHERN SPORTS EDITION

August 2026 Edition

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL EDITION



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Glynn Academy

Sean Green
Camden County

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Frederica Academy

Bishop
MEDIA SPORTS
NETWORK

Photos By Michael Brinson

TIME FOR FOOTBALL



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The Southern Sports Edition was created to offer sports opinions from a southern perspective. The Southern Sports Edition offers some of the top sports minds and opinions from around the South. From coverage on High School Football to a beat on the Atlanta Braves, the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets, SEC, ACC and all southern sports with actual southern opinions. The Southern Sports Edition is currently distributed all across Southeast Georgia and growing everyday.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW



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BRUNSWICK HIGH

Pillaging Pirates by Jason Bishop

The Brunswick High Pirates had their 2025 season end at the hands of the Gainesville Red Elephants in the second round of the GHSA playoffs.

Last season ended in controversy as the Pirates and Red Elephants had the game called early due to benches clearing brawl that made national headlines.

Despite the controversy BHS enters the 2026 season coming off of a 9-3 season and a region title.

They also come into 2026 as a team in transition. Gone are record-setting QB Grant Moore and 4-star TE Heze Kent; 2 vital cogs in the Pirates prolific offense from last year that bludgeoned defenses all season long.

Also gone is former Head Coach Garrett Grady who is now coaching in Douglas with the Coffee County Trojans.

Enter Dr. Byron Slack to take over as the Pirates head man. Slack spent several years on the Camden County staff during the championship years and comes over from Cook County after spending 4 seasons as Head Coach with the Hornets.

Slack will be an emphasis on

team discipline and bring out the best in the Pirates on defense; an area that has been inconsistent for the Pirates for over a decade.

Despite losing key cogs on offense BHS does return some key playmakers on offense. Most notably running backs Nigel Gardner, Josiah Gibbons and WR Waseem Murray.

Both Gardner and Gibbons rushed for over 1,000 yards and combined for almost 30 touchdowns last season.

Murray was the Pirates best playmaker in open space and was dangerous every time he got the ball in his hands. Murray had 700 all-purpose yards and 5 touchdowns.

At QB the Pirates will either have senior Keegan Walker or junior Eli Overton under center.

BHS will move up from 5A to 6A and play in Region 1-6A with Glynn Academy, Effingham, South Effingham, Bradwell Institute, Grovetown, Greenbriar and Lakeside.

Brunswick will kick off the season on August 21st against Camden 'Between The Bricks' at Glynn County Stadium.

The Pirates will take to the road the week after that to take on

Groves. BHS gets a bye the following week and then return home in week 4 to take on national power Grayson at Glynn County Stadium.

Region play starts for the Pirates on September 18th against Grovetown up in Augusta.

BHS then hosts Greenbriar and then travels to Hinesville to square off with Bradwell on October 2nd.

Brunswick High will then take a bye to get ready for the City Championship game against the Glynn Academy Red Terrors on October 16. This game will go a long way in determining who will win the region.

Technically the Pirates will be the home team against Terrors and will be the first of three consecutive home games; the other two will be against South Effingham and Effingham.

Brunswick will close the regular season against Lakeside on the road in Augusta.

I am predicting the Pirates will be serious contenders to win the region. In my opinion who ever wins the City Championship Game will also hoist the region championship trophy at season's end.

BRUNSWICK HIGH



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 vs Camden County

8/28 @ Groves

9/4 Bye

9/11 vs Grayson

9/18 @ Grovetown

9/25 vs Greenbrier

10/2 @ Bradwell

10/9 Bye

10/16 vs Glynn Academy

10/23 @ South Effingham

10/30 vs Effingham County

11/6 @ Lakeside



GLYNN ACADEMY

Terror-izing by Garrison Ryfun

Glynn Academy enters the 2026 season looking to make the playoffs for the 18th year in a row and the 13th time under current head coach Rocky Hidalgo.

Last season, Glynn finished 6-5 overall and 5-3 in Region 1-5A, finishing 4th before falling in the 1st round of the 5A playoffs to Jackson County.

This year, the Red Terrors move up to Class 6A as the GHSA returns to a 7-classification system for the first time since 2023.

Despite the change, Glynn will see many familiar opponents, with Brunswick, Bradwell Institute, Effingham County, South Effingham, Lakeside-Evans and Greenbrier remaining on the region schedule. Grovetown joins the region, while Statesboro and Evans stay in 5A.

With the GHSA's new Post Season Ranking system, it may not be as easy to sneak in the playoffs as a four seed in the region.

The new Post Season Ranking Formula weighs a team's winning percentage at 35%, its opponents' winning percentage at 35% and its opponents' opponents' winning percentage at 30%. Region champions will still receive

favorable treatment, but the remaining playoff spots will depend more heavily on overall record and strength of schedule.

On the field, the biggest storyline will be the second season of the flexbone offense.

The flexbone was introduced at Glynn Academy last year and immediately produced points. The Terrors averaged 29.6 points per game, the 8th-best points per game in school history and the 2nd-highest during Hidalgo's tenure.

Returning to command that offense is rising junior quarterback Max Noonan, who missed much of spring practice while helping Glynn Academy's baseball team make a deep playoff run. Noonan led the Terrors in rushing yards and touchdowns last season while quickly picking up the new offense.

Replacing the two-headed attack of Da'sean Howard and DJ Creighton at fullback will be one of the questions on offense for the Terrors. The Terrors have several potential options at the position, including Caiden Robinson, standout linebacker Cooper Reiss and backup quarterback Ayden Wilson, who could all see carries in the backfield.

The Terrors will have only three games to settle on their new-look backfield before region play begins,

and even with the new seeding formula region play is still very important for the playoffs.

After making three trips to the Augusta area for region games last season, the Terrors will thankfully make the journey only twice this year to face Lakeside-Evans and Greenbrier.

The path to the region championship has typically run through some combination of Brunswick, Effingham County, and Glynn Academy in recent years.

That is unlikely to change despite coaching changes and excellent talent that graduated for all 3 schools last year.

Brunswick still boasts an explosive backfield with Josiah Gibbons and Nigel Gardner at running back, while Effingham should continue an impressive passing game with standout wide receiver Trayvis Hunter returning on the outside.

The outlook for the Terrors' 2026 season is very optimistic. With another year in the flexbone offense and several key contributors returning on both sides of the ball, Glynn should once again compete near the top of the region and put itself in position to extend its playoff streak to 18 consecutive seasons.

GLYNN ACADEMY



2026 SCHEDULE

8/20 @ Calvary Day

8/28 @ Camden County

9/4 vs Savannah Christian

9/11 Bye

9/18 vs Bradwell

9/25 @ Lakeside

10/2 vs Effingham County

10/9 Bye

10/16 @ Brunswick

10/23 @ Greenbrier

10/30 @ South Effingham

11/6 vs Grovetown



CAMDEN COUNTY

Cats On The Prowl by Michael Spiers

There is something different in the air around Chris Gilman Stadium.

Maybe it is the arrival of a new head coach. Maybe it is the return of August football in Kingsland. Or maybe it is simply the belief that Camden County football is ready to begin writing its next great chapter. Whatever it is, the 2026 season feels important.

The Wildcats enter the year under first-year head coach Tucker Pruitt, a proven winner who brings a championship resume and a clear vision to Camden County.

Pruitt won big at Fitzgerald, captured a state championship, took teams deep into the playoffs, and spent last season leading Appling County to a region title.

Now, he steps into one of Georgia's most tradition-rich programs with the task of restoring Camden to consistent statewide relevance.

That journey will not come with an easy schedule.

After a preseason scrimmage against Florida power The Bolles School on August 14, the Wildcats open the regular season at home against Brunswick on August 21. The Pirates went 9-3 last season and reached the playoffs before falling to Gainesville, giving Camden an immediate test against a strong coastal opponent.

One week later, Glynn Academy comes to Kingsland. The two programs have not met in several years, adding a little

extra intrigue to a rivalry matchup that once carried plenty of familiarity. Glynn finished 6-5 last season, but records rarely matter much when old rivals get back together.

September will reveal even more about Camden's toughness.

The Wildcats travel to Benedictine on September 4 to face a program that went 11-3 last season, won the Region 1-4A championship and came within one play of a state title, falling 42-39 to Creekside in the championship game. That matchup may be one of the best non-region measuring sticks on the entire schedule.

Camden then returns home for three straight games against Florida opponents. Amos P. Godby visits on September 11 after a 5-7 season in which it still finished second in its district. Ed White follows on September 18 after going 9-3 and winning its district. On September 25, Camden hosts West Broward, a team the Wildcats beat 32-13 last season, but one that finished 12-3 and should arrive looking for payback.

By the time Camden reaches its October 2 bye week, Pruitt and his staff should have a clear picture of where the Wildcats stand.

Then comes the gauntlet of play in the newly re-established Region 1-7A.

There may not be a tougher four-game stretch in Georgia high school football. Camden opens region play October 9 at Lowndes, last year's region champion. The

Vikings went 10-2 before falling to North Gwinnett in the second round.

Richmond Hill comes to Chris Gilman Stadium on October 16 after finishing 6-5 and reaching the playoffs. Then Camden travels to Valdosta on October 23 to face a Wildcats team that went 12-2, finished second in the region and reached the quarterfinals before losing to Buford.

The regular season closes October 30 at home against Colquitt County, another heavyweight that went 9-3 last season and advanced to the second round before falling to Grayson.

In other words, nothing will be handed to Camden County. But maybe that is exactly the point.

Pruitt has emphasized discipline, physicality, accountability and toughness since arriving in Kingsland. With veteran defensive coordinator Alan Rodemaker joining the staff and transfer quarterback Xavier Collins adding experience to the offense, the Wildcats have reasons for optimism.

The road back will be demanding, but Camden County has never been a program built on shortcuts. This is a place where expectations are earned under the lights, in the weight room and through the grind of Friday nights.

The 2026 season is more than a schedule. It is the beginning of a new era. And in Camden County, new eras still come with old expectations.

CAMDEN COUNTY



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 @ Brunswick

8/28 vs Glynn Academy

9/4 @ Benedictine

9/11 vs Godby

9/18 vs Ed White

9/25 vs West Broward

10/2 Bye

10/9 @ Lowndes

10/16 vs Richmond Hill

10/23 @ Valdosta

10/30 vs Colquitt County



FREDERICA ACADEMY

Chinks In The Armor? by Jeff Duke

When the 2025 Frederica Knights season ended in the state playoff semifinal round, the outlook for the future was bright regardless of the most recent game.

Unfortunately, the offseason between 2025 and 2026 was not kind. Several departures have taken the Knights from state title contenders to where some are questioning whether they will even make the playoffs.

Those people have obviously never dealt with Coach Brandon Derrick.

Known for "doing more with less" on the gridiron, Coach Derrick has got his work cut out for him as he enters his fourteenth season at the helm. Instead of the nine returning starters from the 2025 campaign they were expecting, Frederica will instead see five starters return. The four lost starters are significant, most notably starting QB/FS Stanton Beverly.

"(Stanton)'s gonna go to Valwood. So, yeah, so I lost a two year starter, all state quarterback and free safety."

These will be uncharted waters for the coach, who has never had to face a former player on the field of play. Adding insult to injury, reports out of Hahaira are that Beverly will be the starting QB for the team when the Knights come calling on September 3rd.

At the end of the day, this means

that two-year backup Braxton Sykes moves into the QB1 role a year ahead of schedule.

Entering his Junior year, Sykes was competent in the QB role when called into action in 2025, but was showing significant strides as a Wide Receiver in the meantime. This summer, his primary focus has been travel baseball, but has been all-in on the QB role while at practice.

"We will be more pass oriented than we have been in the past," says Coach Derrick. "with Stanton we could run the option. Braxton, he's more pass oriented. He'll have to run some and do a lot of RPO stuff, but I think he's a solid player. He does a good job, he's got a pretty good understanding of what we're doing. It's gonna be the decision making. The more he practices, the more he plays, the faster his decisions will be made, he'll make better decisions."

Those decisions will have to be made without two offensive weapons that his predecessor had; TE JC Wessel and WR Jayden Gibson who have left the team for different reasons.

Gibson has moved to the Atlanta area and will not be available for what should have been his senior season with Frederica.

Wessel, on the other hand, made a decision for what his family considers a better option for his future - transferring to Bolles Academy in Jacksonville, Florida.

"(JC and his dad) think he'll be

coached up better by one of the tight end coaches down there that they've brought in." Several Bolles players are being recruited by D1 NCAA programs.

In addition to these losses on offense, DE Eric Alford also is no longer with the Frederica Academy Knights.

While roster depth is always an issue with Frederica (they will start 2026 with 27 players), this year's squad will still be heavy on the upperclassmen.

OLB Eli Middleton and DE Clay Sproule will lead the class of eight seniors that will include stars RB Jordyn Rollins and CB/WR Jaylen Baldwin. Newcomer to the Senior class will be Sal Vinci who will be taking over placekicking duties from the recently graduated Mary Ford Fitzjurls.

In addition to the upperclassmen, look for freshmen WR/DB Henry Dorminy and DE/OL Hayes Brock to make immediate contributions.

Coach Derrick knows it won't be easy, but honestly it never is in the GIAA.

"We're going to put the best product we can on the field. We're planning a really tough schedule. Hopefully our seniors, like I tell them every year, grab the steering wheel and drive the bus. I drive the bus, it's bumpy. You drive the bus, it's a lot better."

The 2026 Frederica Knights season kicks off August 14th at home against Bethesda Academy.

FREDERICA ACADEMY 2026 SCHEDULE

8/14 vs Bethesda Academy 9/25 Bye

8/21 @ Pinewood

10/2 @ Stratford Academy

8/28 vs Deerfield-Windsor

10/9 vs St. Andrews

9/3 @ Valwood

10/16 @ Savannah Country Day

9/11 @ Charlton County

10/23 @ Bulloch Academy

9/18 vs First Presbyterian Day

On a Tear

Understanding the most common knee injuries and how to treat them

You don't have to be an NFL powerhouse or a world-renowned soccer star to face a knee injury. In fact, athletes at all levels—from recreational players to professional competitors—have faced knee pain and wondered if their time on the field or the court has ended. It makes sense, as the knee is one of the body's most essential structures and allows players to do what they do best.

"The knee is the largest joint in the body, and it makes movement possible," explains Beau Sasser, MD, a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon with Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery and medical director of the sports medicine program at the Southeast Georgia Health System Brunswick Campus. "The knee also stabilizes your body and absorbs shock as you perform. The more stress it's put under, the more opportunity there is for an injury to occur."

Whatever sport you play, if you experience knee pain, you should not ignore it. The following are the two most common knee tears faced by athletes and require specific treatment to get you back on your feet.

ACL Tear

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is the ligament that connects the femur (thigh bone) to the tibia (shin bone). It's job is to stabilize the knee joint, allowing for forward motion and rotation of the leg. An ACL tear typically happens when you stop suddenly, change direction unexpectedly or land a jump in an awkward way. The injury often comes with a "popping" sound and swells very quickly—and soon you'll find it nearly impossible to put weight on your knee.

"An ACL tear typically is seen in athletes who play soccer, basketball or football. Skiers are also at high risk for ACL injuries," Dr. Sasser says. "These sports require fast pivoting, cutting and deceleration. However, nearly 70% of cases are non-contact injuries, meaning that there was no direct impact that caused the tear. And female athletes are between two and eight times more likely to suffer a non-contact ACL tear thanks to biomechanical and hormonal factors. Fortunately, thanks to modern sports medicine, an ACL tear is not a career-ending injury."

The first step in treating an ACL tear is R.I.C.E. (rest, ice, compression, elevation). Medications like ibuprofen or naproxen, as well as bracing the knee, can help. More severe pain may require the use of opioids or narcotics under the close supervision of your doctor. Physical therapy (PT) often will be started within weeks after an injury—often in preparation for reconstructive surgery, which creates a new ligament. A phased rehabilitation plan after surgery can get you back to practice and competition, but it may take between six and 12 months to be in top form again depending on the severity of the injury.

Meniscus Tear

Cushioning both the femur and the tibia is the meniscus. This cartilage sits between the two bones, acting as a shock absorber, spreading weight evenly and protecting the joint. Dr. Sasser notes, "A meniscus tear is very common in athletes and usually happens when your knee twists while your foot is planted. The quick and unexpected change of direction is the culprit. The good news is that a meniscus tear is usually less serious than an ACL tear."

Again, soccer, football and basketball players are very susceptible to meniscus tears. Because this injury also can be the result of deep bending or squatting, baseball players—particularly catchers—and weightlifters are also at risk. Even long-distance runners can experience meniscus tears after years of wear and tear. Unlike an ACL tear, symptoms often develop more gradually. Swelling could take hours or days to appear, and you may not realize you're hurt because you can still walk, albeit with some discomfort. You also may notice—and unintentionally disregard—a locking sensation or clicking in your knee.

R.I.C.E., medication and the use of a brace are at the top of a conservative treatment plan for a meniscus tear. According to Dr. Sasser, PT will also be at the forefront of that plan to help strengthen the muscles around the knee joint; many tears actually can heal in a few weeks without surgery. However, if your knee locks or does not get better with PT over time, an orthopaedic surgeon can perform minimally invasive arthroscopy to stitch the torn cartilage back together or remove the damaged portion of the meniscus. A full recovery after surgery can take from several weeks to several months.

Whatever you face, the key is to find a physician who can identify the issue. "A physical exam followed by an MRI can provide the information you need to get started on the road to recovery," says Dr. Sasser. "Just remember that if you're in a lot of pain, have excessive swelling or cannot bear weight at all, see a doctor as quickly as possible. The longer you wait, the more you risk permanent damage to your knee."



Beau Sasser, MD

A board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, Dr. Sasser specializes in sports medicine and also serves as medical director of the Southeast Georgia Health System Sports Medicine Program.

Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery has offices in Brunswick, St. Simons Island and St. Marys.

To make an appointment with Dr. Sasser, call 912-466-7340.



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MCINTOSH COUNTY ACADEMY

Swash-Buc-Lers by Jason Bishop

Coach Warren Bradley enters his 8th season as the McIntosh County Academy Buccaneers Head Coach in his second stint holding that position.

Bradley took over the Bucs program in 2019 and has stabilized MCA's football ranks. Before the hiring of Bradley, the Bucs employed 5 different head coaches in 7 seasons.

Bradley has not only stabilized the program, but he also has revitalized winning habits into the Bucs program and turned MCA into a perennial playoff team.

In 2025 the Bucs made the playoffs for the again under Bradley. MCA has made the playoffs every season in Coach Bradley's tenure in his second go-round.

Last season the Bucs finished 5-5 in the regular season and that was good enough to get into the playoffs as four seed. MCA finished the season overall at 5-6, losing in the first round of the GHSA playoffs to #1 seed Johnson County, 34-7.

MCA enters 2026 with high expectations as they are returning

starting RB Earnest McIntosh for his senior season.

The Bucs also find themselves in a new region. Region 3-1A will consist of MCA, Portal, Montgomery County, Emanuel County Institute and Claxton. This region lines up far easier than the last two seasons for the Bucs. While the region added Montgomery County, gone are the powerhouses of Metter and Screven County.

The Bucs will kick off the 2026 campaign at home at The Ship in Darien against Long County on August 21st.

Week two will also be at home against former region foe Charlton County.

The Buccaneers will take to the road in week 3 against Georgia Military and then in week 4 pay a visit to Liberty County to take on the Panthers.

MCA will return home on September 18th against Jeff Davis and then will host Screven County the following week at The Ship.

After a bye the following week region play kicks off for the Bucs against ECI in Darien

The Buccaneers return to the

road on October 23rd against the Claxton Tigers.

MCA returns home on Halloween weekend to take on Montgomery County and then will wrap up the regular season on the road against the Portal Panthers.

MCA is a legit contender to win the region in 2026.

Keep in mind the GHSA will be transitioning away from ranking teams according to how they finished in their region and instead will use power rankings rank playoff participants. What this does is place huge importance on non-region tilts as well as the region games as far as seeding.

I am picking MCA to finish the 2026 season with a 9-1 record and to win Region 3-1A.

Worst case for the Bucs, by my estimation, will be an 8-2 mark finishing second in the region.

The Buccaneers have not made a deep run in the playoffs in some time. I think this year that changes. I believe MCA is definitely an Elite 8 team, at worst, in 2026.

MCINTOSH COUNTY ACADEMY 2026 SCHEDULE

8/22 @ Long County

8/28 vs Charlton County

9/4 @ GA Military College

9/11 @ Liberty County

9/18 vs Jeff Davis

9/25 vs Screven County

10/2 Bye

10/9 @ Emmanuel County

10/16 Bye

10/23 @ Claxton

10/30 vs Montgomery County

11/6 @ Portal



VALDOSTA

Cats Are Coming by Ron Reagin

Few things matter more in the new Post-Season Ranking Formula (PSRF) era than building the right schedule.

In the Valdosta Wildcats' case, wins also carry more meaning as they are racing to be the first high school program to reach 1,000 wins.

Valdosta's 2026 slate looks like a smart, strategic effort designed for this new system to maximize wins both in the regular season and postseason.

The Wildcats will play six home games, three road games, and four tough Region 1-AAAAAAA contests.

Non-Region Breakdown: Valdosta's non-region schedule looks well-balanced.

The road trip opener to Jones County and home games against Stockbridge and Booker High (Sarasota, FL) provide quality competition that should boost both OWP and OOWP.

Booker, a consistent playoff team in Florida, could prove to be a strong addition.

The home games against Howard, Bradwell Institute, and

KIPP Atlanta Collegiate are winnable matchups that should help build the win column without being too soft.

But as we all know too well, you can never overlook an opponent that has nothing to lose. Those types of teams historically pull out all the stops to beat Valdosta.

The Region 1 Gauntlet: Region 1-AAAAAAA remains one of Georgia's strongest regions year after year.

The late-season stretch: @ Colquitt County, vs. Camden County, @ Lowndes, and vs. Richmond Hill will be critical.

In a small five-team region, every result carries heavy weight under PSRF. Avoiding a late-season loss will be critical in maintaining a strong playoff seed.

From the unbiased broadcast booth, a 9-1 record with three region wins feels like the most realistic strong outcome.

That should position Valdosta comfortably inside the top 20 statewide with a favorable seed. However, most Valdosta fans will not be happy with anything but a championship.

The expectation to win, especially after a region championship

and semifinal run last season, is even higher this year.

Strengths: Six home games help accumulate wins for the 35% winning percentage component.

Quality non-region opponents (especially Booker, Stockbridge, and Jones County) combined with a tough region give Valdosta a legitimate strength-of-schedule advantage without sacrificing winnable games.

Risks: As we've alluded to with the new PSRF, late-season swings are very real. The final four games are all region contests. A tough stretch in October and early November could drop the Wildcats several spots in the rankings even with a winning record. This risk is one that all Region 1 teams will be trying to avoid.

Overall, Valdosta's 2026 schedule appears well-constructed for the PSRF era. It balances winnable home games with enough quality competition to reward a strong season.

Valdosta fans should be excited, as this slate gives the Wildcats a legitimate chance at a high seed and deep playoff run.

VALDOSTA



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 @ Jones County

8/28 vs Howard

9/4 vs Bradwell

9/11 vs Kipp Atlanta

9/18 Bye

9/25 vs Stockbridge

10/2 vs Booker

10/9 Bye

10/16 @ Colquitt County

10/23 vs Camden County

10/30 @ Lowndes

11/6 vs Richmond Hill

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CHARLTON COUNTY

War Chant by Michael Spiers

Football has always meant something in Folkston.

For generations, Charlton County has built one of South Georgia's proudest football traditions, a program defined by toughness, discipline and a belief that every season brings another opportunity to compete for championships.

Those expectations don't disappear simply because the calendar changes or a new coach arrives. Instead, they grow.

The 2026 season marks the beginning of a new era for the Indians as Brandon Byram takes over a program that reached the second round of the Class A Division II state playoffs a year ago.

Charlton finished 6-6 overall in 2025, battling through a demanding schedule before seeing its postseason run come to an end against Screven County. Now, the focus shifts from what was accomplished last season to what lies ahead.

And what lies ahead won't be easy.

The Indians open the season with three consecutive road games, beginning August 21 with perhaps their toughest non-region challenge.

Charlton travels across the state line to face West Nassau, a Florida powerhouse that finished 12-2 last season and reached the postseason after placing third in its district. It will be an immediate measuring stick for a team looking to establish its identity under a new coaching staff.

The road doesn't get much easier a

week later when the Indians visit McIntosh County Academy. While the Buccaneers finished just 5-6 a year ago, they reached the state playoffs and will present another early challenge before Charlton heads to Berrien on September 4.

The Rebels struggled to a 4-8 record last season, making that contest one the Indians will hope to use to build momentum before returning home.

Fans in Folkston won't have to wait long for a marquee matchup.

Charlton's home opener comes September 11 against Frederica Academy, a defending region champion that finished 8-4 and advanced to the second round of the playoffs.

One week later, the schedule becomes even more demanding when Early County visits. The Bobcats posted a 10-4 record in 2025, won their region and advanced all the way to the state semifinals before their impressive season came to an end.

Region play begins October 2 when Lanier County visits Folkston. Although the Bulldogs finished just 2-9 last season, region games often have a way of ignoring the previous year's records, making every Friday night significant.

Charlton then travels to Atkinson County on October 9 to face a team that finished 9-1 a year ago, one of the biggest challenges on the region schedule.

After an open week to regroup, the Indians return home October 23 to host Mitchell County, a playoff team that lost a heartbreaking overtime game in the opening

round last season.

The regular season concludes with two road games that could ultimately define Charlton's postseason hopes.

First comes the annual showdown with Clinch County, one of the state's perennial Class A powers. The Panthers finished 13-1 last season, captured the Region 2 championship and advanced to the state semifinals. Every year this rivalry delivers a physical, hard-fought contest, and 2026 should be no different.

The finale sends the Indians to Irwin County on November 6. While those Indians struggled to a 1-9 record in 2025, road region games are rarely easy, particularly when playoff berths and postseason seeding may still be hanging in the balance.

There are certainly questions surrounding Charlton County entering a season with a new head coach. There always are.

But the Tribe from Folkston has never been short on confidence. Confidence that hard work will win games. Confidence that tradition matters. Confidence that when the lights come on Friday night, Charlton County will be ready to compete.

The road through the 2026 schedule is demanding, but that has never discouraged football in Folkston.

If the Indians embrace the challenges ahead and continue building on last year's playoff success, another memorable chapter in Charlton County football history could soon be written.

CHARLTON COUNTY 2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 @ West Nassau

8/28 @ McIntosh County

9/4 @ Berrien

9/11 vs Frederica Academy

9/18 vs Early County

9/25 Bye

10/2 vs Lanier County

10/9 @ Atkinson County

10/16 Bye

10/23 vs Mitchell County

10/30 @ Clinch County

11/6 @ Irwin County



GRAYSON

Ramming Through 2026 by Kenneth Harrison

The GHSA preseason football rankings have been released. Grayson is ranked #3 in class 7A.

The Rams went 14-1 in 2024 and won the 6A state championship. They started 2025 ranked #1 and held that spot for most of the season. Their only loss came in the state quarterfinals, 34-14 to Carrolton.

Head coach Santavious Bryant led the Rams to a 37-5 record the last three seasons. He left to take over as the head coach at Gainesville after the season.

Grayson promoted defensive coordinator Greg Carswell to head coach.

"For a first-time head coach, this is a dream come true," Carswell said. "I thank God for preparing me the six seasons I've had the opportunity to coach here on and off. I'm honored to be chosen to lead these young men. I love these kids so much and will take pride in pushing this program to the pinnacle of high school sports."

They are coming off a 12-1 season, so we do not expect much to change with a new head coach.

"The standard at Grayson will never change," Carswell said. "We have a relentless effort and approach to reach the

highest level of success this program can reach. We will always play hard physical and dominate the trenches, but the fire, passion and energy that will exude from a coach Carswell team will be unmatched."

They still have plenty of talent on the roster. Senior IOL Jordan Agbanoma is a four-star recruit and the tenth ranked player in the state for the class of 2027. Agbanoma is 6'2 and 300 pounds. He's currently committed to Nebraska.

His teammate, KD Jones is a three-star IOL that is also committed to the Cornhuskers. Jones is 6'5, 303 pounds.

Junior Edge Elijah Tillman is 6'7, 215 pounds. He's also a four-star recruit but that's based more on his measurables. He should be a key contributor in 2026.

Senior CB Preston Glasco (6'2, 190 lbs.) is a three-star recruit and he's committed to UConn.

Senior S Jalen Welch (6'3, 190 lbs.) is also a three-star recruit and he's committed to Syracuse.

Senior DL Waylon Wooten (6'2, 300 lbs.) is committed to Georgia.

Senior QB David "Deuce" Smith (5'11, 190 lbs.) is a dual-threat. He became the starter after four-star QB Travis Burgess was injured last season. He passed for 2,355 yards and 24 touchdowns.

The season begins August 12th in the Corky Kell/Dave Hunter Classic at Mercedes-Benz Stadium (Atlanta) against North Gwinnett. The Bulldogs were 12-2 last season and they made it to the state semifinals.

Six of Grayson's first seven games are on the road. Week 2 they travel to Sandy Creek. The Patriots have moved up to 4A but they were undefeated (15-0) and won the 3A state championship in 2025.

After a bye week the next game is at Langston Hughes. The Panthers are one of the top teams in 5A. They were 12-1 last season and they have a lot of talent.

On September 11th they travel to Brunswick. The Pirates were 9-3 last year and they have made the move to 6A this season.

The first home game of the season is the following week against #1 Buford. The Wolves were undefeated and won the 6A state title in 2025.

They face Carol City (Miami) October 2nd.

Region play begins after that with games @Archer, @Newton, South Gwinnett and Rockdale County.

I think Grayson will finish the regular season with a couple of losses but they will be tough to beat in the playoffs.

GRAYSON 2026 SCHEDULE

8/12 @ North Gwinnett

8/21 @ Sandy Creek

8/28 Bye

9/4 @ Langston Hughes

9/11 @ Brunswick High

9/18 vs Buford

9/25 Bye

10/2 vs Carol City

10/9 @ Archer

10/16 @ Newton

10/23 vs South Gwinnett

11/6 vs Rockdale County

JACKSONVILLE JUMBO SHRIMP

2026 SCHEDULE

HOME

AWAY

MARCH/APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					27 ROC 7:05PM	28 ROC 6:35PM
29 ROC 2:05PM	30	31 SUG 7:05PM	1 SUG 12:05PM	2 SUG 7:05PM	3 SUG 7:05PM	4 SUG 6:35PM
5 SUG 2:05PM	6	7 NOR 6:35PM	8 NOR 6:35PM	9 NOR 12:05PM	10 NOR 6:35PM	11 NOR 6:35PM
12 NOR 1:05PM	13	14 CLT 11:05AM	15 CLT 7:05PM	16 CLT 7:05PM	17 CLT 7:05PM	18 CLT 6:35PM
19 CLT 2:05PM	20	21 GWN 6:00PM	22 GWN 11:05AM	23 GWN 7:05PM	24 GWN 7:05PM	25 GWN 6:05PM
26 GWN 1:05PM	27	28 DUR 11:05AM	29 DUR 6:45PM	30 DUR 6:45PM		

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 NAS 7:35PM	2 NAS 7:35PM	3 NAS 7:35PM	4 NAS 7:05PM
5 NAS 7:05PM	6	7 DUR 7:05PM	8 DUR 7:05PM	9 DUR 7:05PM	10 DUR 7:05PM	11 DUR 6:35PM
12 DUR 1:05PM	13	ALL-STAR BREAK			17 ROC 6:45PM	18 ROC 6:45PM
19 ROC 5:05PM	20	21 WOR 6:45PM	22 WOR 6:45PM	23 WOR 12:05PM	24 WOR 6:45PM	25 WOR 4:05PM
26 WOR 1:05PM	27	28 MEM 7:05PM	29 MEM 7:05PM	30 MEM 7:05PM	31 MEM 7:05PM	

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 DUR 6:45PM	2 DUR 6:45PM
3 DUR 1:05PM	4	5 CLT 7:05PM	6 CLT 12:05PM	7 CLT 7:05PM	8 CLT 7:05PM	9 CLT 6:35PM
10 CLT 2:05PM	11	12 MEM 7:45PM	13 MEM 1:05PM	14 MEM 12:05PM	15 MEM 8:05PM	16 MEM 7:35PM
17 MEM 2:05PM	18	19 NOR 7:05PM	20 NOR 12:05PM	21 NOR 7:05PM	22 NOR 7:05PM	23 NOR 6:35PM
24 NOR 6:35PM	25	26 CLT 6:35PM	27 CLT 6:35PM	28 CLT 7:04PM	29 CLT 7:04PM	30 CLT 6:05PM
31 CLT 1:05PM						

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 MEM 6:35PM
2 MEM 5:05PM	3	4 GWN 6:35PM	5 GWN 6:35PM	6 GWN 7:05PM	7 GWN 7:05PM	8 GWN 6:05PM
9 GWN 4:05PM	10	11 SYR 7:05PM	12 SYR 7:05PM	13 SYR 7:05PM	14 SYR 7:05PM	15 SYR 6:35PM
16 SYR 5:05PM	17	18 MEM 7:45PM	19 MEM 7:45PM	20 MEM 7:45PM	21 MEM 8:05PM	22 MEM 7:35PM
23 MEM 2:05PM	24	25 NAS 7:05PM	26 NAS 7:05PM	27 NAS 7:05PM	28 NAS 7:05PM	29 NAS 6:35PM
30 NAS 2:05PM	31					

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 NAS 7:05PM	3 NAS 7:05PM	4 NAS 7:05PM	5 NAS 7:05PM	6 NAS 6:35PM
7 NAS 2:05PM	8	9 GWN 7:05PM	10 GWN 7:05PM	11 GWN 7:05PM	12 GWN 7:05PM	13 GWN 6:35PM
14 GWN 2:05PM	15	16 DUR 6:45PM	17 DUR 12:05PM	18 DUR 6:45PM	19 DUR 6:45PM	20 DUR 6:45PM
21 DUR 5:05PM	22	23 MEM 12:05PM	24 MEM 7:05PM	25 MEM 7:05PM	26 MEM 7:05PM	27 MEM 6:35PM
28 MEM 2:05PM	29	30 NAS 7:35PM				

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 NOR 6:35PM	2 NOR 6:35PM	3 NOR 12:05PM	4 NOR 6:35PM	5 NOR 6:35PM
6 NOR 1:05PM	7	8 GWN 7:05PM	9 GWN 7:05PM	10 GWN 7:05PM	11 GWN 7:05PM	12 GWN 6:35PM
13 GWN 2:05PM	14	15 SWB 7:05PM	16 SWB 1:05PM	17 SWB 7:05PM	18 SWB 7:05PM	19 SWB 6:05PM
20 SWB 1:35PM						

THIRSTY THURSDAY

FIREWORKS

MILITARY APPRECIATION

BUSINESS PERSON SPECIALS

DOG DAYS

SPLASH DAY

EDUCATION DAY

OPPONENTS

CLT — CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS (CWS)
DUR — DURHAM BULLS (TB)
GWN — GWINNETT STRIPERS (ATL)
MEM — MEMPHIS REDBIRDS (STL)

NAS — NASHVILLE SOUNDS (MIL)
NOR — NORFOLK TIDES (BAL)
ROC — ROCHESTER RED WINGS (WAS)
SUG — SUGAR LAND SPACE COWBOYS (HOU)

SWB — SCRANTON/WB RAILRIDERS (NYY)
SYR — SYRACUSE METS (NYM)
WOR — WORCESTER RED SOX (BOS)



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WAYNE COUNTY

The Big Sting by Jason Bishop

The Wayne County Yellow Jacket Football Program is a very proud program full of tradition and fan fever.

The Yellow Jacket program has fallen on hard times the last few years and is looking to get back to being a perennial state power.

Two seasons ago the Yellow Jackets hired John Mohring who had been the head coach at Calvary Day. Mohring did not survive his second season in Jesup.

Mohring resigned midseason after an 0-4 start to the 2025 season. Mohring's only full season came in 2024 in which the Yellow Jackets ended up 1-9 and that one win was a forfeited win over Appling.

So overall, Mohring's short stint in Wayne County saw the Yellow Jackets go 1-13 under his leadership.

After Wayne moved on from Mohring they stunned Warner Robins 32-10 but were unable to build any momentum after that and finished 1-9.

If you do the math the Yellow Jackets come into 2026 with a 2-18 record in the past two seasons and

remember one of those games was not an actual win but a forfeit by Appling for playing an ineligible player. Appling did win the game on the field.

The Yellow Jackets made a big time hire snagging Scott Roberts away from Swainsboro.

Roberts had two stints with the Swainsboro Tigers. First in 2008-2009 and then again in 2017 through 2025.

Roberts comes to Jesup with an overall record of 92-43. Most importantly the Yellow Jackets are looking to Roberts to supply some stability to the program; Roberts will be the fourth Yellow Jackets Head Coach in four seasons.

Wayne County will not have an easy road in 2026 to right the ship. The Yellow Jackets will play in Region 1-5A for the next two seasons. Region 1-5A will consist of Benedictine, Jenkins, Ware County, Statesboro, Groves, Richmond Academy, and Evans.

Wayne's 2026 schedule is as follows:

8/21 v. Liberty
8/28 @ Bradwell
9/4 Bye
9/11 @ Appling

9/18 v. Richmond Academy
9/25 @ Evans
10/2 v. Jenkins
10/9 v. Groves
10/16 Bye
10/23 @ Benedictine
10/30 v. Ware
11/6 @ Statesboro

This is a pretty tough schedule for a program in rebuild mode. However, it is not completely unmanageable. I can see a possibility for a 6-4 season for the Yellow Jackets if they find some fortunate bounces in a couple of games.

A 6-4 season would likely mean a playoff berth for the Yellow Jackets and their first trip since 2023.

I definitely see four concrete wins on the schedule for Wayne and as I said, with a little luck six wins is a possibility.

Even if Wayne only wins four games it would be a great step forward. The Yellow Jackets would double their total win number from 2024 and 2025 combined.

Scott Roberts will return Wayne County back to respectability at the bare minimum.

WAYNE



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 vs Liberty County

8/28 @ Bradwell

9/4 Bye

9/11 @ Appling County

9/18 vs Richmond Academy

9/25 @ Evans

10/2 vs Jenkins

10/9 vs Groves

10/16 Bye

10/23 @ Benedictine

10/30 vs Ware County

11/6 @ Statesboro



RICHMOND HILL

Climbing The Hill by Joseph Stuckey

The Richmond Hill Wildcats football team is looking to take a big step in 2026, building off of their success in 2025.

The Wildcats play in the newly added 7-A class, which is GHSA's highest classification. Their region is one of the most competitive in the state and consists of: Camden County, Colquitt County, Lowndes, and Valdosta.

Last year they made the state playoffs as the 4 seed coming out of Region 1 in 6-A (was GHSA's highest classification at the time). The Wildcats would take an early exit after drawing national power Buford High School in the first round on the road.

This year, they look to play well during the regular season and use the GHSA's new power-ranking formula for playoff seeding to their advantage.

To do this, they will rely heavily on senior quarterback Gunner Mobley. Last season, he got region honorable mention, and during the season he threw for over 1400 passing yards and was responsible for 13 touchdowns. He was also named a top-5 quarterback in the greater Savannah area.

The schedule sets up pretty well for the Wildcats. By being in GHSA's highest classification, most of their games outside of region play will be against lower-classification teams and should favor the Wildcats.

They will take on a nearby opponent in the Effingham County Rebels. In this game, On3 gives the Wildcats an 86% chance to win this game. Effingham County is a solid opponent that hosted a first-round playoff game last year in GHSA's second-highest classification (5-A).

They will also take on another nearby opponent with Liberty County; according to On3, this game should be all Wildcats as they are given a 99% chance to win this game.

The Wildcats will also take on Jenkins out of Savannah, who has become one of the toughest opponents for any team can face in the 912 area code. Another one of South Georgia's perennial powerhouses is also on the schedule for Richmond Hill.

The Wildcats will take on the Gators of Ware County in what is sure to be one of the top games of the year in South Georgia.

The Wildcats will also compete

in a border-battle game as they take on Wando High School, which is located near Charleston, South Carolina. This is the only out-of-state game on the schedule for the Wildcats in 2026.

Richmond Hill will also take on West Georgia powerhouse East Coweta in what is sure to be one of the top games of the week in the state. On3 has this game at basically a coin flip, with it being listed as 41-59 favoring East Coweta.

Finally, to end the season, the Wildcats will take on the South Georgia Gauntlet; their region play will consist of games against Colquitt County, Camden County, Lowndes, and Valdosta in that order to end the season.

The bonus here is that each of those teams has the potential to be a playoff team, which should boost Richmond Hill's power ranking under the new GHSA formula.

I see Richmond Hill as a team that, based on its strength of schedule, is able to compete for a top 16 seed and could potentially host a home playoff game in the first round of the GHSA state playoffs.

RICHMOND HILL



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 vs Effingham County

8/28 vs Liberty County

9/4 vs Jenkins

9/11 @ Ware County

9/18 vs Wando

9/25 @ East Coweta

10/2 Bye

10/9 vs Colquitt County

10/16 @ Camden County

10/23 vs Lowndes

10/30 Bye

11/6 @ Valdosta

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WARE COUNTY

Gator Bait by Joe Delaney

Jason Stricklands 2025 edition of the Ware County Gators was a senior led group that rolled into the GHSA playoffs with an 8-2 record in a very tough region and title aspirations.

After a first round dismantling of Flowery Branch the Gators moved on and ran into a juggernaut in the Creekside Seminoles. One of the top high school football programs in the nation took it to the Gators early and often. The result was a 9-3 final record for a great group of seniors at Ware County High School.

Now looking toward the 2026 season, the Gators will be young, very young.

Gone are Ja Mario Rice, DL Walker Hudson, DL Seth Seuss, LB Nick Grant, LB Avontae Ballentine, RB Jamir Boyd, RB Tayshaun Franklin, OL Landon Smallwood, OL Carson Hall, and OL Kyler Matthews.

There are others but needless to say that's a long list of experience and talent that has moved on. The question is are the Gators gonna reload or rebuild?

Several quality players are back for the '26 season and Ware is a talent hotbed so the cupboard is definitely not empty.

Leading the 2026 Gators will be returning Quarterback Isaiah White. He was an All-Region player last year and should be one of the top players in south

Georgia this year.

And he will have Ja'Londi O'Hara, and Gunter Fore back at wideout. Both were All-Region last year.

Several other pieces of the puzzle are back also on offense so the Gators should be ok. Replacing those 3 All-Region linemen will be key.

Returning are RT Jaylen Sturdivant and OL Kydarian Bennett. These guys will be the leaders with a bunch of young Gators vying for playing time behind them.

At running back look for Moomoo Mckoy and Jimmy Taylor to step in and fill some big shoes from last year. Coach Strickland thinks both of these guys could be special. Great ability and good speed. Coach called them slashers. The offense will be good and look for White to have an All-State type of year.

The defense will be a work in progress with most of the front 7 graduating. There is talent all over and while these aren't the biggest group of Gators we've seen on defense, they are fast and strong.

Jamarion Keyhay returns at linebacker and is a team leader. Add in Rod Lewis and Jameer Barkley who are coming back from injury and this defense could be good.

Davion Jones returns at corner and will also handle kick returns and punt returns.

One big returning piece to the

puzzle is Jeffery Gonzalez. The veteran will handle the kicking and punting for Ware and should be one of, if not, the region's best.

Landon Smallwood will be missed at snapper and there are three young ones trying to fill those big shoes.

Ware County Gators 2026 Schedule

8/7 vrs Brunswick (scrimmage)

8/21 @ Bainbridge

8/28 @ Coffee

9/11 vrs Richmond Hill

9/18 vrs Groves

9/25 @ Statesboro

10/2 vrs Richmond Academy

10/9 @ Evans

10/23 vrs Jenkins

10/30 @ Wayne County

11/6 vrs Benedictine

The 2026 edition of the Gators will be fun to watch. The backfield could be electric. Add in the returners on the O-line and at wide receiver and Coach Strickland has a lot to work with.

Defensively the Gators will be just as fun. With a good returning group of leaders, the Gators will fly all over the field with stunts and slants, using that speed and power.

Add in very good special teams play and the Gators will be a force in the region and a dangerous group of reptiles come playoff time. The Gators are reloading!

WARE COUNTY 2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 @ Bainbridge

8/28 @ Coffee

9/4 @ Bye

9/11 vs Richmond Hill

9/18 vs Groves

9/25 @ Statesboro

10/2 vs Richmond Academy

10/9 @ Evans

10/16 Bye

10/23 vs Jenkins

10/30 @ Wayne County

11/6 vs Benedictine



BRANTLEY COUNTY

New Flight For Herons by Colin Lacy

The Brantley County Herons Football Program is one in transition and is looking for stability.

This offseason former Brantley Head Coach David Shores accepted a job on the Camden County staff and resigned from being the Herons head man.

Shores was a splash hire two offseasons ago in Nahunta and came with big time experience at Camden, Lowndes and Brunswick.

In two seasons Shores went 2-18 with the Herons, including a winless 2025 campaign.

Enter new Head Coach Matt Hickox. Hickox is a Brantley County Alum and is coming over from Pierce County. Hickox spent seven seasons in Blackshear serving as the Bears Defensive Coordinator and won two state titles at Pierce in 2020 and 2023.

Hickox is looking to provide some stability to the Heron program as he is now their 3rd coach in 4 years.

In reclassification the Herons find themselves in Region 3-3A. This region is tough at the top with Appling, Pierce and Toombs but leaves room for the Herons to possibly be a playoff team if they can handle business against everyone else, which is very possible.

Outside of the aforementioned

big three the rest of the region lines up with Beach, Islands, Johnson, and Tattnall.

The Herons will take on these region foes along with Bacon County, Lanier County and Claxton.

The Brantley Herons 2026 schedule is as follows:

8/21 @Bacon
8/28 v. Lanier
9/4 @Claxton
9/11 Bye
9/18 v. Islands
9/25 @ Appling
10/2 v. Toombs
10/9 @ Johnson
10/16 Bye
10/23 v. Pierce
10/30 v. Tattnall
11/6 @ Beach

The Herons have a tough first half of the schedule but I expect the Herons to be a playoff contender.

I am not sure this will be the year for the Herons to make a return to the playoffs but they will be in the mix down to the wire.

I definitely see at least four wins on the schedule for Brantley, which would be a huge step in the right direction coming off of an 0-10 season.

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BRANTLEY COUNTY 2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 @ Bacon County

8/28 vs Lanier County

9/4 @ Claxton

9/11 Bye

9/18 vs Islands

9/25 @ Appling County

10/2 vs Toombs County

10/9 @ Johnson

10/16 BYE

10/23 vs Pierce County

10/30 vs Tattnall County

11/6 @ Beach

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LOWNDES

Vicious Vikings by Ron Reagin

The Lowndes Vikings enter the 2026 season with high expectations after back-to-back 10-2 campaigns.

Under head coach Adam Carter, the program continues to compete in South Georgia with physical play, strong culture and fan base that usually deliver consistent postseason appearances.

This will be Carter's fourth season at the helm, and the continuity he has built is showing.

2025 Season Recap Lowndes finished 10-2 overall and 4-1 in Region 1-AAAAAA, earning a home playoff game in the first round.

They fell in the second round to an eventual Final Four team, North Gwinnett. The Vikings dominated their non-region schedule early, outscoring opponents by an average of 43-8 in the first five games.

In region play, they rolled through Colquitt County, Camden County, Tift County, and Richmond Hill, scoring over 30 points in each contest while allowing just 13.25 points per game.

Their lone region loss came

in the Winnersville Classic to rival Valdosta.

Key Returners and Leadership: The offense returns one of the state's top dual-threat quarterbacks in Jayce Johnson. The Texas A&M commit brings elite arm talent, mobility, and valuable experience.

Several skill players and key offensive linemen are back, giving Lowndes continuity up front and in space.

On defense, experienced playmakers return to anchor a typically physical front seven that gave up less than 14 points on average over 12 games last season.

However, look for emerging contributors from 2025 and some new names, who gained valuable reps and are poised for bigger roles. Coach Carter and his staff have emphasized depth and competition throughout the offseason.

2026 Schedule Highlights: Lowndes will test itself early and often at home. The non-region portion includes Jenkins, Harris County, Lithonia, Blanche Ely (FL), Long

County, and Winter Haven (FL).

Region play brings the annual battles with Camden County, Richmond Hill, Valdosta (Oct. 30 at home), and the season finale at Colquitt County (Nov. 6).

With the new PSRF playoff seeding formula in place, this schedule gives Lowndes multiple opportunities to boost their ranking through quality wins. The Florida games and tough region slate should prepare them well for a deep postseason run.

Outlook: The Vikings have the talent, experience, and coaching to contend for another region title and make noise in the state playoffs.

Coach Carter's emphasis on fundamentals, physicality, and player development has the program trending upward since he took over.

South Georgia fans know the Winnersville Classic against Valdosta (Nov. 30) and the late-season games against Colquitt and Camden will be tough games and shape their postseason.

Lowndes enters 2026 hungry to take big step towards another title.

LOWNDES



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 vs Jenkins

8/28 vs Harris County

9/4 vs Lithonia

9/11 vs Blanche Ely

9/18 vs Long County

9/25 Bye

10/2 vs Winter Haven

10/9 vs Camden County

10/16 Bye

10/23 @ Richmond Hill

10/30 vs Valdosta

11/6 @ Colquitt County



STATESBORO

Blue Deviled by Colin Lacy

Coming off a second-round appearance in the GHSA State Playoffs last season, Statesboro High has taken enormous steps forward each of past three years under Head Coach Matt Dobson and the Blue Devils' staff.

2026 sets up to be more of the same with Statesboro looking to burst into a newly revamped region and make a deep run into the playoff field.

After a 2-2 start to the 2025 season last year, the Blue Devils went on a five-game winning streak with wins over Bradwell Institute, Lakeside, Brunswick, Evans and South Effingham.

Statesboro had hopes to win the region title up until the final week of the regular season last year with having to deal with a lot of adversity through the year.

A lot will be talked about with Beckham Jarrard (and rightfully so), but even when Jarrard missed multiple games with injury in the middle of the five-game win streak, the Blue Devils were able to continue to thrive.

Davis Harrison was able to take over and with contributions from Keon Childers, Gage Newsome, and other weapons.

While the roster continues to be littered with talent for Dobson, the

main focus continues to be on Beckham Jarrard.

The now junior has had a busy offseason bouncing from some of the best college camps in the country and garnering well deserved attention from the top schools in the country just entering his junior campaign.

In two seasons for the Blue Devils, Jarrard has racked up over 2,800 passing yards, rushing for almost 700 more and scoring 28 combined touchdowns.

Jarrard is a phenomenal talent on the field, but to me what sets him apart as a next level talent is the mindset and dedication to, he has shown to the mental side of football.

We mentioned in a story from last season how Jarrard breaks down virtually every throw he makes (in a game and practice) on video with former NFL QB Coach Pat O'Hara.

While there are some questions that will be answered early in the season for "the Boro", Matt Dobson and company believe that they have the answers to them.

Statesboro will have to find replacements for Keon Childers who was one of the best rushers and receivers in the region in the past few years along with Gage Newsome, the top receiver for the Blue Devils last year who both graduated after the 2025 season.

SHS will look to some returners

to take a big step forward along with at least one transfer into the program.

Someone that has produced in a number of different roles for Statesboro already in his career but would be my pick to take a massive step for his senior year is Davis Harrison.

Harrison has worked as a receiver, quarterback (as we mentioned earlier), and now is listed on the roster as a tight end but is someone that is a leader in the squad that could really put up some big numbers this year.

The other player that I believe will have a massive year in his first year in a Blue Devil uniform is DJ Brooks.

Brooks transfers to Statesboro this year from cross-county rival Southeast Bulloch and looks to sure up the running back room for Statesboro with Keon Childers' departure.

Brooks averaged over 6.0 yards per rush with a pair of touchdowns in limited action for Southeast Bulloch last year as a sophomore but is a physical player that can be a beautiful counter punch (and weapon for) to Jarrard.

Statesboro will try to improve on the 2nd round appearance last year that saw the final record sit at 8-4 and will be a force to be reckoned with in a much tougher region after the GHSA realignment.

STATESBORO



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 @ SE Bulloch

8/28 vs Burke County

9/4 vs Emanuel County

9/11 Bye

9/18 vs Benedictine

9/25 vs Ware County

10/2 @ Groves

10/9 @ Richmond Academy

10/16 Bye

10/23 @ Evans

10/30 @ Jenkins

11/6 vs Wayne County



EFFINGHAM COUNTY

Rebel March by Joe Delaney

Coach John Ford and the Effingham County Rebels are hard at it.

They are out to show that last year's 9-3 record and a narrow one-point playoff loss was no fluke.

Coach Ford was upbeat about the coming 26 season. And while there are definitely holes to fill from a great group of graduated seniors, this is a team on the rise in southeast Georgia.

In my conversation with Coach Ford, he was dialed into coach speak. "We're taking it one day at a time" and "we're working hard to make something happen today and every day."

Sure, you've heard that before but in listening to Coach Ford you could tell that's where the Rebels were, working hard and focused.

It doesn't hurt that Effingham County itself is one of the fastest growing areas in the state and that makes the turnover more manageable.

In 2026 the Rebels will have a

schedule that includes opening games at Richmond Hill and at home against Tift County.

That's a tough way to start and the Rebels will have to be on their game early.

From there it's into region play with Brunswick and Glynn Academy looming. It is a workable schedule and being tested in those two opening games should have the Rebels ready for games down the road.

On offense Effingham has a very good running back in Jamere Doe-Davis. He is a great center piece to work from and expect him to shoulder the load early and often.

He will run behind a completely revamped offensive line as all five of the O-line graduated. This and the quarterback position will tell the tail for the offense.

Three youngsters are currently in the mix to start at QB. Whoever takes the job will be young and inexperienced and need to mature quickly.

One thing the new quarterback

will have is a talented and experienced group of wide receivers.

Back are Isaiah Brown, Malik Letman, and Trayvis Hunter. Look for Coach Ford to lean on these 3 quality wideouts. They all have good speed and hands.

Defensively the Rebels should be stout. Back on the defensive line is Deyvon Aaron and RJ Brown. Behind them at linebacker are Genard Albright, and Jackson Eubanks.

This should be a very good front seven and couple it with the entire secondary coming back and the defense should carry the team early.

Look for the Rebels to field a very good football team in 2026.

While it may be difficult to match last year's total. The early toughies on the schedule should make this team mature quickly.

The keys will be the offensive line play and a solid season from the new QB. If those fall into place this could be a very tough out come playoff time.

EFFINGHAM



2026 SCHEDULE

8/21 @ Richmond Hill

8/28 vs Tift County

9/4 vs New Hampstead

9/11 Bye

9/18 @ Lakeside

9/25 vs Bradwell Institute

10/2 @ Glynn Academy

10/9 Bye

10/16 vs South Effingham

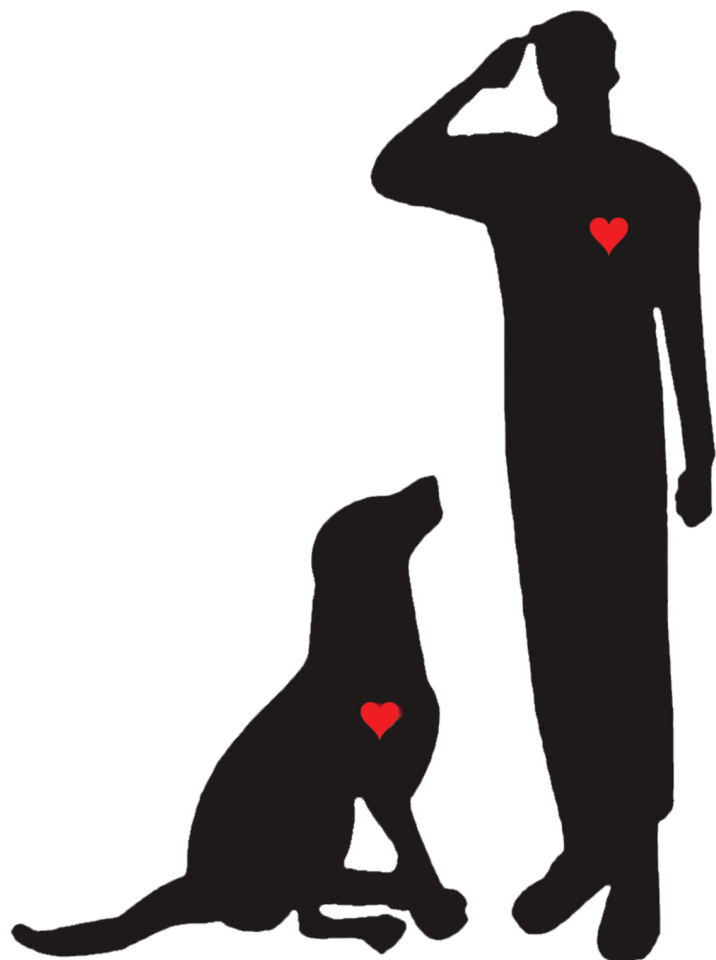
10/23 vs Grovetown

10/30 @ Brunswick

11/6 vs Greenbrier



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