

Fear None, Follow One: Shoals Christian Enters New Era with No Fear

The biggest shift from the reclassification last January was that private schools were grouped into their own classes. The AHSAA took the private schools and made two classes now known as “Double A” (17 largest private schools) and “Single A (the rest of the private schools). To level the playing field in sports. Shoals Christian will compete in the Single A division, which, in the old format, is full of 1A-3A schools. Shoals Christian can still play public schools in the regular season, but in the playoffs and region/area play, it will be private versus private. Coach Joe Michael noted how it has been interesting in navigating the shift with additional travel but how inside the locker room they are not changing. “All that changed for us is we’ll have some different jerseys in front of us,” he also added.

Shoals Christian will have to travel more this season than in the past. The regions in the small school private class can be thought of more simply than the ones for the public schools. You have four regions of seven to eight teams in each, then the top four will make the playoffs. Region 1 will be South Alabama (Mobile/Dothan). Region 2 will be South/Central Alabama (Montgomery/Troy). Region 3 you can call it south of Birmingham, as it will have schools from Tuscaloosa, the Birmingham area, Selma, and the Anniston area. Region 4 will be North Alabama (Shoals/Huntsville/Gadsden).

Shoals Christian’s region will include Coosa Christian, Decatur Heritage, Lindsay Lane, Mars Hill, Westbrook Christian, and Whitesburg Christian. Coosa and Mars Hill won the 2A and 3A 2025 State Championships in 2A and 3A, respectively. Decatur Heritage has spent the last two years in 2A after being in 1A from 2010-2023. Westbrook Christian has been a 3A the last four years and won a playoff game in their last three playoff appearances (2025, 2020, 2019). Whitesburg Christian is in their seventh season of having a program and is coached by former long-time Decatur coach Jere Adcock. He led Whitesburg to their first playoff appearance last season. Lindsay Lane will start their varsity program this season.

Shoals Christian’s schedule will be full of new faces for the first time as they have only played Mars Hill, Decatur Heritage, and Whitesburg Christian before. The non-region slate includes Clements (3A) and Tharptown (2A, but not playing region play), and Vina (1A, but not playing region play), and Carbon Hill (2A)

Coach Joe Michael has now been the head coach for a full year. He got hired about a week before media days last season. He noted that last year they were bought in, and now they are more bought in after seeing each other every day in the classroom, field, etc. Shoals Christian started last season 0-3 before finishing 4-4 to make the playoffs.

Shoals Christian may have lost in round one of the playoffs last season, but they were really in their second round already. They had to beat Waterloo last season to make the playoffs.

They would tie the game as time expired with a touchdown, then had an extra point to either win or go to overtime. The kick was up and good. Shoals Christian claimed the last playoff spot from their region. The players mentioned how it was an awesome atmosphere. Sophomore Knox Benson said, "You always hear about these game-winning extra points and touchdowns, and we actually got to live one." Coach Michael added, "Out of all my experiences playing football and short coaching career, that is one of those moments that will forever be ingrained in my memory. I mentioned last year how God sent us here as a family, and I felt like that game was his signature on last season and his reason for sending us here."

Fear None, Follow One. That is what Shoals Christian football is being built on now. The long form is to fear no one and follow the one (Jesus Christ). Coach Michael added how it's what they live by. Despite the new region, successful programs, and all the changes this offseason with the reclassification, Shoals Christian is choosing to fear none and follow one.

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