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Friday Night Football returns with
playoff prospects for three of the six teams
in our coverage area

BY STEVE LEE
Sports Reporter

In what has become an annual tradition, this marks the fifth straight year of *The Zephyrhills News* previewing six local high school football teams in east and central Pasco. That list once was limited to hometown Zephyrhills, arch-rival Pasco in Dade City, Wesley Chapel and Wiregrass Ranch.

Cypress Creek, which enters its sixth season and is based in Wesley Chapel, along with Zephyrhills Christian Academy, which started out in six-man football and is a private school with students from kindergarten through the 12th grade, have since been added.

Coming off playoff seasons are Zephyrhills, Zephyrhills Christian Academy, Wiregrass Ranch and Wesley Chapel. This year, however, the two Zephyrhills-based schools and Cypress Creek might be the only teams that make it.

The Bulldogs have played in the postseason in seven of the past eight years. The Warriors, who last year advanced the furthest to the region semifinals have five straight postseason berths. The Bulls, who always play a host of Hillsborough County teams due to a higher student population than our other schools, have six consecutive playoff appearances.

While Zephyrhills and Zephyrhills Christian are expected to make playoff runs in 2022, Wiregrass Ranch might have too much to overcome with the graduation of its quarterback — Rocco Becht, son of former Tampa Bay Buccaneers tight end Anthony Becht, signed with Iowa State — and the transfer of his heir apparent. Brendyn Colella, Wiregrass Ranch's junior varsity signal-caller last year, now leads the Zephyrhills offense.

Starting with Zephyrhills, coach Nick Carroll is counting on Colella and standout wide receivers D.J. Pickett, who grew up playing youth football in Zephyrhills and returned after one season at Carrollwood Day School, Jakobe Campbell, Azuri Jackson and Maddox Rivera.

Led by Fred Adams, a transfer from Zephyrhills Christian, the ground game will be a running by committee approach behind an offensive line anchored by Gabe Coveny. The defense is led by a front seven featuring Calob Durham, Blake Yearby and Rodney Smith.

Zephyrhills Christian lost some transfers and gained some, making a repeat of last year's 9-3 season dependent on a mix of newcomers and key returners.

In a season-opening win 34-14 win over Lake Placid, the Warriors displayed plenty of balance on offense. Quarterback Parker Stinkorb passes for 129 yards with a touchdown and an interception while Alex Cruz, a transfer from Wiregrass Ranch, gained 100 yards on the ground and scored a touchdown.

At Cypress Creek, Owen Walls' 1,917 yards and 17 touchdowns will be missed. Entrusted as the new signal-caller is Jack Neimann, last year's junior varsity starter who is banking on that experience to carry over. He'll get help offensively from Malachi Askin, who ran for 217 yards and a touchdown in the season opener.

On defense, the Coyotes will be led by linebacker Logan Falk, who had 15 tackles and 3.5 sacks in the opener, Milton Garcia, Gerron Bush, Cristian Gregory and Zyron Davis.

Wesley Chapel has key returners in Mason Quinn and line-backer Joshua Poleon. Welsey Young will lead the ground game.

At Wiregrass Ranch, Kantor was stuck after the departure of Colella with Elijah Brown and backup Lincoln Kennedy not

faring well at quarterback. Third stringer Jordiel Barrios had the only pass completion in a tough loss to Manatee in the first game.

Wide receiver Bryson Rodgers, who has committed to Ohio State, and running back Kenny Walker will lead the Bulls' balanced attack.

As is always the case, Zephyrhills Christian lost some key players to graduation or transfers and welcomed several underclassmen and transfers. The Warriors have made five straight playoff appearances and are coming off a 9-3 season.

Pasco, which has struggled in recent years after an impressive run of eight consecutive postseason berths, appears far from a playoff contender and once again has a new coach in Alphonso Freeny. He replaced Jason Stokes, who coached the Pirates for three years including last season when they went winless at 0-8.

Freney is entrusted with changing the culture. The program got a boost when the combined varsity and junior varsity rosters swelled to more than 80 by the time preseason began.

Steve Lee and Andy Warrener will cover these teams throughout the season. Also contributing to this tab are advertising sales manager Theresa LeBlanc, graphic designer Nancy King, accounting manager Cindy DeMatteo, receptionist Josephine Light, circulation manager James Bannon and, of course, publisher/owner Jan Linville.

Below: The ZCA Warriors break through the tunnel to start their 2022 regular season.

Below: The revamped Pirates take the field during their pre season opener against River Ridge.

A portrait of Representative Randy Maggard, a middle-aged man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling slightly. The background of the portrait is a dark blue gradient. Above the portrait, there is a red banner with white text. To the right of the portrait, there is a dark blue area with white text. At the top of the entire graphic, there is a portion of the American flag and the Seal of the Florida House of Representatives.

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Randy Maggard**

**Florida House of
Representatives, District 38**

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2022 ZEPHYRHILLS BULLDOGS

Zephyrhills Bulldogs aim to continue impressive playoff run and get a little deeper once they get there

By STEVE LEE
Sports Reporter

So far, there has been some good, bad and ugly with the Zephyrhills High football team. The Bulldogs dominated in a 43-0 preseason win over Sunshine Athletic Conference rival Land O' Lakes before winding up on the wrong end of an ugly 33-0 rout by perennial powerhouse Lake Wales in a season-opening road game.

Coach Nick Carroll clearly was not overly thrilled with the way the regular season began, especially with six turnovers bogging down the offense. Nonetheless, he said, "we'll move forward" and that the early mistakes are "correctable."

That entails moving past the regular season, which has become the norm for the Bulldogs. The local team went 9-2 last season, winning a district title before bowing out of the postseason with a narrow 12-10 loss in the first round against St. Petersburg Gibbs.

There are, however, some daunting challenges in a drive to extend a current run that includes seven postseason appearances in the past eight years. Zephyrhills is in a newly realigned district — 3 Suburban, District 7 with nearby rivals Pasco, Wesley Chapel and Cypress Creek.

Additionally, a daunting schedule also includes tough teams in Wiregrass Ranch, which has seven straight playoff appearances, Lakeland Kathleen Dunnellon, the Villages Charter and IMG Academy.

As for the players, two-year starter Jaxson Rivera, who in addition to playing quarterback punted and handled kicking

duties, graduated. Stepping in as the starter is Brendyn Colella, a junior transfer from Wiregrass Ranch who last year was the junior varsity quarterback for that school.

"I just thought it would be good for me to find a new environment," Colella said, alluding to a quarterback competition with Elijah Brown, who now is the Wiregrass Ranch quarterback. "I like how Zephyrhills is a tough team and it's not too far away (from his home in Wesley Chapel)."

Colella is joined at Zephyrhills by his brother Lukas, a tight end/linebacker. His father John also has gone from being an assistant at Wiregrass Ranch to the same role at Zephyrhills.

"I want to see our offense progress and it's not just throwing the ball. I think he has the tools to throw really well," Carroll said of Colella, who passed for 371 yards and four touchdowns in the preseason victory. "Early on he was listening and trying to understand the offense."

The offense was dealt a serious blow when Fred Adams, a transfer from Zephyrhills Christian Academy, suffered a collarbone injury and could be out for a while. Adams has made an impression as a defensive back, running back and slot receiver.

That still leaves D.J. Pickett, who grew up playing football in the local Zephyrhills youth program before transferring to Carrollwood Day School and coming back to Zephyrhills this season. Pickett had three touchdown catches in the preseason game.

"I'm back home," declared Pickett, who is among numerous family members to have played and coached for the Bulldogs.

There also is Azuri Jackson, a fast, surehanded receiver who caught a scoring pass in the preseason game from backup quarterback Tristan Lennon. Maddox Rivera and Ben Raines are other targets for the quarterbacks.

Anchoring the offensive line are tackle Gabe Coveny and guard Xavier Salgado.

Defensively, a group of stalwart linemen and linebackers include Calob Durham, Blake Yearby, Brody Switzer and Rodney Smith. The defensive backs, most of whom also can play offense and as receivers, are Maddox, Pickett, Adams, Campbell and Theodore Sands.

Unlike recent years in which the Bulldogs have had one feature running back getting the bulk of carries, Carroll described this year's approach to the running game as "a backfield by committee."

2022 ZEPHYRHILLS BULLDOGS



— schedule

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:30 p.m.

Last season: 10-2
Class: 3 Suburban, District 7
Coach: Nick Carroll, seventh season.
Assistants:
Matt Jackson
Raleigh Allen
Tom McHugh
Bryan Thomas
Pat Fortunato
Jason Chapman
Brett Lemay
John Colella

DATE	OPPONENT
Aug. 19	LAND O'LAKES
Aug. 26	at Lake Wales
Sept. 2	THE VILLAGES CHARTER
Sept. 9	at Wiregrass Ranch
Sept. 16	IMG ACADEMY WHITE
Sept. 30	at Wesley Chapel
Oct. 7	SOUTH SUMTER
Oct. 14	at Pasco
Oct. 21	at Kathleen
Oct. 28	CYPRESS CREEK
Nov. 4	DUNNELLON



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2022 ZEPHYRHILLS BULLDOGS

varsity
roster



No.	Player	Position	Year
1	Maddox Rivera		12
2	Ben Raines	WR	12
3	Jakobe Campbell		11
4	Fred Adams	FS	10
5	DJ Pickett	ATH	10
6	Brendyn Colella	QB	11
7	Theodore Sands	WR, CB	11
8	Fred Maixner		11
9	Jacavien McGovern	QB	11
10	Rodney Smith		11
11	Vikai Dexter	TE, DE	11
12	Jaden Jones	RB, OLB, MLB	10
13	Tristan Lennon	QB, OLB, TE	10
14	Christian Clemens	K	12
16	Nate Rios Rivera	K, P	11
19	Rylan Pickett	CB	11
20	Marcell Tucker	CB, WR	12
20	Tristan Cowley	OLB, RB	
21	Lukas Colella	RB, TE, OLB	10

No.	Player	Position	Year
22	Tayshaun Jamison	RB	11
27	Malachi Woodard	RB	10
30	Roe Miller	WR, RB	9
34	Jeremiah Bland		12
45	Ashton Lopp	WR	11
50	Blake Yearby	C, MLB	12
55	Brody Switzer	MLB, G	10
56	Giovanni Montes De Oca	OL	10
56	Malik Dillard	DT, MLB	11
60	Samaryn Black		10
61	Xavier Salgado	G	12
62	Logan Lagrone		11
63	Jared Apple	DT	10
65	Jordan McDaniel		11
66	Gabe Coveny	T, DT	12
72	Christian Velasquez		11
77	Calob Durham	DT, T, G	12
	Eric Johnson		12

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2022 PASCO PIRATES

Pirates look to emerge from ashes in 2022

Following a dismal end to the 2021 season, the revamped Pasco Pirates are looking to stake some claims

By ANDY WARRENER
Sports Reporter

The 2021 season was a disaster for the Pasco Pirates. They showed some promise in their first two years under then-coach Jason Stokes. However, Stokes's third season opened up with a rash of injuries and blowout losses. Problems compounded and the season completely imploded. Stokes moved on and so did the Pirates.

The Pirates would not wait long to move on. By December, they'd tapped former Mitchell coach Alphonso Freeney for the task. It was going to be no small task. Freeney played collegiately at Jacksonville State and was an assistant coach at Mitchell for a few years but this would be his first undertaking of a head coaching position. Also, there were 22 student-athletes at the team meeting when school administrators introduced Freeney.

It was very much starting from scratch. Yet, starting from scratch gave Freeney an opportunity as well as an obstacle. He could instill a culture, rather than have to replace one.

"One of our big things at the beginning was goal-setting," Freeney said. "We want to create a standard, a culture that these kids want to be around. We stressed grades and setting expectations. It seemed like the kids wanted that, we think they'd been waiting for that. It played out in the weight room over the summer, kids were seeing their hard work pay off, their numbers jump, their bodies change."

Freeney continued to build. Basically the entire coaching staff was replaced. Only coach Darryl Nobles was retained from last season. The coaching staff set right to work. They managed to field a team for the Spring Game. Not only that but they took crosstown rival Cypress Creek and Pinellas County's Saint Petersburg Catholic to the buzzer in two quarters of action against each team.

The numbers started to grow. By the start of fall football the numbers in the locker room had swelled to 60. By the Pirates's first preseason game against River Ridge they were pushing 80 players between both JV and varsity. Despite it being preseason, the Pirates showed out, defeating visiting River Ridge 22-18.

The Pirates hit JJ Johnson for an 80-yard touchdown to start the game. Quarterback Angel Miles also hit Tyrese Grose, the hulking middle linebacker, for a touchdown in the first half. In second half action, the Pirates scored a fourth-quarter touchdown and two-point conversion to secure the win. A more auspicious start could not have been ordered as the Pirates open the regular season at East Ridge in Clermont. Let's take a look at some of the key players in the 2022 season.

Quarterback

The Pirates are going to go with two quarterbacks, at least initially, this season. Junior Angel Miles (6-1, 185) cuts the better physical figure than senior Enrique Matos (5-7, 155) but it was Matos that stepped in and played quarterback last season when there were little other options. Matos gives the team a good run option at the position and is the more experienced of the two. Miles is new to the position but made some solid throws in the preseason opener.

"Matos makes good decisions, can do things with his legs and arms and the kids seem to rally behind him," Freeney said. "Miles throws and runs well and looks like a D1 talent if you see

him play." Both quarterbacks play wide receiver as well.

Running back

The Pirates have several options here but three runners have emerged as top candidates. Senior Tayshaun Balmir appears to be leading the pack. The 5-9, 180-pound back had close to 200 rushing yards in the Spring. He had a 40-yard run in the preseason game called back on a holding penalty. Freeney says Balmir has, "elite speed and legit four-four (four-second, 40-yard dash time)." Freeney likes his physical manner of running the ball. Expect Balmir to get the lion's share of carries in 2022.

Behind Balmir are junior Julius Hill and sophomore Leroy Vickers. Hill is new to the sport but Freeney hopes his learning curve is quick. Vickers is more of the downhill/full back type of runner, who will flip around and play linebacker.

"When he (Hill) puts it together, he's going to be something," Freeney said.

Wide receiver

Top receiving threat and player who Freeney thinks is going to make the most noise is junior JJ Johnson. Johnson was another victim of the quarterback carousel last season. Now, he's back at his natural position and he should shine there. A couple of big plays in the preseason game against River Ridge foreshadowed the kind of contributions coaches hope Johnson provides this season.

Wesley Chapel transfer Jelani Pilcher and sophomore Nazryh Freeman provide complements to Johnson. Both are at least 6-2 targets for whichever quarterback is under center. Junior Caleb Samuels is a wildcard at the position to keep an eye on.

Offensive/defensive line/misc.

One number to keep an eye on in the trenches this season is 50 in senior Anthony Pratt. Pratt will line up at left guard on offense and defensive end. He's not the biggest guy on the team, going just 6-1, 185 but coaches are excited about what he brings to the table.

"He (Pratt) is a go-getter, a hard worker," Freeney said. "He may be undersized but he's going to fight to win every rep."

He will be needed. The Pirates field a bevy of sophomores around Pratt. Pratt and senior Cody Juarez are going to be the players on defense that coaches look to. The Pirates best prospect on the defensive line actually plays middle linebacker. Junior Tyrese Grose has the squat, fire-hydrant look, emblematic of defensive tackles but Freeney likes him playing back a few steps.

"He (Grose) looks like a defensive lineman," Freeney said. "He is the heart and soul of the defense, he's bought into the system and he's developing leadership skills, making sure people are lined up right."

Grose doesn't have the sideline to sideline speed one looks for in a middle linebacker but he moves downhill in a hurry and should prove a stingy run-stuffer for his

position. Grose will also flip around and play tight end. He caught a touchdown pass in the Spring Game. Behind Grose, quarterback Miles will survey the field from his safety position.

"When those two (Grose and Miles) are flying around back there, it's really something," Freeney said. "And they both love to hit."

Senior kicker Juan Sanchez takes over kicking duties and Freeney says he is good at putting kickoffs in the end zone. Sanchez was 2-for-2 with his extra points in the preseason game.

Predictions?

The Pirates are back in a local district again after moonlighting with Hernando and Citrus County schools last season. This year, they are back with local rivals Cypress Creek and Wesley Chapel. 9-Mile rival Zephyrhills is also in the new district alignment. It's hard to imagine the Pirates being ready in time to seriously threaten the Bulldogs but they have a chance against most of the other teams on their schedule.

The Auburndale game is going to be a loss, the Bloodhounds were 9-1 a year ago. Hernando and Hudson posted respectable records, 6-6 and 5-3, respectively but the other games on the schedule are very winnable.

There were just six wins between East Ridge, Fivay, Crystal River and Central last season, with Central and East Ridge both going 0-10. Five, maybe six wins is a good season for the new Pirates.

The key to this year's Pirate team is how fast they improve. They are starting further behind most teams but their learning curve will be steep. Facing Pasco in the early part of the season is a good idea if you want to beat them. By October, they should be pulling even with teams that started ahead of them.

2022 PASCO PIRATES



— schedule

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:30 p.m.

DATE	OPPONENT
Aug. 19	RIVER RIDGE
Aug. 26	at East Ridge
Sept. 2	at Fivay
Sept. 9	at Hudson
Sept. 16	HERNANDO
Sept. 30	CYPRESS CREEK
Oct. 7	AUBURNDALE
Oct. 14	ZEPHYRHILLS
Oct. 21	CRYSTAL RIVER
Oct. 28	at Wesley Chapel
Nov. 4	CENTRAL

Last season: 0-8.
Class: 3 Suburban, District 7.
Coach Alphonso Freeney, first season.
Assistants: Bruce Patterson
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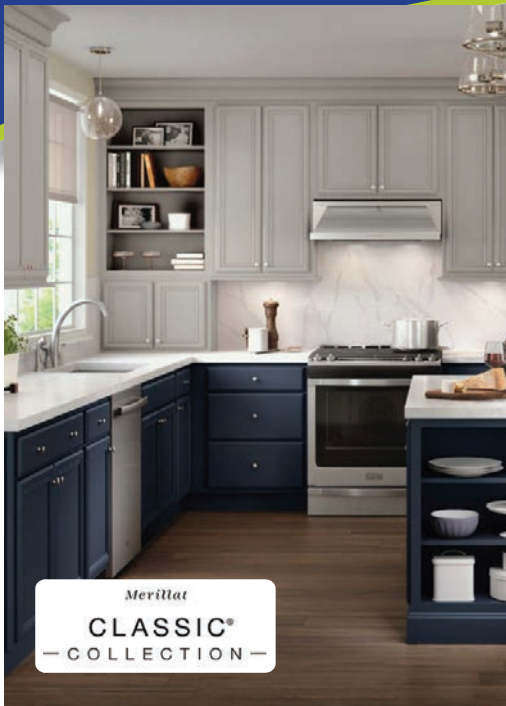
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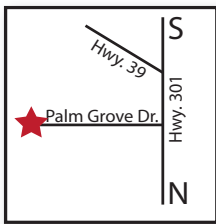


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2022 PASCO PIRATES

varsity roster



No.	Player	Position	Year	No.	Player	Position	Year
1	Enrique Matos	WR, SS	12	42	Brady Bass	MLB	10
2	Tayshaun Balmir	RB, CB	12	44	DJ Pope	G, DT	11
3	Willie Reed	WR, OLB	12	50	Anthony Pratt	G, DE	12
4	Nazyrh Freeman	WR, CB	10	51	Christopher Jones	MLB	12
5	Jalani Pilcher	WR, DB	12	53	Anthony Lane	G, DE	9
6	Kayleb Samuel	WR, OLB	11	54	J'shawn Jones	TE, MLB	12
7	Angel Miles	QB, WR, FS	11	55	Allen Clark	NG	11
8	Julious Hill	RB, OLB	11	56	Julien Robledo		11
9	Amari Williams	WR, CB	10	57	Logan Fernandez	T, G, DT	11
12	Leroi Vickers	RB, MLB	10	58	Kiah'eze Russell	OG, DT	10
14	Cam Riche	WR, CB	12	60	Kenneth Meeks	C, OT	10
15	Anthony Cozzolino	TE, MLB	11	61	Jadon Robinson	T, G, DT	11
16	Jackson Dietsch	QB	9	62	Joseph Knight	T, G, DT	10
17	Zabrian Hammond	WR, CB	11	63	Rudy Sanchez	G, DT	10
18	Cody Juarez	DE	12	64	Juan Torres	G, DT	10
19	Cameron Toomer	WR, OLB	10	65	Tahir Richards	T, DT	10
20	Leonardo Ingalls	WR, TE, MLB	10	66	Ethen Frederick	T	9
21	Vincent Irizarry	RB, MLB	11	70	Mehki Jordan	G, DT	11
23	JJ Johnson	WR, CB, FS	11	71	Lukas Gilbert	T, G, DT	10
24	Ethan Humphries	TE, OLB	12	72	Braden Jones	C	12
27	Sage Stinyard	RB, FS	9	73	Mason Pippin	T, C	10
28	Nico Torres	WR, OLB	11	77	Jamar Mention	G, DT	11
29	Chance Lowe	WR, FS	10	79	Austin Padron	C	12
33	Jalandis Smith	RB, OLB	9	80	Juan Sanchez	K, P	12
34	Desmick Davis	DE	11	83	Luis Stanley	TE	10
				84	Tyreese Grose	T, MLB	11

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SCAN ME



2022 ZEPHYRHILLS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY WARRIORS

ZCA Warriors lose some, get some

The Warriors lost some key pieces to their successful 9-3 season in 2021 but they've got several key players from elsewhere to mitigate the loss

By ANDY WARRENER
Sports Reporter

Transition has bitten the 2022 Warriors...hard. They had a huge prospect in freshman quarterback Jayce Nixon, one that could have potentially locked up four solid years at the position. Nixon threw for more than 1,300 yards and 14 touchdowns last season. He was a bonafide pocket passer with minimal rushing yardage but averaged almost 150 yards per game passing. He's gone, transferred to Gaither High School in northwest Hillsborough County.

Then the Warriors's bell cow running back Dontrevius Jackson left for college. Despite having a few Division 1 offers, Jackson elected to go with junior college New Mexico Military Institute. Jackson's 1,800 yards and 18 touchdowns will be nearly impossible to replace.

You lose your elite quarterback and running back, it's a scratch year, right? Not so fast. The Warriors picked up as much, perhaps nearly as much, as they lost. Enter senior Parker Stirnkorb. Stirnkorb is a Pinellas County Dunedin High School transfer that threw for over 2,000 yards last year for the Falcons.

"He (Stirnkorb) came in over the summer and made an immediate impact on the team," ZCA coach Mike Smith Jr. said. "We're still working on the chemistry with his receivers but he's ready to go."

You lose your stalwart running back and it's a reset year, right? Maybe not. There's no way to replace a runner like Jackson but the Warriors are getting someone back that they lost to injury a year ago. Senior Andrew Felder tore his ACL in Week 2 of last season. He's now gone through surgery and is completing his rehabilitation. Smith expects him to be clear for the season opener.

"He (Felder) is going to be a big time back for us," Smith said.

Felder won't be alone, either. Junior Alex Cruz is a Wiregrass Ranch transfer that bolsters a stout backfield. Complementing Cruz's skill set is sophomore Javier Lopez. Lopez is more the short yardage, downhill runner, while Cruz is more of the speedy, outside option. Expect both to see the ball in 2022.

"Alex (Cruz) is elusive and we like his speed on the outside," Smith said. "Lopez is more of our inside-the-tackles runner that will give the other guys a break."

Smith is pretty happy with what he's got at the receiver position.

"We are loaded at the skill position," Smith said.

It starts off with senior Ethan Allen. Allen didn't have eye-popping numbers from last season, just 377 yards on 21 catches but look for Allen to become the dominant force on offense this season.

"In my opinion, he (Allen) is the top wide receiver in the county and a top five receiver in the Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas area," Smith said.

Smith says that Allen drew a great deal of double and triple coverages last season. He expects that teams won't be able to do that as much this season with the other talented receivers on board and that Allen's numbers should spike. Some of those receivers in the stable with Allen are: junior Jayden Ramos and sophomore Amarri Range. Ramos, according to Smith, "is an elite route runner" and has great speed, hands and technique. Range runs 6-2 and is a big target for Stirnkorb. Smith touts Range's ability to use his body to shield off defenders and his range to get to the football. Other receivers Hezekiah Langley, Caleb Gaskin, Jared West and Noah Coates will factor into the mix as well.

In the trenches, look no further than senior Antonio Hunt. The 6-1, 260-pound lineman is already holding offers from FIU, Mercer and other universities. He also has interest from FAU, FIU, UCF and USF. Hunt will also play a little running back.

"He (Hunt) is tough to block," Smith said. "He is a solid football player."

On the offensive side, Alex Hambrecht and Ryan Warren are both Wesley Chapel transfers. Both have great size (6-4 and 290) and will line up as offensive tackles. Elijah Autsin and Joel Thompson will be the starting offensive guards. Austin is a four-year starter for the Warriors and Thompson squatted 650 pounds during summer workouts.

On defense, a lot of the Warriors play both ways. Lopez is a key defender from the linebacker position. Sophomore Joshua Cazares has physicality and Smith hopes will help clog up the middle. Junior Tocarra Johnson is a transfer from North Marion that will play safety. He fits nicely in ZCA's 3-5 defensive scheme.

More defensive backs Allen, Langley and Kahlil Brody will play in the defensive secondary. Smith likes Brody at corner and says he's been doing a great job at the position. Ramos and Jeremy Marrero

will factor into the defensive secondary as well.

The Warriors are in a district for their first time since moving to 11-man football. Playing just in a region last year, the Warriors were slotted into a Class 1 Suburban district with the likes of Lakeland Christian, Victory Christian and Bishop McLaughlin. The Warriors went up to Jacksonville and got hammered by multiple state champion University Christian for their pre-season matchup. Smith wanted them to see what it was like going against an elite team.

"Now, they have something to work for," Smith said.

The good news is, the Warriors won't have to face a powerhouse like that again. Last year's nemesis Orlando Christian Prep isn't even in the same classification anymore. The Warriors usually have their hands full with Victory Christian but otherwise should dominate their schedule and even improve on last year's record.

2022 ZEPHYRHILLS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY WARRIORS



— schedule

Start time is 7:00 p.m. - Except 9/16 & 11/4 at 7:30 p.m.

DATE	OPPONENT
Aug. 19	at University Christian
Aug. 26	LAKE PLACID
Sept. 2	NEW SMYRNA BEACH
Sept. 9	LAND O'LAKES
Sept. 16	at Lakeland Christian
Sept. 23	STRAWBERRY CREST
Sept. 30	VICTORY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
Oct. 7	DISCOVERY
Oct. 14	at Bishop McLaughlin Catholic
Oct. 28	at Northside Christian
Nov. 4	at Nature Coast Tech

Last season: 9-3.
Class: 1 Suburban, District 5.
Coach
Mike Smith, eighth season.
Assistants:
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Malik Jones
Spence Jones
Mike Smith II
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2022 ZEPHYRHILLS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY WARRIORS

varsity roster

No.	Player	Position	Year	No.	Player	Position	Year
0	Jayden Ramos		11	17	Talon Maple	WR	10
1	Hezekiah Langley	WR	11	18	David Dehart	WR, DE	10
2	Quavious(deuce) Cook	SB, CB	12	19	Tocarra Johnson	RB, QB, DB	11
3	Amarri Range	WR, CB	10	23	Javier Lopez	RB, LB	10
4	Andrew(drew baby) Felder	CB, WR, RB	12	40	Barron Barber	DE, RB, LS	11
5	Ej Allen, Jr.	WR	12	53	Issiah McClamma	OL, DL	11
6	Alex Cruz	RB	11	54	Max Hambrecht	T	12
7	Caleb(money man) Gaskin	QB	12	55	Elijah(squirrel) Austin	C	12
8	Joshua Casarez	FB, LB	10	56	David Anderson, Jr.	G, DE	12
9	Antonio Hunt	RB, FB, MLB	12	58	Jaylan Dorsett	OL, DL	11
10	Jared West	WR	10	65	Joel Thompson	OG, NG	10
11	Jeremy Marrero	SS	11	74	Ryan Warren	G, T	12
12	Parker Stirnkorb	QB	11	76	Alex Hambrecht	C, G	9
13	Kalil Browdy		11	85	Vincent Elder		11
14	Chris Trivigno	WR	9				
15	Noah Coates	OLB, TE	11				

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2022 WIREGRASS RANCH BULLS

Wiregrass Ranch aiming for seventh straight playoff berth with coach Mark Kantor one win shy of 100

By STEVE LEE
Sports Reporter

There could be two noteworthy records falling at Wiregrass Ranch this season. As a football team, the Bulls seek to extend their school record of six consecutive playoff berths to seven. Plus, at some point Mark Kantor could make history. The Wiregrass Ranch coach is one shy of 100 career wins.

Kantor, who has coached high school football for 30 years including 20 as a head coach, racked up 99 victories in stints at Hudson, Gaither and Wiregrass Ranch. He is the only coach in Bulls history with a winning season and playoff appearances.

"It means I've been doing this too long," he said jokingly, adding that he might coach for another 10 years.

The late John Benedetto holds the Pasco County record with 196 victories, all coming at Land O' Lakes before he retired.

"I don't know if I'll ever catch Benedetto," Kantor said.

While 100 victories is a nice number, for Kantor, it's the players he has worked with that mean everything to him.

"It's not about the number, but the kids I've had the opportunity to coach; to help them grow as young men," he said. "I've been blessed to coach guys that became great young men."

Players like Rocco Becht, Bryson Rodgers and Kennedy Nguyen all spoke highly of Kantor. Becht, the son of former Tampa Bay Buccaneers tight end Anthony Becht, was a two-year starting quarterback for the Bulls before signing with Iowa State.

Rodgers and Nguyen are Wiregrass Ranch seniors with Rodgers being a highly recruited wide receiver who this summer verbally committed to Ohio State and Nguyen anchoring the offensive line.

"He's the best I've ever been coached by," said Nguyen, a starting right guard. "He's pretty old-school. He doesn't accept anything less than great."

Rodgers appreciated Kantor's help during the recruiting process as he considered such Division 1 powerhouses as Florida, Florida State, Alabama, Georgia and Texas, to name a few.

"It's been a true blessing to play for coach K," Rodgers said. "Every Friday night I give him my all."

As for extending the team's postseason run, that could be in jeopardy due, in part, to the 2022 graduation of Becht and trouble finding an adequate replacement. While Becht made a name for himself as the county's top quarterback last year his heir apparent left for Zephyrhills. Brendyn Colella, last year's junior varsity quarterback for the Bulls, felt he had a better opportunity with the Bulldogs.

That left Elijah Brown, who competed with Colella during the spring, in summer 7-on-7 tournaments and a preseason game against Clearwater Central Catholic, to take over.

Unfortunately, Brown was picked off on the first play from scrimmage in a season-opening loss to Manatee in Bradenton and backup Lincoln McManus did not fare much better by getting intercepted twice. Third-stringer Jordiel Barrios came in and had the team's only pass completion in that game.

The Bulls opened the season without their best player and it showed. Wide receiver Bryson Rodgers, a highly recruited senior who

this summer made a verbal commitment to Ohio State University, sat out with a left hip flexor.

In fairness, Rodgers missed that first game with a left hip flexor, but was expected back for the second game, a home matchup against longtime rival Wesley Chapel. If the Bulls can figure out their quarterback situation look for Rodgers to continue producing like he has for the past two seasons. His numbers over that span are 89 receptions for 1,355 yards and 14 touchdowns.

Also expected to contribute heavily to the offense is Kenny Walker, a senior running back who last year gained 481 yards and scored seven touchdowns. Davion Brown, another senior running back, rushed for 246 yards with two touchdowns. Both can catch out of the backfield as well.

2022 WIREGRASS RANCH BULLS



schedule

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:30 p.m.

Last season: 5-6.
Class: 4 Suburban, District 6
Coach Mark Kantor, eighth season.
Assistants: Reggie Roberts, John Grone, Brian Surcy, Rey Urquiola, Lance Roberts, Andrew Warner, Ramon Rodriguez, Pat Jalmiste, Ian Smart, Thomas Adams, Jordan Gold

DATE	OPPONENT
Aug. 19	CLEARWATER CENTRAL CATHOLIC
Aug. 26	at Manatee
Sept. 2	WESLEY CHAPEL
Sept. 9	ZEPHYRHILLS
Sept. 16	at Mitchell
Sept. 30	SPRINGSTEAD
Oct. 7	RIVER RIDGE
Oct. 14	at Sunlake
Oct. 21	at Booker
Oct. 28	LAND O'LAKES
Nov. 4	at The Villages Charter



Wiregrass Ranch seniors get together for a photo on the field.



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2022 WIREGRASS RANCH BULLS

varsity
roster



No.	Player	Position	Year	No.	Player	Position	Year
1	Bryson Rodgers	WR, CB	12	25	Jeremiah Julmiste	MLB, TE	11
2	Davion Brown	RB	12	26	Wyatt Chapman	DB	12
3	Kenneth Walker	RB	12	28	Drew Rameau	OLB, MLB, TE	12
4	Matt Hensley, Jr.	RB, TE, OLB	12	30	Gavin Gilyard	WR, CB	10
5	Tre Gibson	RB, WR, CB	12	33	Ehmani Flores	DE	11
6	Jaiden Barron	RB, MLB	11	42	Seanmichael Williams	DE, DT	10
7	Isaiah Riggins	WR, CB	11	43	Camren Gallimore	TE, DE	11
8	Shelton Gilyard, III	WR, CB	12	45	Khalial Buckenroth	T, DE	11
10	Elijah Brown	QB	11	50	Jaeden Ortiz	NG, DT	11
11	Nick Johnson	DE	12	51	Josiah Loyola	G, MLB	10
12	Larence Graham	OLB, MLB, TE	12	52	Travis Brown	MLB	11
13	Jordiel Barrios	QB	11	53	Kennedy Nguyen	G, DT	12
14	Alex Condon	WR	10	54	Christian Starkey	OT	11
15	Jeremy Caruso	K, P	12	60	Austin Legge	OL, DL	11
17	Demontia Hudson	SB, WR	9	62	Billy Rodriguez	DT, T	10
18	Nasir Martinez	MLB	12	63	Wesley Malave	DT, NG	10
19	Ola Omoyole	MLB	9	64	Aiden Curtis	G, DT	10
20	Isaiah Fitzpatrick	DB, WR	11	66	Devin Leathers	G, DL	12
22	Elijah Westbrooks	DB, WR	12	70	Jacob Mascarelli	OL, DL	11
23	Aiden Perez	DB	10	74	Jase Darner	T	10
24	Bryce Randolph	WR, CB	10	99	Jonah Perez	G, DT	11



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2022 WESLEY CHAPEL WILDCATS

Wesley Chapel Wildcats' modest two-year playoff run is likely to end this season

By STEVE LEE
Sports Reporter

A modest streak of two consecutive playoff season likely will end for Wesley Chapel, which appears to be in a rebuilding stage. The Wildcats made it to the postseason two years ago, as did all high school teams in Florida due to the coronavirus outbreak, and last year lost to Chamberlain in the first round to finish with a 6-4 record.

Tony Egan who has coached the Wildcats for the past six seasons, has his hands full as he tries to replace a handful of players who signed college scholarships.

Perhaps as an incentive to the team's current and future players, Egan initiated a Wesley Chapel Football Hall of Honor in the offseason with Ellrie Allen as the inaugural inductee. A presentation took place before the spring game against Land O' Lakes.

The 2017 Wesley Chapel graduate, a fullback/linebacker, went on to play outside linebacker at Florida A&M.

"You try to do nice things for as many kids as you can," Egan said. "(Allen) led by example. Every drill he did he went full speed."

As for this season, the Wildcats appear to be in full rebuild mode after lackluster performances in a preseason loss to The Villages Charter followed by a season-opening loss to Sunlake. From what he has seen so far, Egan reasoned that there is a wide range of outcomes for what so far has been a team of inconsistencies.

"We thought we were going to be doing a full rebuild, but then we got some transfers in," he said. "We're just going to do the best we can and compete."

Egan noted that some of the players on the roster have never played football, hence some of the mistakes on the field that comes with inexperience. Instilling discipline with a few more rules, Egan said, could go a long way in eliminating some of those troublesome situations.

"Hopefully, we figure it out soon," the coach said.

The defense seems to have figured things out a bit more than the offense in the early going with Egan saying, "Our defense flies around. We've got a lot of guys going to the ball."

Senior linebackers Erik Chana and Zachary Jones are the early leaders on defense. Chana, coming off knee surgery, made six tackles with 2.5 sacks while Jones, who missed last season after shoulder surgery, had five tackles and one sack in the opener. Emmanuel Park, a junior linebacker chipped in with four tackles and 1.5 sacks.

Other players to watch on defense are key returners and senior linebackers Joshua Poleon and Mason Quinn. Poleon was the Sunshine Athletic Conference Defensive Player of the Year in 2021.

All of the aforementioned players line up on offense as well as defense, as does running back Wesley Young, who also is a linebacker. Young, who had the Wildcats' lone touchdown run in the loss to Sunlake, and quarterback Dylan McGinnis are likely to get the bulk of carries on offense. Add Quinn to that mix of ballcarriers.

The passing game and offensive line are works in progress. Wesley Chapel lost two starting blockers who transferred to Zephyrhills Christian Academy. That leaves Evan Miller, Gabe Stewart and Jones are the top blockers.

"Our line is a very fluid thing," Egan said.

While things might be rough this season, the future bodes well for the Wildcats. The junior varsity team looks solid with ample depth and talent, in part, because of 25 freshmen who came out for football.

"The JV's are going to be really good," Egan said after that squad's 27-18 defeat of Zephyrhills in a season opener.



Wesley Chapel running back Wesley Young picks up yardage during a game against the Villages Charter.

2022 WESLEY CHAPEL WILDCATS



— schedule

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:30 p.m.

Last season: 6-4.
Class: 3 Suburban, District 7.
Coach Anthony Egan, seventh season.
Assistants: Mark Barnes, Brian Colding, Cameron Culbertson, Brian Cullum, Rick Gavin, Kenny Roberts, Matt Smith

DATE	OPPONENT
Aug. 18	THE VILLAGES CHARTER
Aug. 26	at Sunlake
Sept. 2	at Wiregrass Ranch
Sept. 9	at Gulf
Sept. 16	LAND O'LAKES
Sept. 30	ZEPHYRHILLS
Oct. 7	at Tohopekaliga
Oct. 14	at Cypress Creek
Oct. 21	LECANTO
Oct. 28	PASCO
Nov. 4	MITCHELL



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2022 WESLEY CHAPEL WILDCATS

varsity
roster



No.	Player	Position	Year	No.	Player	Position	Year
1	Travon Hill	WR, DB, ATH	11	42	Ian Meyer	LB	10
3	Kyson Dickerson	DB, WR	12	44	Shawn Kelley	LB	9
4	Emmanuel Park	FB, LB, ATH	11	45	Ricky Mingo	FB, LB	11
5	Dylan McGinnis	QB, LB	12	50	Jadon Haynes	DL, OL	12
6	Mason Quinn	RB, LB	12	52	Brady Barowski	DL, OL	10
7	Nikolai Larota	WR, LB	12	53	Nikola Krekik	OL	10
8	Jaylahn Lewis	RB, DL	10	54	Evan Miller	OL	11
9	Connor Libby	TE, DL	11	55	Zackary Jones	LB, OL	12
10	Eli Chana	QB	9	56	Logan Pomeranke	OL	10
11	Kody Gibson	CB	11	58	Christian Hersh	OL, DL	10
15	Jason Brown	LB	10	62	Ben Stay	OL	11
17	Payton Cox	WR	12	63	Nick Jenkins	DT, DE	10
18	Desmond Ghabbour	DB, WR	10	65	Aaron Jones	OL	9
20	Dylan Colton		10	70	Gabe Stewart		12
21	Thomas Waskovich	WR, S	9	71	Gregory Griffith	OL, DL	12
22	Wesley Young	LB, RB	11	72	Ronold Artadi		11
23	Judah Howell	WR, DB	10	74	Levi Loez	OL	10
24	Edwin Garcia		10	75	Anthony Pinkston	OL	9
25	Braden Rice	WR	10	76	Chris Vassilakos	OL	9
26	Aaron Patten	DB, RB	11	77	Jason Ferguson	OL, DL	11
28	Yahiel Claudio	WR, DB	10	80	Malik Burgos	WR, CB	10
30	Chance Hummel	RB	9	81	Brandon Glassman	QB, WR, S	11
32	Joshua Poleon	LB, FB	12	88	Cain Huff	TE, DL	10
34	John Mundorff	WR	9				

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2022 CYPRESS CREEK COYOTES

Cypress Creek Coyotes gear up for first playoff appearance since 2019 and just the second in school history

By STEVE LEE
Sports Reporter

One year after missing the playoffs, there is optimism in the Cypress Creek camp that a return to the postseason is imminent. The Coyotes enter their sixth season with just one playoff appearance.

They actually made it to the postseason twice but only 2019 was earned since all high school football teams got a playoff game in 2020 when that season was adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Three significant changes could factor into that prospect. While Mike Johnson returns as the only head football coach in school history, longtime assistant Tico Hernandez steps up as the defensive coordinator and quarterback Jack Niemann replaces Owen Walls, a two-year starter who graduated last spring.

The third change is the coaching staff implementing a leadership council that instills a new sense of accountability and debuted during the spring sessions. Filling those roles are Jack Carbone, Shawn Smith, Dylan Lolley, Roman Sercu, Austin Slusher, Logan Falk, Malachi Askin and Niemann.

"It's a group of our players that we hold to a higher standard," Johnson said, adding that among that group will be rotating captains on game nights. "At the end of the day those are the guys that are our group leaders. On good teams, the coaches are leaders. On great teams, the players lead."

After this season, a plaque in the locker room will be put up after every season to honor the leadership council members "so all the classes can see it," said Johnson, who as a defensive back at Illinois Valley Central High and later at Eureka College in Illinois wishes he had something along those lines.

"I think they enjoy having that kind of title," he said, adding, "It can be taken away and they know it."

Entrusted as the new signal-caller is Niemann, last year's junior varsity starter who is banking on that experience to carry over. He replaces Walls, who passed for 1,917 yards and 17 touchdowns in two seasons.

"Jack's got all the tools to be really good in this game," Johnson said of Niemann, last year's junior varsity starter.



The Cypress Creek seniors are shown here.

For his part, Niemann, who threw for 99 yards and a touchdown in a season-opening 20-13 win over Fivay, welcomes the challenge: "I think I can do it."

Behind Niemann on the depth chart are Zyon Davis and Sercu.

As for Niemann's targets to pass to downfield, there is Lolley, a big tight end, and wide receiver Milton Gracia, a solid-two-way player who also can line up in the secondary as a defender. "Niemann is going to be blessed with some weapons," said Johnson, adding that Lolley is "big down the middle" and Gracia "is just a pure athlete. He's matured so much over the past year. He just catches everything."

On defense, Johnson and Hernandez lauded the play and practices of defensive backs Askin, Logan Lugo, Jackson Zebra, Sercu and Gracia.

Falk sparked the defense in the win over Fivay. The senior outside linebacker led the Coyotes with 15 tackles, including five solos, and had two of his team's five sacks.

"The kid is full-go," Hernandez said. "He loves contact."

As for Askin, Fernandez said the junior cornerback "is physical, has fantastic coverage and never gives up on a play."

Hernandez also described Lolley, as a solid two-way player, who lines up as a tight end and defensive lineman. In the first game, Lolley had two receptions for 32 yards with one being a touchdown catch against the Falcons.

Offensively, Smith and Askin are expected to contribute like they did against Fivay. Smith had three receptions for 52 yards with Askin rushing for 217 yards and two touchdowns in that game.



Cypress Creek's defensive leaders for this season are Shawn Smith, Dylan Lolley, Logan Falk and Malachi Askin.

2022 CYPRESS CREEK COYOTES



— schedule

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:30 p.m.

Last Season: 4-6.
Class: 3 Suburban, District 7
Coach
Michael Johnson, sixth season
Assistants:
Tico Hernandez
Jon Altonen
Darrell Davis
Will Fulmer
Seth Petty
Robb Sercu
Willie Thacker
Dave Dimarco
Aman Patel
Jeff Barnes
Phil Hiett
Steven Mira
Jerrell Hardy

DATE	OPPONENT
Aug. 19	at Key West
Aug. 26	FIVAY
Sept. 2	at Sunlake
Sept. 16	BAYSHORE
Sept. 23	at Anclote
Sept. 30	at Pasco
Oct. 7	HOLLINS
Oct. 14	WESLEY CHAPEL
Oct. 21	at Parrish Community
Oct. 28	at Zephyrhills
Nov. 4	RIVER RIDGE

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2022 CYPRESS CREEK COYOTES

varsity
roster



No.	Player	Position	Year			
1	Roman Sercu	WR, SS	11	42	David Kirk	TE, DE 11
2	Logan Falk	FB, OLB	12	44	Nolan Lussier	MLB 11
3	Logan Lugo	WR, CB	12	50	Jack Carbone	G, MLB, LS 12
4	Malachi Askin	RB, CB	11	51	Austin Slusher	T 11
5	Milton Gracia	WR, OLB	11	52	Vincent Tre	G, DE 12
7	Jeremy Bastidas	RB, OLB	12	53	Elliott Meredith	OLB 11
8	Coy Martin	FB, OLB	11	55	Jt Agnes	G, DT 12
10	Shawn Smith	WR, OLB	11	60	Trindon Symonds	T, DT 11
11	Shaan Patel	WR, CB	10	61	Declan McClure	OL, DL 11
12	Jack Niemann	QB	11	62	Dalton Gulley	DE 12
13	Logan Wilson	WR, FS	11	64	Garett Loner	OL, DL 12
14	Jaden Donovan	WR, CB	11	65	Joshua Dimarco	T, DE 12
15	Zyon Davis	WR, DB	12	66	Lucas Pavlikovic	C 10
18	Jayden Frederick	RB, DB	12	70	Amjad Khalid	OL, DL 12
19	Jackson Zebra	SS	11	71	Gerron Bush	OL, DL 10
20	Alex Dulaski	MLB	12	72	Duncan McAllister	T, DT 11
22	Jadon Manatt	WR	10	75	Andre Hall	G, DT 12
23	Larry Jackson, III	QB	10	77	Ethan Smith	T 12
24	Blayze Lancaster	RB, OLB	11	80	Cameron Canard	K, P 11
25	Jakob Criswell	RB, OLB	10	81	Cristian Gregory	DE 12
30	Josh Nickerson	TE, DE	11	82	Geoffrey Bettis Miller	WR 11
32	Breck Petty	DE	10	84	Marley Walker	OLB 11
33	Andrew Alvarez	RB, MLB	11	85	Jayden Hill	WR 12
40	Bryce Browdy	MLB	10	88	Dylan Lolley	TE, DE 12
41	Mekhai Santiago	CB	11		Youssef Mina	12
					Vincent Tré	12

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