

2026 Shoals Sports Report Midseason

Football Checkpoint

Fall has officially started even if it feels like summer still. We have crossed the halfway point of the season with most teams in our coverage area already having played five of the ten games on the regular season schedule. Where do they stand with playoffs? What are the best win(s), loss(es) on their resume so far? What big games are left? How do they line up for the playoffs if it began today? We go through all sixteen programs answering all those questions along with our thoughts of each program so far and what is to come. Starting with Single-A Private then 1A-5A in alphabetical order with each class.

Single-A Private

Mars Hill

Record: 3-2

Region: 2-1

Points Per Game: 26

Points Allowed Per Game: 18.2

Key Wins: Madison Academy (24-21), Shoals Christian (44-0)

Key Losses: Westbrook Christian (35-14)

Biggest Games Remaining: Whitesburg Christian (10/2). Lindsay Lane (10/9). Decatur Heritage (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): 3-seed at Tuscaloosa Academy

Thoughts: Mars Hill came into the season as the preemptive favorite in this private school region but got a wake up call when they had to comeback from a 21-10 halftime deficit vs Madison Academy then lost to Russellville and Westbrook Christian in back to back weeks. The toughest part of the schedule should be over and they may be able to finish 7-3 or 8-2. The last three region games they need to win at least two to make the playoffs and gain tiebreakers. Coach Chris Hill has brought in a new offense and it takes time to learn but scoring 40+ in their last two games may be a sign that it is firing on all cylinders now.

Shoals Christian

Record: 2-3

Region: 0-2

Points Per Game: 13.4

Points Allowed Per Game: 23

Key Wins: Tharptown (24-12)

Key Losses: Lindsay Lane (12-0)

Biggest Games Remaining: Decatur Heritage (10/2), Coosa Christian (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Would Not Qualify (6-seed)

Thoughts: When we saw the reclassification everyone said wait a minute Shoals Christian with Mars Hill in the same region? Shoals Christian has to play two schools from Gadsden? Coach Joe Michael and his players said "Fear None, Follow One." at media days. The only two wins have come versus schools who are not playing region play this season but they hung around with Lindsay Lane. It was 0-0 at halftime until Lindsay Lane pulled away in the second half. If they can win one or both of Decatur Heritage and Coosa Christian they will have a shot at playoffs. May need some help from Lindsay Lane losing one or two games but they are not too far gone yet.

1A

Cherokee

Record: 1-3

Region: 0-3

Points Per Game: 19

Points Allowed Per Game: 49.5

Key Wins: Tharptown (34-26)

Key Losses: Belgreen (48-14)

Biggest Games Remaining: Phillips (10/2). Waterloo (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Would Not Qualify (7-seed)

Thoughts: Similar to Shoals Christian, the lone win is versus a team not playing region play but they have had to play Meek and Red Bay back to back, two playoff teams last year. Belgreen is better than most thought as well. They need to beat Phillips to have a shot at the playoffs. Four region losses is about the most you can take and make the playoffs. They still have games with Addison and Hackleburg on the schedule as well.

Waterloo

Record: 1-3

Region: 1-2

Points Per Game: 13.7

Points Allowed Per Game: 38.2

Key Wins: Phillips (41-0)

Key Losses: Hackleburg (58-7)

Biggest Games Remaining: Meek (10/2), Belgreen (10/16). Cherokee (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Would Not Qualify (6-seed)

Thoughts: Beating Phillips was huge for playoff hopes. They must win two if not all three of Meek, Belgreen, Cherokee to have a better shot at playoffs. Red Bay still looms on the schedule but they have already played Addison and Hackleburg so October may be kinder to Waterloo

2A

Colbert County

Record: 3-2

Region: 2-1

Points Per Game: 36.2

Points Allowed Per Game: 27.6

Key Wins: Tanner (26-14)

Key Losses: Phil Campbell (34-26)

Biggest Games Remaining: Lexington (10/2), Falkville (10/16)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): 3-seed at Piedmont/Walter Wellborn

Thoughts: Aside from the Phil Campbell loss it has been smooth sailing in 2A competition for Colbert County. The Lexington game on 10/2 was thought to be a de facto region championship game but now it may be Colbert County playing for a home playoff game and a top two seed. If they can shock Lexington then a region championship is on the table and at least a home playoff game. Piedmont and Walter Wellborn are both undefeated at 5-0 so this is a region where you do not want to be the three or four seed come playoffs.

Lexington

Record: 5-0

Region: 3-0

Points Per Game: 38.8

Points Allowed Per Game: 10.4

Key Wins: Lauderdale County (20-19), Phil Campbell (20-18)

Key Losses: N/A

Biggest Games Remaining: Colbert County (10/2)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): 1-seed vs Ohatchee/Pleasant Valley

Thoughts: In 1982 you could buy a gallon of gas for about \$1.25 and you could drive out to Lexington, AL and watch the Bears have a perfect 10-0 season. That was the last time they began 5-0 as well. Returning a sophomore quarterback and offensive line who all started last season helps. Sophomore quarterback Zane Kilburn has already broken his own record of passing touchdowns in a single game when he had seven versus Falkville. The 2A Region 7 Championship crown is in more reach after Phil Campbell stunned Colbert County. Still work to

do but Lexington is eyeing a home playoff game for a second straight season and the fourth time in the last five seasons.

Sheffield

Record: 1-4

Region: 1-2

Points Per Game: 17.2

Points Allowed Per Game: 38.2

Key Wins: Winston County (20-10)

Key Losses: Red Bay (34-14), JB Pennington (49-25)

Biggest Games Remaining: Tanner (10/2), Falkville (10/9)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Would Not Qualify (7-seed)

Thoughts: It is easier to enter the bye week on a win and Sheffield got their first win over Winston County. However they need to win one, if not both of Tanner and Falkville to have a shot at playoffs. Will give credit for playing Red Bay who is 5-0 within 20 points. Sheffield is still searching for the first playoff berth of this decade.

3A

Central

Record: 4-0

Region: 3-0

Points Per Game: 37.5

Points Allowed Per Game: 13.2

Key Wins: Phil Campbell (49-14), Wilson (20-6), Lauderdale County (21-20)

Key Losses: N/A

Biggest Games Remaining: Brooks (9/25), West Limestone (10/16), Rogers (10/23), Hatton (10/29)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Tied for 1-seed vs Vinemont/Glencoe

Thoughts: Central has never had an undefeated regular season and this may be their best shot. The schedule is aging well also as Phil Campbell, Wilson and Lauderdale County are all off to good starts. Phil Campbell started slow but lost to three undefeated teams. Lauderdale County and Wilson have been the biggest tests so far, but the biggest games are to come. Brooks is an out of region test. The Rogers game could decide the region. West Limestone could be playing for a playoff spot. Hatton could be looming if both are 9-0 and be the last challenge before a potential 10-0 season. Central has not won 10 games since 2010, they were 9-1 in the regular season.

Colbert Heights

Record: 0-5

Region: 0-3

Points Per Game: 13.4

Points Allowed Per Game: 44.4

Key Wins: N/A

Key Losses: East Lawrence (28-18), Lauderdale County (40-13), West Limestone (48-0)

Biggest Games Remaining: Wilson (10/2), Elkmont (10/16), Clements (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Would Not Qualify (8-seed)

Thoughts: The last two seasons Colbert Heights had started 4-0 and 5-0 then finished 4-6 and 5-5. So maybe this season they finish strong after a rough start. The region did not get any easier with the reclassification but four of the first five opponents made the playoffs in 2025 and/or currently over .500 winning percentage. They are almost in a must win spot vs Wilson on 10/2 and then can begin thinking about playoff scenarios.

Lauderdale County

Record: 2-3

Region: 2-1

Points Per Game: 26.8

Points Allowed Per Game: 22.2

Key Wins: West Limestone (41-14)

Key Losses: Lexington (20-19), Central (21-20)

Biggest Games Remaining: Rogers (10/9), Wilson (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): 4-seed at Oneonta

Thoughts: Lauderdale County needed the West Limestone win in the worst way. They got it convincingly. Two of the three losses have come by two points to two undefeated teams (Lexington and Central). They can probably afford one more region loss down the stretch and still make the playoffs. If they lose two then it becomes interesting. The game versus Wilson could be a win and make the playoffs for both sides or a spot where the winner is the two-seed (host a playoff game) and the loser is the three-seed (on the road round one)

Rogers

Record: 4-0

Region: 3-0

Points Per Game: 44.7

Points Allowed Per Game: 17.7

Key Wins: Elkmont (27-16), Colbert Heights (48-24)

Key Losses: N/A

Biggest Games Remaining: Lauderdale County (10/9), Wilson (10/16), Central (10/23), Lexington (10/29)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Tied for 1-seed vs Vinemont/Glencoe

Thoughts: Three weeks in October will tell the story of the 2026 Rogers Pirates. Currently tied for the 1-seed with Central and they will have a mini tournament from October 9th to October 23 for the region championship. The game with Wilson may be the difference in a home playoff game or traveling in round one. Then leaves Lexington at the end which may be two 9-0 teams battling for 10-0. Rogers has not finished 10-0 since 2016 and 2017.

Wilson

Record: 3-1 (2-1)

Region: 2-1

Points Per Game: 36.5

Points Allowed Per Game: 10

Key Wins: Haleyville (28-14), Clements (63-6)

Key Losses: Central (20-6)

Biggest Games Remaining: West Limestone (10/8), Lauderdale County (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): 3-seed at Etowah

Thoughts: Is that the Army Black Knights or Navy Midshipmen? No it is the Wilson Warriors running the flexbone/option offense. Opening the season on the road with a win (Haleyville) for the first time since 2021 and the game was not as close as the scoreboard indicated. Wilson can control the clock if needed. They can also break a big play at any moment. The three wins matches the total number of wins from last season and they do not look to be satisfied with just three wins. Wilson has not won three or more games in back to back years since 2012-2018.

They have not made the playoffs since 2017 and look to change that this season. A win over one or both of West Limestone and/or Lauderdale County will virtually lock up a playoff spot. If they can beat both and beat Rogers then we are talking about a potential home playoff game in Zip City (Wilson). If not, a region championship (has not happened since 1990).

4A

Brooks

Record: 2-3

Region: 1-2

Points Per Game: 30.4

Points Allowed Per Game: 33.8

Key Wins: Lauderdale County (43-14), Ardmore (55-31)

Key Losses: Hamilton (41-20)

Biggest Games Remaining: Central (9/25), Deshler (10/15), Priceville (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Would Not Qualify (5-seed)

Thoughts: Brooks has three losses to who made the playoffs last season so it is not as bad as it looks. The wins have been convincing but have yet to find a way to win back to back weeks. They could enter the Deshler game at 3-2 in region play and need a win against Deshler or Priceville to make the playoffs. Each Brooks head coach has made the playoffs in year one since 2003.

Deshler

Record: 4-1

Region: 3-0

Points Per Game: 45.2

Points Allowed Per Game: 19.6

Key Wins: Hamilton (35-33), Priceville (51-7)

Key Losses: Russellville (28-27)

Biggest Games Remaining: West Morgan (10/2), Brooks (10/15)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Tied for 1-seed vs Jacksonville/Moody

Thoughts: Somethings never change and Deshler football contending for a region championship is one of those. After a season opening loss to Russellville they have fired off four straight wins by an average margin of victory of 32.5 and put themself in prime position for a region championship and at the least a home playoff game. West Morgan looms after the bye week but this is not the same West Morgan-Deshler matchup we saw last year, but it may have the same impact on the region standings. The schedule opens up after the West Morgan game with teams at the bottom of the region as well as Brooks who is sure to be fighting for a playoff spot in the middle.

5A

Florence

Record: 5-0

Region: 3-0

Points Per Game: 34.2

Points Allowed Per Game: 11.6

Key Wins: Muscle Shoals (7-0), Russellville (35-21)

Key Losses: N/A

Biggest Games Remaining: Athens (10/2), Austin (10/16)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): 1-seed vs Southside

Thoughts: The biggest win of this season across all classes came on September 4th when Florence beat Muscle Shoals ending a couple of long losing streaks to Muscle Shoals. The game

was scoreless until the last three minutes when Florence broke a run to score the lone touchdown. Then came another test in the new look Russellville Tigers. Florence trailed 14-7 before halftime then scored to tie it at 14-14 into halftime. Florence came out in the third quarter and scored twice to lead 28-14 before adding another touchdown to win 35-21. Florence has already won the two toughest games (arguably) on the schedule (Muscle Shoals and Russellville). Austin upset Athens last week so the path to a region championship is getting wider for Florence. Assuming nothing goes terribly wrong, Florence is eyeing at least a home playoff game for the first time since 2022. They have not won a playoff game since 2019.

Muscle Shoals

Record: 2-2

Region: 2-1

Points Per Game: 19.7

Points Allowed Per Game: 10.5

Key Wins: Austin (26-7), Hartselle (45-14)

Key Losses: Florence (7-0)

Biggest Games Remaining: Russellville (10/2), Athens (10/23)

Playoff Matchup (if started today): Tied for 2-seed vs Pell City

Thoughts: No one in our coverage area had a tougher uphill climb to start than Muscle Shoals. New Head Coach (Michael Darden) lost to powerhouse Hoover by six then Florence by seven and then got rolling. Any fears or concerns about Muscle Shoals were erased the last two weeks. Muscle Shoals is currently in a four way tie for the 2-seed but only three of them plus Florence can make the playoffs if it began today. The Russellville game will be enormous as the winner will more than likely host a playoff game in round one. Muscle Shoals has not traveled for the first round since 2020. Russellville not since 2019. If Muscle Shoals wins vs Russellville then they would virtually be a lock for playoffs with tiebreakers over Austin and Russellville.

Zack Pounders,

Shoals Sports Report