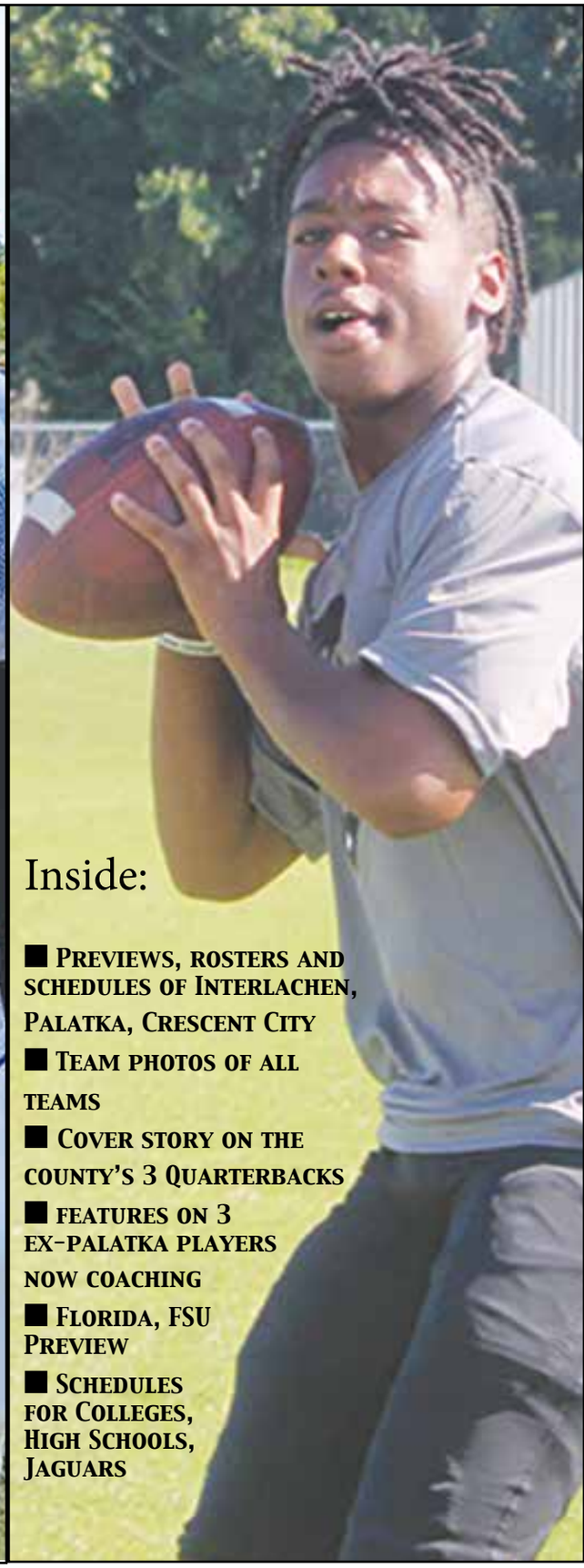
2022 PIGSKIN PREVIEW







Inside:

- Previews, rosters and schedules of Interlachen, Palatka, Crescent City
- Team photos of all teams
- Cover story on the county's 3 Quarterbacks
- features on 3 ex-palatka players now coaching
- Florida, FSU Preview
- Schedules for Colleges, High Schools, Jaguars

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The trio of dual-threat quarterbacks

Allen, McKinnon, Jenkins use all resources to keep opposing defenses guessing during games

By Corey Davis
Palatka Daily News
cdavis@palatkadailynews.com

It is no secret one of the most important positions on a football field is at quarterback.

Lucky for Putnam County, it is blessed to have three solid athletes who bring different skill sets to the table each week.

For Interlachen senior Reggie Allen Jr., Palatka senior Jamarrie McKinnon and Crescent City sophomore Eric Jenkins, the upcoming season will literally rely on their arms, legs and other tools to win.

Allen is the veteran of the group beginning his fourth season on varsity, third as the starting quarterback of the Rams. Last year, Allen ran for a county-leading 1,240 yards and 13 touchdowns, while throwing for only 388 yards and three touchdowns. In two years, Allen has thrown for 1,232 yards and 11 touchdowns, ran for 1,736 yards and 16 touchdowns.

His freshman year, Allen played wide receiver for the Rams and hauled in 18 passes for 357 yards and six touchdowns.

"I see my throwing, my legs and my ability to read defenses as my talents," Allen said. "Ninety-nine percent of me running was by design. They wanted me to run up the middle or bounce it outside. They just didn't want me to have negative yards. I did a lot of running to get yards for the team so we could get something rolling on offense."

See **QUARTERBACKS**, Page **22**



MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Interlachen quarterback Reggie Allen Jr. attempts to escape would-be Bell High tacklers during a game last season at home.

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FRONT PAGE PHOTOS

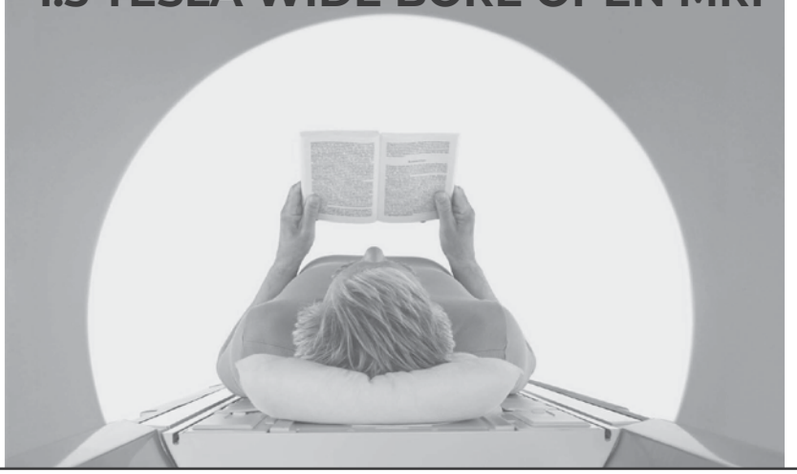
The front page features the three quarterbacks, from left, Palatka's Jamarrie McKinnon, Interlachen's Reggie Allen Jr. and Crescent City's Eric Jenkins Jr., who hope to have big seasons for their teams.

(Photo credits: Jamarrie McKinnon and Eric Clemsons Jr. by Mark Blumenthal; Reggie Allen Jr. by Corey Davis.)

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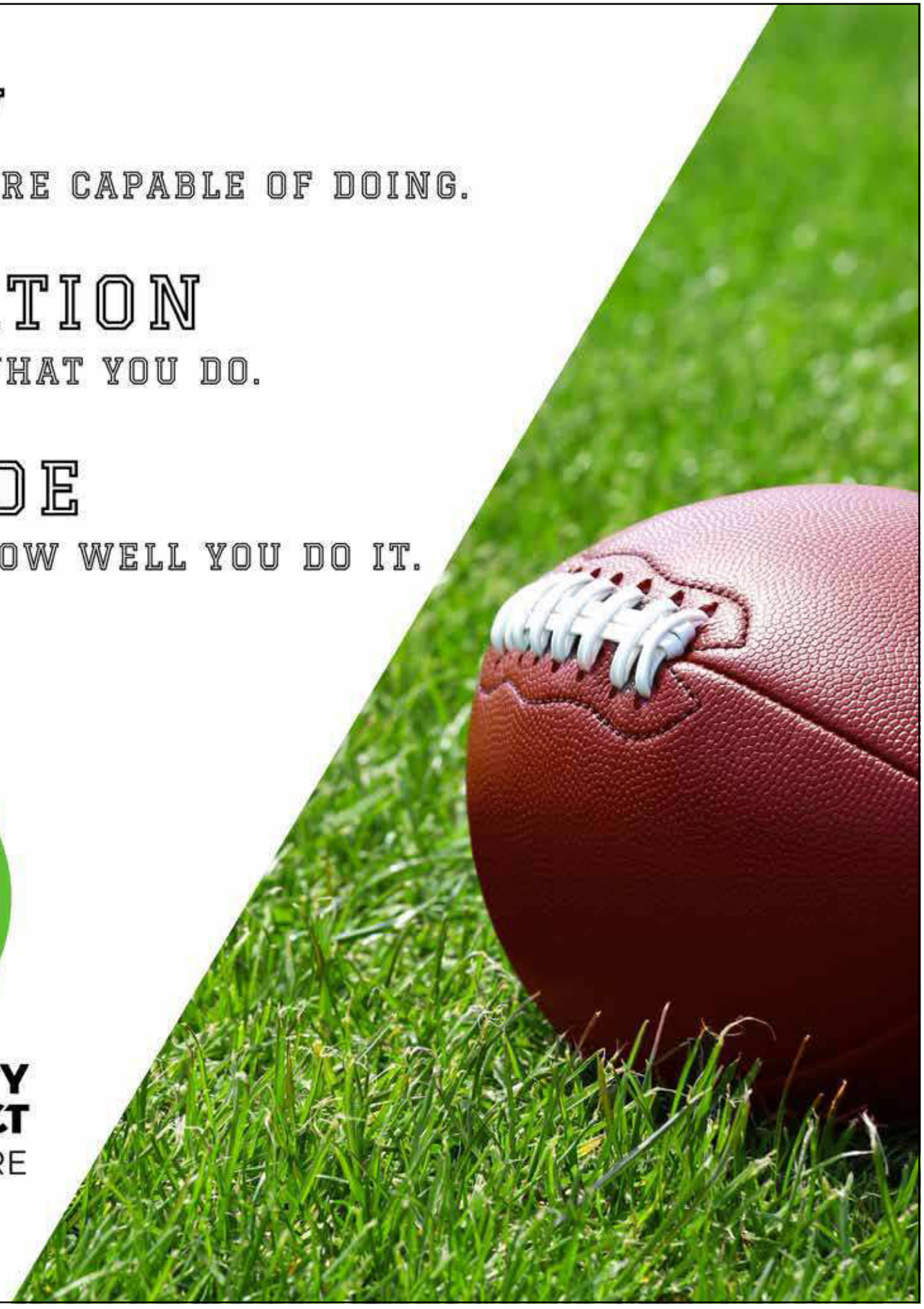
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MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daiy News

Crescent City Junior-Senior High School football coach Sean Delaney (right) watches as his players warm up before practice recently. Delaney's Raiders went to the postseason last year after going 0-8 in the 2020 season.

Returning to familiar winning form

Raiders seek more with lethal throwing game

By Mark Blumenthal
Palatka Daily News
mblumenthal@palatkadailynews.com

No, it did not take long to turn around the fortunes of the Crescent City Junior-Senior High School football for Sean Delaney.

A year after having to re-train his new Raiders how to be football players, they went to the postseason and finished up 7-4. They lost, 56-7, in the state tournament at Gainesville P.K. Yonge. But Delaney said he was just happy his players – especially the graduated seniors – got that postseason feeling.

Now, as Delaney pointed out, the bar has been set higher for this season.

"As I told our team the other day, we're not going back to the expectations of the past, where we 'hoped' to win that week," he said. "Now we expect to win. There's the difference. Just because of the mindset from last year and what we did, it left a lot of our players hungry this year."

So this year's team set out to make itself better after the May jamboree held at Wisnoski Field at Wiltcher Stadium against county rivals Palatka and Interlachen. They have gone through strenuous weightlifting workout this summer that has made them even stronger than last year.

And for the first time since 2016, the Raiders will be part of a district. They will be competing for the District 8-2S ("S" as in the new Suburban schools group) against Lake Weir, Port Orange Atlantic and longtime provincial rival Pierson Taylor.

Goals begin with winning the district, according to Delaney.

"It's nice to be part of a district again," he said. "This is the first chance for these kids to have something to play for other than a state championship. It's something they can hang their hats on if they win it."

Delaney said one thing he is very pleased with and could make a difference this year is in the passing department. Even though all-everything quarterback Naykeem Scott, last year's county player of the year, threw for over 1,000 yards, sophomore Eric Jenkins Jr. could be on line to do better. As a matter of fact, Delaney said he has set the over/under for 1,000 yards passing as over.

"Eric is a more accurate quarterback and that's not a knock by any means on Naykeem," Delaney said. "Eric is not going to improvise the way Naykeem did when a play broke down and he could just take off and run with the ball. Naykeem could do things that other quarterbacks can't. I'm not expecting Eric to do those things, but I believe he's a better passer. Barring injury, he'll be throwing for over a 1,000 yards."

See **RAIDERS**, Page **7**

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Crescent City Breakdown

BASE OFFENSE: SPREAD.

Quarterbacks: Eric Jenkins, Larry Harrington.

Currently, Jenkins has a better command of the offense showing to be a very accurate passer and being able to improvise. Herrington's strengths are staying within the system and doing what's is asked of him to do.

Running back: Tyler Daughtery, Zay Robinson, Eduardo Martinez.

Daughtery did see time at running back, filling in for starter Elijah Hernandez and played a lot of special teams. Daughery is also a good blocker and has developed quickly in the offseason. Robinson is a freshman, but he's a promising star of the future with a bull-like running style and strong IQ, according to coach Sean Delaney. Martinez has played off and on and is learning the position on th fly. Each runner has its own style.

Receivers: Sheldon Patrick, Ray Davis, David Newbold, Brandon Padgett, Lentavious Keenon.

Longtime standouts Patrick and Davis can turn their games on at any time and be dominant in a game. Newbold, Padgett and Keenon help give Jenkins great targets to throw to. Padgett is returning from a broken wrist and can catch some people off guard.

Line

Tackles: Jake Robinson Charles Winstead, Zach Rotramel; **Guards:** Clinton Smith, Jacob Westberry; **Center:** Elias Perez; **Tight end:** Josiah Washington.

The tackles are tall, big kids with tons of potential and a lot of promise in the future. The guards and center Perez are small strong and fast, but not big by any means. The guards are not even 200 pounds and Perez is 170. But all three of them are very strong, fast and mean, which is what Delaney wants. Delaney said he expects some highlight blocks from veteran Clinton.

DEFENSE: 3-4.

Linemen

Ends: Jaden Charles, Jeremy Jones, Rotramel, Smith **Nose guard:** Westberry, Winstead.

Delaney calls this unit "tenacious" and "gives us fits in practice." The challenge, though, according to Delaney, is stopping the run, which has been a challenge since he's been coach.

Linebackers

Outside: Washington, Perez, Alex Bell, Cameron Wright, Daughtery; **Inside:** Martinez, Robinson, Smith.

This unit has experience and are more decisive in its play. Unlike the past, this group is "reacting and playing football," according to Delaney.

Secondary

Cornerbacks: Padgett, Jenkins, Newbold; **Safeties:** Davis, Patrick, Keenon.

The secondary is strong, but may not get challenged quite that much. Padgett, Davis and Patrick bring the experience, but stopping the run is what the Raiders have to do first.

Special teams

Kicker/punter: Newbold, Michael Hernandez. **Long snappers:** Perez, Tyler Frazier. **Kick/punt returnees:** Padgett, Wright, Patrick, Davis.

Four of the five special teams phases the Raiders have done. It's the punt return team that has Delaney concerned. But with Newbold kicking, not many teams will return kickoffs and he's getting more confidence on field goal attempts from outside 35 yards. Delaney will not be in fear of using him for those kicks.

At A Glance

Head coach/offensive coordinator/quarterbacks/running backs: Sean Delaney (Western Governors, 2010; third year.


Delaney

Last year's record: 7-4, FHSAA Region 1-3A playoffs.

Career record: 7-12.

Assistant coaches: Robert Ripley (defensive coordinator/linebackers), Keenan Henry (defensive backs/special teams), Brian Roney (defensive linemen), Travis Delaney (offensive line), Fitzroy Henry (receivers/running backs), Tim Ross (middle school head coach/offensive coordinator), Ronnie Pilcher (middle school defensive coordinator), Ardrae Williams (middle school assistant).

Tickets: $7. There's a discount for students via gofan.co.

All-time football record: 358-369-13.

LAST YEAR'S SCHEDULE (7-4)

Chiefland 56, Crescent City 13
Crescent City 41, Umatilla 6
Crescent City 27, Interlachen 21
Crescent City 47, Trenton 42
Hilliard 42, Crescent City 21
Crescent City def. Belle Isle Cornestone Charter, forfeit
Keystone Heights 56, Crescent City 21
Crescent City 47, Pierson Taylor 21
Crescent City 62, Jacksonville Wolfson 36
Crescent City def. Jordan Christian Prep, forfeit
Playoffs (Region 1-3A): Gainesville P.K. Yonge 56, Crescent City 7



Crescent City Schedule

Aug. 26 Chiefland

Last year: 11-2

Series: Chiefland leads, 5-4, and won last meeting 56-13 in 2021.

Sept. 1 at Umatilla

Last year: 6-5

Series: Crescent City leads, 15-13, and won last meeting 41-6 in 2021.

Directions: Head south on US-17 to Pierson, turn right onto SR-40 until it veers left into CR-445A. Turn left onto SR-19 and head south until you reach Umatilla. Turn left at Bulldog Lane, the stadium is on right.

Sept. 9 Interlachen

Last year: 3-6

Series: Crescent City leads, 25-7-1, and won last meeting 27-21 in 2021.

Sept. 23 at Hilliard

Last year: 9-2

Series: Crescent City leads, 3-2, but Hilliard won last meeting, 42-21, in 2021.

Directions: Take US-17 for 59 1/2 miles into Orange Park and to I-295. Take the I-295 jughandle and head north for 18 1/4 miles until getting to Exit 28 (US-1/US-23/New Kings Road). Head north for 23 miles until reaching Hilliard. Make a left turn onto CR-108 and go half a mile. Turn right onto Cypress Street, then left onto the first cross street on West 3rd Street and then a right into the parking lot. The field is on the side of the parking lot.

CRESCENT CITY ROSTER

No.		Year	Position	Height/Weight
2	Eric Jenkins	So	QB	5-9/165
3	Ray Davis	Sr	WR-DB-RB	5-10/165
4	Sheldon Patrick	Sr	WR-DB-Ath	5-11/173
7	Tyler Daughtery	Sr	RB-DB	5-8/170
8	Sebastian Garcia	So	DB	5-8/155
9	Arzavean Williams	So	WR-DB	6-1/180
11	Lentavious Keenon	Jr	TE-LB	6-1/185
13	Brandon Padget	Jr	CB-WR	5-8/165
14	Josiah Washington	Jr	WR-CB	5-10/145
15	David Newbold	Jr	WR-K	6-0/164
17	Larry Harrington	Jr	QB	6-0/165
18	Eduardo Martinez	Jr	WR-DB	5-9/150
19	Cameron Wright	Jr	WR-DB	6-1/165
20	Andre Martin	Fr	QB	5-6/145
21	Zay Robinson	Fr	RB-LB	6-1/200
23	Alex Bell	Sr	WR-LB	5-7/164
26	Jaden Charles	Sr	DL-RB	6-0/176
34	Jahmaad Strong	Fr	LB	6-0/174
41	Alan McCartney	So	S	5-8/154
44	Preston Washington	Fr	LB-TE	5-10/175
51	Jaden Murphy	Fr	OL-DL	5-6/165
52	Elias Perez	Sr	OL-LB	5-11/186
54	Tyler Frazier	Fr	C-Long Snap	5-6/195
55	Jabin Wright	Sr	OL	6-0/210
56	Zach Rotramel	Sr	OL-DL-OT	6-2/256
57	Michael Hernandez	So	OL	5-7/184
58	Wilber Guerrero	So	OL	5-10/220
66	Jacob Westberry	Jr	OL-LB	5-8/165
73	Charles Winstead	So	OL	6-2/235
74	Justin Brady	So	OL	6-0/225
76	Jake Robinson	So	OL	6-3/226
77	Clinton Smith	Sr	OL-DL	5-11/205
78	Aiden Fitzgerald	So	OL	6-2/240
84	Desmond Anderson	Jr	RB-DL	6-0/189
87	Andrew Roosa	Fr	WR-DB	5-8/166
90	Jeremy Jones	Sr	LB-TE	6-1/183
99	Jacob Lee	Jr	DL	6-5/210

Sept. 30 Pierson Taylor

Last year: 2-6

Series: Crescent City leads the series, 36-19, and won last meeting, 47-21, in 2021.

Oct. 7 Keystone Heights

Last year: 10-2

Series: Keystone Heights leads the series, 20-15, and won last meeting, 56-21, in 2021.

Oct. 14 Port Orange Atlantic

Last year: 2-8

Series: Atlantic leads the series, 2-0, and won last meeting, 28-7, in 2012.

Oct. 21 Beachside

Last year: First-year program

Series: First meeting

Directions: Head north on US-17 through Pomono Park, Satsuma and San Mateo. Turn right onto CR-207 through Hastings all the way to I-95. At the I-95 intersection, turn left and head north 22 miles to Exit 329 (CR-210 exit). Exit off right onto CR-210. Turn left onto Rum Runner Way, and the school is on left.

Oct. 27 at Lake Weir

Last year: 1-9

Series: First meeting

Directions: Head south on US-17, turn right ont Emporia Road before taking a left onto SR-40, then follow it for 26 miles to Levy Hammon Road/ SE 183rd Avenue Road for 23 miles. Turn left at the Dollar General onto CR-464C and then a right turn onto SE Maricamp Road. Take a right onto Oak Road. The school is on the right side, the stadium is behind the school.

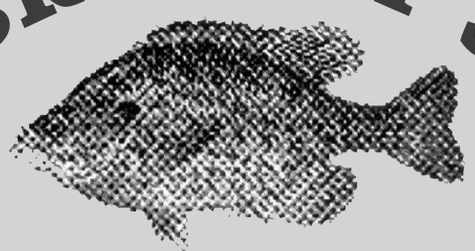
Nov. 4 at Titusville

Last year: 0-10

Series: First meeting

Directions: Travel south on US-17 for 21 1/2 miles. Turn left onto SR-40 and travel east for almost 20 miles until reaching I-95. At I-95, veer right and go 47 3/4 miles south to Exit 220 (SR-406/Garden Street exit). Veer off the exit and travel 2 3/4 miles until reaching Hopkins Avenue. Make a right turn and go nearly a mile. Continue onto Edison Avenue and go a quarter of a mile. That dumps you onto US-1 heading south for almost a mile. Turn right onto Terrier Trail and travel into the high school parking lot. The field is in the back and to the right.

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Raiders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Both Jenkins and Larry Harrington, a junior who saw time on junior varsity last season, will have the two main targets to throw to back in seniors Sheldon Patrick and Ray Davis. Add budding junior standout Lentavious Keenon and steady junior David Newbold, also the team's kicker, to the receiving group and it's no wonder why Delaney could be focusing more on the passing game, while developing a young and new running back group.

"I'm really excited over the potential our offense can show," Delaney said. "And our younger players may surprise some people."

Speaking of Newbold, Delaney likens him to a player who he once saw kick for a team he was an assistant to in South Carolina.

"When I coached at Christ Church Episcopal (in Greenville, South Carolina), we had a guy named Chandler Catanzaro who went on to play at Clemson and went on to the NFL," Delaney said. "Never did an opposing team his senior season start beyond the 20-yard line. He was booming kickoffs. We have that kind of weapon in David. I can see him doing the same thing. He's close to doing that now."

The defense, Delaney said, will be a work in progress as the season goes on.

"We're not where we want to be," he said. "But our players are getting better and there's no question to what it is they want to do. They're giving us great effort and energy. Right now, they just want to hit someone that isn't wearing a maroon jersey."

Which made this past Friday's preseason cancelation tough for Delaney and his team. Lightning in the area forced the Raiders to have to wait until Friday night's kickoff at home against Chiefland, which whipped the Raiders, 56-13, in last year's opener, to finally compete.

The late Clarence "Pooh Bear" Williams, who Delaney succeeded as coach in 2020, said years ago that each year is a different year and just because you had success one year does not mean you will have the same success the following year, even with almost the same personnel back. Delaney said he knows it's a new year, but he is optimistic with what he's seen.



MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Crescent City assistant coach Keenan Henry gives directions during a recent practice.

And the growth his team has made in the past season.

"It's tremendous," said Delaney, who also points to beating rivals Taylor and Interlachen as team goals. "(Defensive coordinator Robert) Ripley said we're starting to learn how to practice like a winning team, be efficient and have intensity where it needs to be. There's not a lot of wasted motion. Our kids are starting to see the big picture and starting to take ownership of things. It's a good feeling as a coach to meet with the other coaches before practice and see the kids have taken care of so much on their own. It makes it a lot better as a coach."



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Crescent City



MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Last year's Crescent City Junior-Senior High School football team qualified for the state tournament. In the last 19 seasons, the Raiders are the only public school team of the three in this county to win a state tournament game, beating Fort Meade, 22-6, in 2018 in an opening-round game.

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Rams chasing trophy this season

Interlachen in new league, division

By Corey Davis
Palatka Daily News
cdavis@palatkadailynews.com

New league, new division, new opponents and new goals have created a high sense of enthusiasm at Interlachen Junior-Senior High football practice so far.

Coming off a 3-6 season, the Rams are well past that and looking ahead to what could be a special year if things go their way.

Interlachen was initially placed in the new District 6-2S with Bradford, Keystone Heights, Palatka and Tocoi Creek, but made the decision to drop out and go independent based on enrollment numbers.

"I feel like coach (Erik) Gibson made a smart move by getting us out of that district with Bradford, Keystone, Palatka and Tocoi Creek, teams that will have 100-plus on the sideline, while we only have around 30 players," Interlachen senior quarterback Reggie Allen Jr. said.

Out of the Florida High School Athletic Association for now, the Rams joined the Sunshine State Athletic Conference, a statewide independent organization.

The Rams were placed in the Atlantic Division with Cocoa Beach, along with Jacksonville's Paxon School and Stanton Prep.

Of course unlike a traditional district where a team plays every team in the district, the Rams won't see any of those teams until the playoffs. By not playing any of their divisional opponents in the regular season, the Rams control their own destiny as far as earning the top overall seed in the division based on how they do on the field in their non-division games.

"It definitely does make it more interesting," Allen said. "Usually if you're in a division, you play every team in that division and you see them at least once and hope to get revenge later if you meet in the playoffs, but now it's more of we see them when we see them. It's actually kind of awkward because we only see them at the end of the season."

"Biggest thing I have reiterated with our kids is we have to play every game and every week we have to play our game," Gibson said. "They (SSAC) rank the teams just like the FHSAA does. That will be something we watch as the season goes on, but as long as we take it game by game we will be fine. When it comes time for the playoffs, we have to be ready and have to be clicking on all cylinders."

See **RAMS**, Page **22**



MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Interlachen newcomer Rakeem Brown (second from right) comes down with the ball in between defenders Timothy Phillips (25) and Reggie Allen during a practice session. Brown made a name for himself at Peniel Baptist Academy before transferring to Interlachen in his senior season.

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Interlachen Breakdown

BASE OFFENSE: MULTIPLE

Quarterbacks: Reggie Allen Jr., Jack Pavlik.

Coach Erik Gibson has two different types of signal callers. "When Reggie has the ball in his hands he's dynamic and Jack is more of a passer. So its going to be interesting to see what we can do with both quarterbacks. We have packages already for both quarterbacks."

Running back: Terryon Mitchell, Jarcus Sessions, Kendrick Chaney, Rickey Astin.

Gibson has options to choose from. "I don't know if I consider them all tailbacks," he said. "We got running backs, none of them are real scatty. All of them are downhill, north/south runners." Astin will be one of the scatbacks in the H-formation. Gibson said there will be times where they try the option as well as double-wing, triple option or wing-T.

Receivers: Justin Herring, Kaleb McKinnon, Der'tavius Mack, Allen, Ricky Astin, Dante Astin, Landon McCollum.

Across the board, the Rams are pretty good and athletic at receiver. "We have great height at that position with guys 6-2, 6-4 like Herring and McKinnon," Gibson said. "Mack plays tight end, Allen will line up at receiver or tight end when he isn't playing quarterback. Both Astin are our slot receivers and McCollum will play some tight end for us."

Line

Tristan Smith, Zach Collins, Alex Ogle, Tyler Carpenter, Hayden George, Andy Eddins, Connor Phillips, Tucker Gilbert, George Rodriguez, Zach Link, Ryan Davis, Anthony Edwards, Anthony Ennis.

Edwards and Ogle are returnees to the line, but with so few returnees, Gibson has concerns. "That was the biggest thing last year," he said. "We didn't have an offensive line coach, so now we got a good coach and I have already seen changes in them." The starting line averages around 250 pounds, so Gibson said just getting those players to turn the edge and get a little more meanness to them is going to help us a lot.

DEFENSE: 3-4 OR 3-3 STACK.

Linemen

Randall Moseley, Rakeem Brown, Session, Carpenter, Rodriguez, Edwards, Link, Anthony Ennis.

Nose guard Mosley is a freshman he calls a "nasty get-down-and-dirty kind of kid," Gibson said. Brown, a star the last two years at Peniel Baptist, can play a factor and might play in the offensive backfield with Session. Many players will see many rotations on this line.

Linebackers

Inside: Servin, Mitchell; **Outside:** Mack, A.J. Ward, Jaquevis Nixon.

If any defensive unit looks solid, it's the linebacking group, led by Mack, who seems to be all over the field, the tall Herring, and Servin, who also feels like he's in the right place at the right time. And Ward could also play a big factor in the season.

Secondary

Cornerbacks: Rickey Astin, Dante Astin, Timothy Phillips; **Safeties:** Allen, Justin Herring, Abraham McGollie.

Allen, Herring and Rickey Astin will be the stalwarts in the back, while the others fill in as complementary players.

Special teams

Kicker: Mack. Punters: Allen, Rickey Astin. **Long snappers:** Davis. **Kick/punt returnees:** Astin, Herring.

Gibson said the kicking game is still a work in progress. He said Mack has been kicking off and putting them inside the 10-yard line consistently. Gibson also said he has three to four guys trying out at punter. Astin and Herring will get their share of yards on returns when they are tested.

At A Glance

Head Coach: Erik Gibson, second year.
Last year's record: 3-6.
Career record: 3-6.


Gibson

Assistants: Reggie Allen Sr., (middle linebackers), Tad DeLoach (defensive line), Jonathan Goodwin (running backs/co-offensive coordinator), Deaunte Holloway (wide receivers), Joe Lipsey (secondary), Jordan Smalenski (inside linebackers/defensive coordinator), Mark White (quarterbacks/co-offensive coordinator), Ron Whitehurst (defensive line), Kim Troiano (equipment), Robert Clark (middle school head coach), Gerald Swaze (head JV coach), Ralph Dallas (assistant JV coach), Daniel Fisk (assistant middle school), Jason Sharp (assistant middle school).

Tickets: $8. For the entire season's home games, it's $50 for adults, $30 for students.

All-time record: 184-356-2.

LAST YEAR'S SCHEDULE (3-6)

Father Lopez 19, Interlachen 0
Crescent City 27, Interlachen 21
Melbourne Holy Trinity Episcopal 27, Interlachen 16
Keystone Heights 44, Interlachen 0
Interlachen 27, Bell 6
Interlachen 28, Pierson Taylor 21
Interlachen 40, Jax Christ's Church Academy 21
Chiefland 55, Interlachen 0
Fort White 14, Interlachen 7

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Interlachen Schedule

Aug. 26 Lake Weir

Last year: 1-9

Series: Interlachen leads 2-0 and won last meeting, 26-12, in 1971.

Sept. 2 Jacksonville Providence

Last year: 3-7

Series: Providence leads 2-0 and won last meeting, 23-12, in 2008.

Sept. 9 at Crescent City

Last year: 7-4

Series: Crescent City leads 25-7-1 and won last meeting 27-21 in 2021.

Directions: Take SR-20 into Palatka. Turn left onto 9th Street, then right onto US 17-south to Crescent City. School is on right and stadium is in back.

Sept. 16 Fernandina Beach

Last year: 3-7

Series: Fernandina Beach leads 4-2 and won last meeting 37-0 in 2020.

Sept. 23 Keystone Heights

Last year: 10-2

Series: Keystone Heights leads 34-18 and won last meeting 44-0 in 2021.

Oct. 7 at Pierson Taylor

Last year: 2-6

INTERLACHEN ROSTER

No.		Year	Position	Height/Weight
1	Reggie Allen Jr.	Sr	QB-TE-Ath	6-3/205
2	Justin Herring	Sr	OLB-TE	6-2/195
3	A.J. Ward	Jr	LB-FB	5-10/190
4	Taveon McNair	So	LB-FB	5-10/190
5	Der'Tavius Mack	Sr	OLB-TE	6-1/194
6	Ricky Astin	Sr	WR-DB	5-8/147
8	Soulmontee Phillips	Fr	RB-DB	6-0/165
9	Jarcus Sessions	Jr	DL-FB	5-10/205
12	Terryon Mitchell	Sr	ILB-RB	5-10/186
13	Hakeem Bey	Sr	WR-DB	5-8/146
15	Jack Pavlik	So	QB	5-9/170
19	Kaleb McKinnon	Fr	WR-FS	5-10/205
20	Dante Astin	So	DB-WR	5-9/148
21	Rakeem Brown	Sr	RB-DE	6-2/217
22	Jonathan Servin	Sr	MLB-FB	5-11/180
24	Kendrick Chaney	Sr	RB	5-7/185
25	Timothy Phillips	Sr	DB	5-7/165
26	Abraham McGollie	Jr	DB	6-0/165
29	Kameryn Joshua	Jr	WR-DB	5-11/145
34	Tyler Pendleton	Sr	LB	5-10/190
35	Jaquevis Nixon	So	LB	5-10/185
50	Randall Moseley	So	DL	5-9/165
51	Tristan Smith	So	OL	6-0/202
54	Alex Ogle	Sr	OL	6-2/276
55	Tyler Carpenter	Fr	DL-OL	5-10/180
56	Hayden George	So	OL	6-2/218
58	Andy Eddins	Fr	LB-OL	5-9/157
60	Connor Phillips	Sr	OL	6-0/272
61	Tucker Gilbert	Jr	OL	6-0/190
62	George Rodriguez	Sr	DL-OL	6-0/195
64	Zach Link	Jr	OL-DL	5-11/190
66	Ryan Davis	Jr	OL	6-4/285
75	Anthony Edwards	So	NG-OL	6-2/345
76	Anthony Ennis	So	OL-DL	6-4/275
80	Landon McCollum	Jr	WR-TE	6-2/166

Series: Taylor leads, 12-8, but Interlachen won last meeting, 28-21, in 2021.

Directions: Take SR20 into Palatka. Turn left on U.S. 17 south to Pierson. Turn left on Washington Ave. and go almost half a mile. Turn left into the school parking lot.

Oct. 14 at Bell

Last year: 4-6

Series: Interlachen leads 3-0 and won last meeting, 27-6, in 2021.

Directions: Take SR 20 into Gainesville, take a left on Williston Road till you get to I-75. Turn right onto I-75 and travel north until US 441 Alachua exit. Take a left off the exit and head west towards High Springs. Once in High Springs turn right onto Main Street and then a right on 236/NW 182 Ave until it merges into CR340. Take a left onto US 129/Main Street into Bell, school is on left and stadium is behind school.

Oct. 21 Daytona Beach Halifax

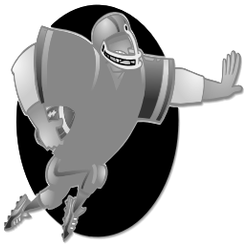
Last year: 0-9

Series: First meeting.



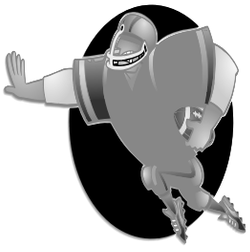
MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Interlachen coach Erik Gibson listens to one of his assistant coaches during the Rams' preseason game against Jacksonville Wolfson last week.



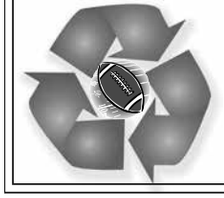
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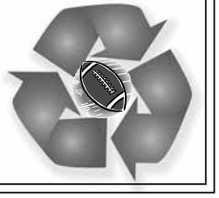


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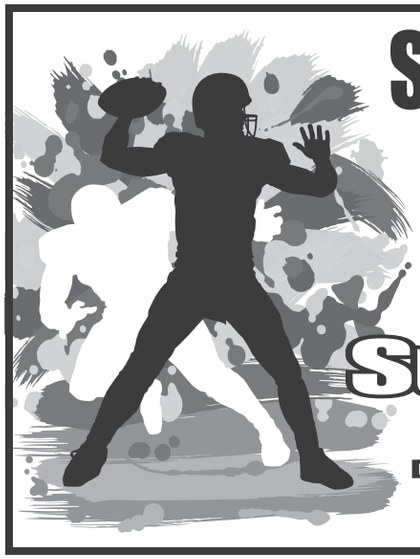
Hwy 17N. Right Hand Side, 1 Mile North of Hwy 19

Interlachen



MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Interlachen Junior-Senior High School's football team has dropped out of the FHSAA this season and will play for a Sunshine State Athletic Conference divisional championship this fall. Five of the Rams' eight regular-season games will be played at home this season.



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MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Palatka second-year head coach Patrick Turner walks around as his players do push-ups during a recent practice.

Palatka's hungry forecast

After 1-8 season, experienced Panthers have hearty appetites

By Mark Blumenthal
Palatka Daily News
mblumenthal@palatkadailynews.com

Last year's catchphrase for the Palatka Junior-Senior High School football team was "confidence."

That's back, even if the final record read 1-8. This year's catchphrase is a little different, according to second-year coach Patrick Turner.

Hunger.

"One hundred%," he said with affirmation. "Getting back to last year, obviously we finished 1-8, but when you look past that and what they've become and how far they have come, we're not the team that didn't score five straight weeks (in 2020). The first game, we lost to Eustis and followed that up wit a double-overtime loss to Newberry, starting from the 25 because of a bad penalty. We were down to Clay and had two opportunities to win it, and we wrapped up the home season by losing 28-24 to Menendez.

"If the ball bounces one way or another, we could have easily been around .500. In our minds, that's where we should have been."

And that's where the motivation begins in the 2022 season. Turner said he believes his team is not only much better, but hungrier for attaining goals this season. They are a year more experienced and stronger.

"I'm not sure people realize how hard this team has worked," Turner said. "I think things are going to happen this season. This isn't the same ol' Palatka ball club teams could roll up on. One year into this, these players have both that knowledge and passion for the sport. That's how hungry they are."

Part of that is building depth. And returning starting quarterback Jamarrie McKinnon will have quite a few receivers to throw to, starting with Ty'ran Bush and continuing with fellow returnee Lane Sheffield and newcomers Cartaveon Valentine, Kamari Hall, Devon Walker and Jimmie Williams.

"This may be the best depth I've ever had at any position I've ever been at," said Turner,

See **PANTHERS**, Page **21**



Palatka Breakdown

BASE OFFENSE: SPREAD.

Quarterbacks: Jamarrie McKinnon, Tommy Offord, Joseph Solomon.

McKinnon is the veteran leader and a captain of the squad, starting five of the nine games, and coach Patrick Turner was enthused with his workouts during the offseason and a big spring game. Offord is extremely athletic, When he's not in quarterback, he's a backup at receiver. Solomon will likely see time on the JV at the position with Offord. Turner compares Solomon to a Matthew Lands who knew the playbook inside and out.

Running backs: Ty'ran Bush, Albert Leonard, Tarik Castor, Saquan Williams.

Turner said his running backs are uniquely different and would not call one better than the other. Leonard is both the strongest and most deceptive. Castor is a talented player, but has some developing to do. And Williams may be the fastest of the three. Add Bush to the mix when asked to run and this unit is deep.

Receivers: Bush, Kaymari Hall, Cartaveon Valentine, Lane Sheffield, Devon Walker, Jimmie Williams, Chavaris Dumas.

Turner is in awe of his depth at this position. Bush and Valentine, who comes over from Fleming Island High, are the speed guys, while Shefield and Walker are reliable receivers. And Hall is a tall target at 6-foot-4. Again, a loaded position.

Line

Guards: Cody Atkinson, Tazavian Curry; **Tackles:** Nolan Faircloth, Javen Palmer; **Center:** Carson Tibbs: **Tight ends:** Caleb Bolton, Trent Williams, Colton Palmer.

Most of this unit is back from last year and a good offseason has Turner enthused for the blocking they will do for McKinnon and the other skill players. He said he expect big things from this unit that saw four of the linemen play varsity last season.

BASE DEFENSE: 3-4

Line

Chub Fenderson, Kason Bradford, Antorrian Smart, D.J. Thomas, Faircloth.

Fenderson is the anchor at 5-10 and 270 pounds. The senior brings a lot of experience to the line. Turner said this unit has come a "super long way" from the spring to preseason camp.

Linebackers

Outside: Mario Bryant, Elysha Campbell II, Majiyah Brown, Kriston Mack; **Inside:** Tyshaun Castor, Jason Purcell, Torrian Valentine, Taurus Session.

Turner can not stop raving about this group, led by outside linebackers Bryant and Campbell, who possesses a wing span of over 7 feet, making him hard to elude. The fastest of the linebackers is Mack, though. On the inside, Turner looks at veteran Purcell to lead the way.

Secondary

Cornerbacks: Dumas, Laquon Wright, Maxwell, Keith Williams; **Safeties:** Ishmael Foster, Godfrey, Robert Walker, Tavion Castor.

It's a Catch-22 for the secondary. Because of standouts like Dumas, highly recruited currently by colleges, and Foster and Godfrey, the ball may not be thrown their way this year. But Turner warns they'll be ready when it does head their way.

Special teams

Kicker/punter: Joseph Alvarez-Aguilar. **Punter:** Offord. **Long snappers:** Tibbs (punt), Purcell (extra point). **Kickoff/punt return:** Williams, Bush, Godfrey, Dumas.

Alvarez-Aguilar is a two-time All-County soccer player who is going to give the kicking game a big boost this fall. Meanwhile, there might not be much in returns with players like Dumas, Bush and Godfrey bringing the ball back this season.

At A Glance

Head coach: Patrick Turner (North Greenville, 2004), second year (10th year overall).

Last year's record: 1-8.


Turner

Career record: 48-49. (Quarterbacks/offense).

Assistants: Aidan Wills (tight ends), Paul Mast (offensive line), Al Smith (receivers), Clayton Buford (assistant receivers), Kedric Wright (running backs/head junior high), Wade Rollinson (defensive coordinator), Bobby Raulerson (defensive backs), Bobby Humphries (outside linebackers), David Criswell (inside linebackers), Darrell Polite (defensive lineman), Colton Palmer (JV head coach), Harvey Coring (junior high assistant), Dale Whitfield (junior high assistant), Mark Bush (junior high assistant).

Tickets: $7 for varsity, $5 for JV and junior high games, all courtesy of gofan.co.

All-time football record: 265-214.

LAST YEAR'S SCHEDULE (3-6)

Eustis 31, Palatka 28
Palatka 27, Weeki Wachee 7
Newberry 37, Palatka 30, 2 OT
Clay 32, Palatka 26
West Nassau 46, Palatka 19
North Marion 42, Palatka 15
Gainesville Eastside 27, Palatka 8
Menendez 28, Palatka 24
St. Augustine 35, Palatka 0



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Palatka Schedule

Aug. 26 at Umatilla

Last year: 6-5

Series: First meeting

Directions: Head south on SR-19 for 55.7 miles. In Umatilla, turn left onto Bulldog Lane. Stadium is behind school.

Sept. 2 Port Orange Atlantic

Last year: 2-8

Series: Palatka leads series, 4-0, and won last meeting, 41-0, in 2008.

Sept. 9 Alachua Santa Fe

Last year: 0-9

Series: Palatka leads series 3-0, won last meeting, 42-21, in 2019.

Sept. 23 at Lake Weir

Last year: 1-9

Series: Palatka leads series 2-0, won last meeting 46-0 in 2000.

Directions: Head south on SR-19 for 33.6 miles to Salt Springs, turn right onto CR-314 and proceed for 10.6 miles. Turn left onto CR-314A for 14.8 miles before you turn left onto Hwy 464C and continue for 4.1 miles. Turn left onto SE 114th St. Road for 1.4 miles, turn right onto SE Maricamp Rd and continue for 2.9 miles and then turn right onto Oak Road. School is on left and stadium is in back.

Sept. 30 Tocoi Creek

Last year: 3-5

Series: First meeting

Oct. 7 Cocoa Space Coast

Last year: 1-9

Series: First meeting

Oct. 14 Keystone Heights

Last year: 10-2

Series: First meeting

Directions: Head west on SR-100 for 25.7 miles until reaching SR-21. Turn left, then make the first right turn onto Nightingale Street. After the four-way stop, proceed on Nightingale which turns into Orchid Avenue. Go half a mile. The stadium is in the back of the school on the right side.

Oct. 21 at Fernandina Beach

Last year: 3-7

Series: Palatka leads series 1-0 and won last meeting, 27-6, in 1979.

Directions: Head north onto US-17 into Jacksonville for 48.5 miles before you merge into I-10. Remain on I-10 for about a mile before you veer onto US-95 heading north. Continue for 20 miles until exiting on 373 (SR-200/A1A). Continue on A1A for 14.3 miles proceeding through Yulee until you reach Fernandina Beach. Take right onto Hickory Street, then a left on Citrona Drive. School and field are both on the left.

Oct. 28 Starke Bradford

Last year: 6-6

Series: Palatka leads series 13-9, but Bradford won last meeting, 36-6, in 2020.

Nov. 4 St. Augustine

Last year: 6-4

Series: St. Augustine leads series 56-44-3 and won last meeting, 35-0, in 2021.

PALATKA ROSTER

No.		Year	Position	Height/Weight
2	Arterrian Godfrey	Jr	S-WR	5-8/145
4	Chavaris Dumas	Sr	CB-WR	5-11/165
6	Jason Purcell	Sr	LB	5-11/190
7	Ty'ran Bush	Sr	WR-RB	5-9/150
8	Ishmael Foster	Jr	S	5-7/140
9	Saiquan Williams	So	RB	5-5/135
10	Tommy Offord	Fr	QB-WR	5-9/140
11	Keymari Hall	So	WR	6-3/165
12	Jamarie McKinnon	Sr	QB	5-10/175
14	Tony Turner	So	WR	5-9/140
15	Amaryan Maxwell	So	CB	5-9/140
16	Robert Walker	So	S	5-8/150
17	Cartaveon Valentine	Jr	WR	5-11/160
18	Keith Williams	So	CB	5-11/150
19	Joseph Solomon	So	QB	5-8/150
20	Tavion Castor	So	S-LB	6-0/165
21	Albert Leonard	Sr	RB	5-7/165
23	Mario Bryant	Sr	LB	6-1/185
25	Tarik Castor	Jr	RB	5-9/150
26	Trent Williams	Jr	TE	6-2/190
27	Devin Walker	Jr	WR	5-9/150
28	La'Kwan Wright	Jr	CB	5-10/165
29	Majiyah Brown	Jr	OLB	5-10/170
30	Jimmie Williams	So	WR	5-10/160
32	Tarus Session	Jr	LB	5-9/185
33	Elysha Campbell II	So	OLB	6-3/175
34	Tyshawn Castor	Sr	ILB	5-11/190
35	Chub Fenderson	Sr	DT	5-10/270
36	Caleb Bolton	Sr	TE	6-0/180
40	Barrett Clark	So	LB	5-9/170
42	Kriston Mack	Sr	OLB	5-10/165
44	Taurean Valentine	Jr	LB	5-10/170
45	Brenden Strickland	Jr	S	5-9/135
50	Cona Kight	Jr	DT	6-0/170
52	Kason Bradford	So	DL	5-10/210
53	Joseph Atkins	Jr	DT	6-1/270
56	Chris Cheatham	So	OL	5-10/250
58	Bryce Robbins	So	OL	5-8/220
60	Cody Adkisson	Jr	OL	6-0/265
62	Blake Sullivan	So	OL	5-8/220
65	Ben Clark	So	OL	5-9/200
68	Jaquez Poole	Jr	OL	5-10/220
70	James Dougherty	Jr	OL	6-0/260
72	Nolan Faircloth	Sr	OL-DL	6-2/230
75	Carson Tibbs	Sr	C	6-0/300
76	C.J. Thomas	So	DL	5-9/300
77	Javen Palmer	So	OL	6-4/260
78	Zae Curry	So	OL	5-10/280
80	Edarian Price	So	WR	5-11/155
82	Colton Palmer	So	TE	6-3/175
85	Steve Harris	Jr	WR	6-0/165
86	Lane Sheffield	Sr	WR	5-11/185
91	Antorien Smart	Sr	DL	6-0/240

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COREY DAVIS / Palatka Daily News

The Palatka High Junior-Senior High School football team looks to improve off a 1-8 first season under coach Patrick Turner with a more experienced team.

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Palatka trio proves you can go home again – and be a coach

Goal for Beauford, Smith, Mast: Restore Palatka pride and get a ring

By Mark Blumenthal
Palatka Daily News
mblumenthal@palatkadailynews.com



MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

Current Palatka Junior-Senior High assistants (from left) Al Smith, Clayton Beauford and Paul Mast all played in different generations for the Panthers.

One has played in the NFL and USFL. One has been a successful head football coach. The last of the three was a college football recruiter.

They all share a few things in common: They're Palatka High School alums and former football players who, this year, return as Palatka Junior-Senior High football assistant coaches.

"They all have their own unique personalities," said Patrick Turner, Palatka's second-year head coach. "And 100% they bleed blue and gold."

Clayton Beauford and Al Smith are both working with a talented wide receiver unit, while Paul Mast, the youngest of the three PHS assistants, is working with the offensive line. And, uniquely, all span a 36-year swath of Panther football. Beauford, 59, was Palatka's quarterback during their 10-1 1980 season, Smith was a fullback and linebacker in the early 1990s for the legendary Jim McCool and Paul Mast was an offensive lineman in the mid-2010 decade.

"There's a certain pride element in coming back to coach here," Mast said. "There's a hometown pride. There's nothing bigger than winning a district championship. There's not much more a feeling than waking up the Saturday morning after a win, then getting to the next goal which would be next week's game."

■■■

Clayton Beauford's story began after taking a year away from football in 1978 to work on his grades as a sophomore. Then he came back as a junior in the late coach Bob Lyle's first season in charge of the Panthers and helped the team get to a 7-3 mark.

The following season, everything clicked. With the emergence of standout players like John L Williams and Jarvis Williams, the Panthers clicked, going 10-0 in the regular season before falling to the legendary Corky Rogers' Jacksonville Lee High team in the opening round of the state tournament.

"Bob Lyle was a father figure more than a coach," Beauford said. "He was the kind of person who gave you so much knowledge to take on the field, then allowed you to make mistakes when they happened. He handled the players in certain ways, but he had a connection with all us because he wanted to bring a championship to Palatka High School."

See **TRIO**, Page **19**

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Trio

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Lyle did just that the following year when the legendary 1981 Panthers team went 14-0 and won the FHSAA 3A championship. Though Beauford was already at Auburn University playing for the Tigers, he felt like he and the other seniors from the 1980 team got the ball rolling.

"It was tough to win all those games and didn't make the championship like the (1981) team did," Beauford said. "It's like building a house from the ground up and you get ready to walk in it and your keys don't fit the house because a new key was made for the next team. But I'd like to think I had a lot to do with how Daryl Oliver, Louis Brown, Jarvis and John L did the following year."

At Auburn, he moved over to wide receiver and played alongside the legendary Bo Jackson. But as he prepared for a career in professional football, Beauford broke his kneecap in the 1985 Senior Bowl. The Detroit Lions still drafted him and took care of him for the following year. Ultimately, he was set free, and during the 1987 NFL Players strike, Beauford was a replacement player for the Cleveland Browns for the duration of the holdout.

But by 1988 and with his playing days over, Beauford turned to the trucking business and driving them for a couple of businesses, moving to Charlotte, North Carolina during that time. Still, he had that pang to teach football and got to do so at Tampa Plant High School as an assistant and was a teacher as well. He also taught football in the youth leagues in Tampa and then back in Palatka. In 2016, Beauford returned to work as a JV coach under current Palatka athletic director-assistant football coach Bobby Humphries.

He did that for one year, but coached youth football for four years until the pandemic was too much for him to be a coach.

Now, he's back as a Palatka assistant, and he keeps it real with the players he's around.

"You relate to those guys by being straight up," said Beauford, a custodian at C.L. Overturf Jr. District Center. "When you're straight up, you don't sugar-coat anything for them. Don't pull any punches. Show them respect and allow them to function, but if they don't have the right attitude, it's going to be trouble. You have to come with the full package."

"I do want something special here and want it for these kids."

~ Palatka assistant coach Al Smith

■ ■ ■

Smith was a two-way player for Palatka High from 1989-92, playing for McCool all four years.

"I learned discipline from him and being the same guy every day," Smith said. "He had high expectations. He wanted us to be physical, but to trust in the process and weightlifting was a big part of that. All the confidence I gained came from the weightlifting room. As you got stronger, your confidence got stronger."

An automobile accident cut his college career short at Bethune-Cookman, but he got his degree in 1999 in physical education. Smith spent 10 years as an assistant coach at DeLand High School before scoring the head coaching job at Crescent City in 2012. In his first three years with the Raiders, the team went to the postseason, losing each time to powerful Union County. The winner of a district championship in the 2013 and '14 seasons, Smith was named the *Daily News*' Coach of the Fall recipient in the 2012 and '14 seasons.

But Smith was let go as head coach after five years at Crescent City in 2016. He landed at Flagler Palm Coast, where he was an assistant for three years, then went on to be head coach at Tampa Spoto in the 2020 and '21 seasons.

He returned to Palatka this spring and has already made an impact with the football team thanks to the work he's put in through nutrition with Turner and the Palatka cafeteria.

"It doesn't matter how hard you work out," Smith said. "If we put the wrong things in our bodies, it won't matter, and the cafeteria has done a great job in providing the food needed. We make sure the guys have extra milk and protein and that they eat more. We stock the fridge in our coach's office. The guys eat before or after they lift. The kids would think that you're supposed to eat three times a day, but for someone working out and burning calories, you need to eat at least six times a day."

The 47-year-old Smith, who also is part of a construction business, said he doesn't hanker for the days of a head coaching job anymore. Now it's about the community he grew up in.

"I do want something special here and want it for these kids," said Smith, the weightlifting teacher at the school. "This team went 1-8 last year and they were not believing in the system. I met them in January and I told them they'd get their best from me. I give it up to these kids because they've been receptive to change."

■ ■ ■

Unlike Beauford and Smith, Mast played for three different coaches in his time at Palatka – Willie Offord (2012-13), Randy Hedstrom (2014) and Humphries (2015). The 25-year-old said he has taken a little of each coach and incorporated that into what he does on a daily basis.

"All the coaches had the same goal of helping young men grow," Mast said. "I loved coach Offord to death and playing for and now coaching with coach Humphries is a hoot. I had coach Hedstrom my junior year and he helped me as a football player being an old school guy and teaching me to be an old school player. I still love talking to him whenever I see him."

Mast moved on after his football and track (he was a seventh-place finisher in the FHSAA 2A championship in the discus in 2016) to Warner University to play offensive line, fullback and linebacker.

After graduating with a degree in student education and a masters in educational arts with a concentration in curriculum design, Mast worked as both an assistant coach and as a recruiter. During a one-month stretch in the winter of 2020, Mast was in between rent leases and spent many nights on a coach's couch in the football office.

See **TRIO**, Page **20**

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Napier, new facility might signal new day ahead for Gators

By Mark Long
Associated Press

GAINESVILLE – Billy Napier's methodical, multifaceted approach to returning Florida to national prominence might actually be on a fast track.

Napier's recruiting prowess has been on display the last two months, culminating with the Gators' 2023 class breaking into the top 10 in national rankings by Rivals and 247 Sports. The latest bump coincided with Florida opening an $85 million facility that was years in the making and should help get the program back on level footing with the Southeastern Conference heavyweights.

It's progress, no doubt.

The key now is preventing it from becoming one step forward, two steps back once the season begins. The Gators open with seventh-ranked Utah in Gainesville on Sept. 3, followed by a visit from No. 20 Kentucky. It's the first time since 1982 that Florida starts with back-to-back ranked opponents.

Coming off a 6-7 season that included the firing of coach Dan Mullen in November, Florida begins the Napier Era outside The Associated Press College Football Poll for the fourth time in the last decade – a clear sign of how far Florida has fallen in recent years.


Napier

A former assistant under Nick Saban at Alabama and the head coach at Louisiana-Lafayette the last four years, Napier is tasked with the latest rebuild. The Gators are confident he'll do better than predecessors Will Muschamp, Jim McElwain and Dan Mullen.

"When your standards and expectations are much higher than anyone on the outside could have for you, I think that gives you an opportunity," Napier said.

Napier's state-of-the-art facility should help. Not only will it provide a much-needed recruiting tool, it should streamline the program's day-to-day operations and improve time management.

Football players and fellow Florida student-athletes will share a portion of the 142,000-square-foot facility, which includes dining options, lounge areas, a resort-style swimming pool, a large hot tub, a basketball court, a barber shop, a virtual reality simulator, a recording studio, a game room and a golf center.

The rest of the Heavener Training Center is reserved for the football program. Players and coaches will have access to a 13,000-square-foot weight room and training area, a locker room featuring personalized stalls that cost roughly $5,000 each, a 20-table training room and dozens of staff offices.

"They did this thing the right way," Napier said. "You're talking about every bell and whistle."

While the payoff likely will come down the road, the facility should have little effect on this year's team. Florida is replacing more than 30 players from 2021, with most of them leaving for the NFL or opportunities elsewhere.

Dynamic quarterback Anthony Richardson seemingly has untapped potential – one website projects him as a top-10 NFL draft pick in 2023 – but he also has one career start and finished last season with six touchdown passes and five interceptions while playing behind Emory Jones.

Bigger question marks: Can Richardson stay healthy and

See **GATORS**, Page **23**

Trio

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

But with a coaching change after last season at Warner, Mast was free to go home and immediately looked to Turner for a coaching position.

"I have to say it was the first mutual breakup I've had," Mast joked. "The next morning, I called Patrick Turner and we had a good conversation."

In practices with the Panthers, Mast is a ball of energy, doing exercises with the players and trying to teach them technique and where to be during plays.

"I put everything I've got into that practice," Mast said. "At the end of the practice, I sit in the coach's office and wonder how I get back to my car because I'm so worn out. We're working hard. They're working hard. Overall, it's a very good atmosphere to be a part of."

■ ■ ■

It has been 19 years since Palatka last won a district championship. It's been 20 years since the Panthers last won a state playoff game. It's been 22 years since the program got to the FHSAA 3A Final Four.

That's a generation's worth of misses. All three assistants agree that they are in a good place at Palatka developing these athletic and talented players into a winning team, and there's no better place they want to be.

And they all want to win something. For Beauford, it's something personal in a manner.

"I want a (state championship) ring," he said. "I asked the guys one day what their ring size was and they didn't know it. I told them, 'You have to know that. If you believe you're going to be a winner and if you've got a purpose, you at least have to know your ring size."

Another sign of wanting to bring winning back to Palatka.

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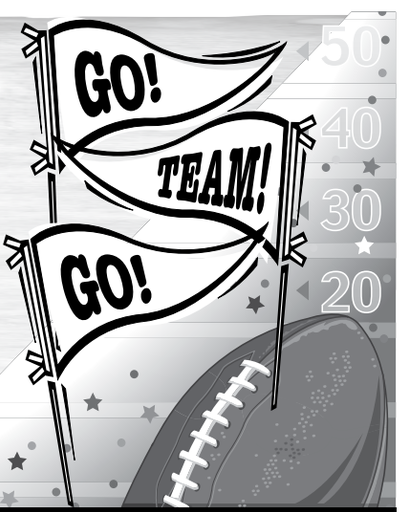
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FSU, Norvell relying on experience

By Bob Ferrante
Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE – Competition has built depth in Florida State's football program. Experience has led to more confidence. Mike Norvell believes the change in his team is mostly due to stability.

The Seminoles aren't where he wants them to be, yet appreciates how far they have come since his arrival in December 2019. Younger players now are productive veterans and leaders. The culture has also dramatically improved along the way.


Norvell

"That was one of the things that was critical within our program," Norvell said. "Coming in a few years ago, there had been so much change. And there was not the consistency and expectation.

"Anybody can point to three head coaches, but there were eight coordinators in a five-year period. Those are all different voices, different expectations, different languages. And then for the leadership, when they don't grow up within that consistency, it's hard to have that example. And for us we've been able to build that."

Norvell has often mentioned that FSU was one of the youngest teams in college football in 2020 and '21. Through three recruiting classes and the transfer portal, Norvell has shaped the roster in his image – with 63 of 85 scholarship players in 2022 being those that he brought in.

Florida State has not had a winning season since 2017 and last played in a bowl after the 2019 season. The Seminoles' 27 losses in the last four seasons illustrate just how difficult the rebuild has been as well as the realities of roster turnover due to coaching transition, from Jimbo Fisher's departure for Texas A&M in 2017 to Willie Taggart's dismissal in 2019.

But because the Seminoles often leaned on younger players the last two seasons, they were able to gain experience and learn through mistakes as well as losses. A resolve to turn the program around through its work in offseason strength and conditioning has often been cited by players as shaping the culture.

"We have a lot of leaders in this football team," quarterback Jordan Travis said. "I can just see it when we do our conditioning. That's when you see when the leaders come out. Everyone's exhausted. Someone bends over – it's not the coach telling someone to stand up. Now it's the players. You don't hear anybody complaining. … It doesn't fall on the coaches. When we lose football games, it's on us as players. We have to take ownership and responsibility."

REBUILT RECEIVER ROOM

Norvell upgraded the receiver room by landing four transfers: Mycah Pittman (Oregon), Johnny Wilson (Arizona State), Deuce Spann (Illinois) and Winston Wright Jr. (West Virginia). The transfers have elevated the competition within the room and built chemistry with Travis.

IMPACT DEFENSIVE TRANSFERS

Florida State also landed defensive end Jared Verse (Albany) and linebacker Tatum Bethune (UCF). Verse has been praised for his athleticism and work ethic, but he will have a learning curve as he makes the jump from an FCS school to the ACC. Bethune is frequently cited for his instincts and play-making in scrimmages, and he shores up a position group that has long been viewed as a weakness.

Panthers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

who has had a number of stops in a 20-year coaching career. "I definitely think we're going to surprise a lot of people. The receivers are better as a whole and in the big picture, what we've done is raise the median of the average player. The top is always going to be the top, but the average player has a higher IQ for the game."

Continuing with the offense, most of the offensive line returns, anchored by center Carson Tibbs and tackle Nolan Faircloth.

On defense, Turner also gave high praise to his outside linebacking corps and to the secondary. Mario Bryant and Elysha Campbell II are the strong outside linebackers, while Chavaris Dumas, who is getting a lot of love from college programs, will be the standout in the secondary along with Ishmael Foster and Arterrian Godfrey.

And Turner is not abashed to heap high praise on his defensive unit.

"It's one of the best defenses I've ever been a part of," he said. "They can back that up, too. It's one of the fastest defenses I've ever coached. Athletically, they are phenomenal. Start with Chavartis at cornerback. He's easily one of our best athletes. Then our two safeties, Ishmael and Arterrian, are amazing. Godfrey is one of the smartest kids on the team. You have Mario and Elysha at outside linebacker. Jason Purcell is one of the best athletes in the school and Chub Fenderson has the passion and energy on the line. Between their athleticism, passion and glory, this unit, I think, is going to be very special."

There was also a revamping of the coaching staff. There are three former head coaches – Bobby Humphries (Interlachen, Palatka), Al Smith (Crescent City) and Bobby Raulerson (Jacksonville Bishop Kenny and Providence and Neptune Beach Fletcher) – on the staff. All have been very valuable to share what they have with Turner, according to the coach.

Turner said he was disappointed not to have a chance to see his team play the preseason game against Mount Dora due to lightning in the area last Friday, but looking on the bright side, he said no one got hurt.

That he will take into Friday's opener against another Lake County club, Umatilla. The Panthers open their home schedule Sept. 2 against Port Orange Atlantic.

The confidence, Turner said, is high. Now if the hunger can equal victories, then the direction of the program will be on the right track.

"One of our goals is to keep in mind that it's one game at a time," said Turner, who will be challenged in the newly formed District 6-2S (Suburban) with Keystone Heights, Bradford and second-year program Tocoi Creek. "We focus on that and not try to get too big-headed. We can lose any momentum we get in a hurry. The second goal we have is to keep getting better with each game. Overall, I think the kids are excited about the season."

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Support Our Local Teams!

Quarterbacks

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Allen is getting plenty of attention from colleges with offers from Ohio and Idaho, as well as interests from Georgia Southern, Massachusetts, Wofford, Middle Tennessee and South Florida among the many.

"College coaches want to see me stay in the pocket more," Allen said. "They want to see me throwing instead of running. So I feel like that's something I need to work on more."

McKinnon, who transferred from Interlachen after the 2019-2020 school year, shared time with senior Matthew Lands last season, but takes over this season.



Jenkins

"Last year taught me to work hard," McKinnon said. "I had to switch spots and we were fighting for one spot."

McKinnon considers himself a dual-threat quarterback and with plenty of skills he is ready to full show off this season.

"I can run and throw the ball well and I am pretty fast, but I would like to get even faster," McKinnon stated.

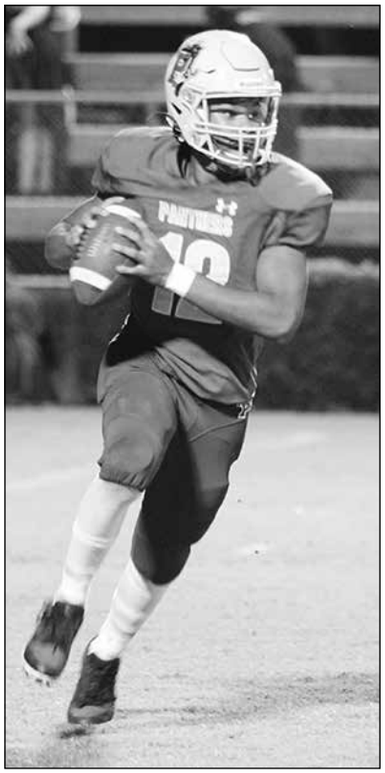
Like every quarterback, McKinnon knows there are things he needs to work on and isn't afraid to admit it. "You are never perfect, but I can always work on that (accuracy)," McKinnon said.

Jenkins takes over at Crescent City and will try to follow in the footsteps of last year's county player of the year, Naykeem Scott.

While Scott's first instincts may have been taking off and leaving the pocket, which led to being a 1,063-yard passer and 1,066-yard rusher, Jenkins has a different skill set.

"He's definitely a better passer than Naykeem," Crescent City coach Sean Delaney said. "He's a dual-threat quarterback and does both throwing and running really well."

Being a sophomore, Jenkins played sparingly last season behind Scott in mostly mop-up duty, but showed off his skills at times.



Palatka's Jamarrie McKinnon scrambles to find a receiver in a game last season at home against Menendez. McKinnon is the Panthers' full-time starter at the position this season as a senior.

MARK BLUMENTHAL / Palatka Daily News

"Like Naykeem, I tell him to go through his reads first and then if no one is open to then run," Delaney said. "Tebow went through the same type of reads at Florida."

Delaney said he sees the potential talent of Jenkins, but knows he has a lot of growing up still to do.

"I'd like to see him assume more of a leadership role," Delaney said. "But being a sophomore it's tough for juniors and seniors to listen to him."

That, though, will come with time and growth throughout the season.

Just like all three quarterbacks as the season progresses, their confidence and skills will get better and they will get all get acclimated and comfortable in their roles.

Rams

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

The move to the new league and new division comes with its own internal playoff system and gives the Rams a chance to bring home a divisional title or trophy for the first time since 1986.

"Playing for it means a lot. We could be the first team in school history to bring home a trophy," Allen said. "As far as our division, all of the teams we are matched up with have about the same amount of players so they should all be close games."

"I think our coaching staff and players have really high expectations of what we want to do this season," Gibson said. "Last year, we got a taste of it. It was our coaching staff's first year, but now with as many seniors as we have, it's not out of the realm of possibility of us winning eight games," Gibson continued. "Obviously, we want a chance to win a championship with the SSAC, so that's our expectation – to be in the championship game and win it. But a lot of that is on the kids whether they execute, whether they do the things they are supposed to and can we stay injury free."

For the Rams to put themselves in position to win the divisional title, they must get solid production from everywhere.

Allen is back after running for 1,040 yards and 13 touchdowns, while throwing for 388 yards and three TDs, but may see time at other positions with the addition of sophomore quarterback Jack Pavlik, a transfer from Gainesville.

Seniors playmakers Rickey Astin, Justin Herring, Der'Tavius Mack, Terryon Mitchell and Kendrick Chaney are all back. Transfers Artarian Ward (Menendez), Rakeem Brown (Peniel Baptist) and Jaquevis Nixon (Peniel), who played in the spring, should provide much needed depth at several positions as well.

"One thing about this team (is) I feel like we have multiple guys including linemen and skill guys who bring different aspects to the offense," Allen said. "Whether it's a mixture of speed or a mixture of strength or both, we can all just do things that can make things happen."

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2022 Putnam H.S. Schedule

AUGUST 26
Chiefland at Crescent City, 7
Palatka at Umatilla, 7
Lake Weir at Interlachen, 7:30

SEPTEMBER 1
Crescent City at Umatilla, 7

SEPTEMBER 2
Port Orange Atlantic at Palatka, 7
Providence at Interlachen, 7:30

SEPTEMBER 9
Santa Fe at Palatka, 7
Interlachen at Crescent City, 7

SEPTEMBER 16
Fernandina Beach at Interlachen, 7:30
Off: Crescent City, Palatka

SEPTEMBER 23
Palatka at Lake Weir, 7
Crescent City at Hilliard, 7
Keystone Heights at Interlachen, 7:30

SEPTEMBER 30
Tocoi Creek at Palatka, 7
Pierson Taylor at Crescent City, 7
Off: Interlachen

OCTOBER 7
Space Coast at Palatka, 7
Keystone Heights at Crescent City, 7
Interlachen at Pierson Taylor, 7

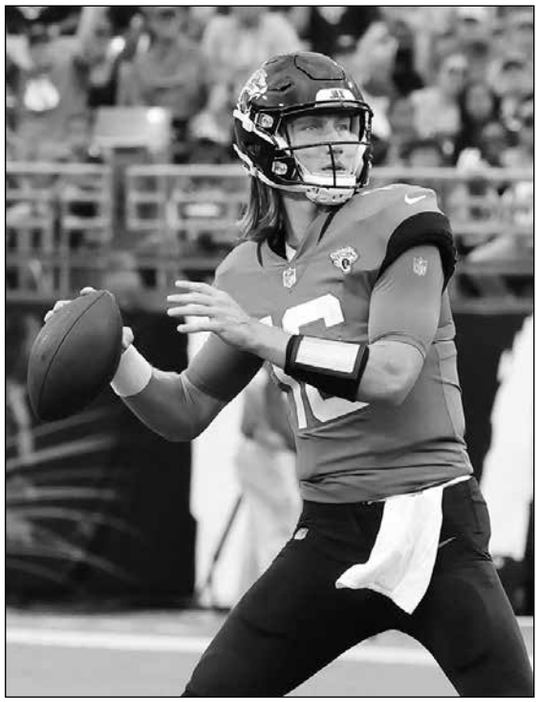
OCTOBER 14
Port Orange Atlantic at Crescent City, 7
Interlachen at Bell, 7
Palatka at Keystone Heights, 7:30

OCTOBER 21
Palatka at Fernandina Beach, 7
Crescent City at Beachside, 7
Halifax at Interlachen, 7:30

OCTOBER 27
Crescent City at Lake Weir, 7:30

OCTOBER 28
Bradford at Palatka, 7
SSAC Playoffs, TBA

NOVEMBER 4
St. Augustine at Palatka, 7
Crescent City at Titusville, 7
SSAC Playoffs, TBA



JOHN STUDWELL / Special to the Daily News

Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Trevor Lawrence looks to throw a pass during the team's 24-13 loss to the Cleveland Browns in the Aug. 12 exhibition game at home. Jacksonville opens up on the road in Washington on Sept. 11.

COLLEGE/NFL SCHEDULES

FLORIDA
Sept. 3 Utah, 7 p.m.
Sept. 10 Kentucky, 7 p.m.
Sept. 17 South Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 24 at Tennessee, TBA
Oct. 1 Eastern Washington, Noon
Oct. 8 Missouri, TBA
Oct. 15 LSU, TBA
Oct. 29 Georgia (Jacksonville), 3:30 p.m.
Nov. 5 at Texas A&M, TBA
Nov. 12 South Carolina, TBA
Nov. 19 at Vanderbilt, TBA
Nov. 25 at Florida State, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 3 SEC Championship game (Atlanta), 4 p.m.

FLORIDA STATE
Aug. 27 Duquesne, 5 p.m.
Sept. 4 LSU (New Orleans), 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Louisville, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 24 Boston College, TBA
Oct. 1 Wake Forest
Oct. 8 at North Carolina State, TBA
Oct. 15 Clemson, TBA
Oct. 29 Georgia Tech, TBA
Nov. 5 at Miami, TBA
Nov. 12 at Syracuse, TBA
Nov. 19 Lousiana, TBA
Nov. 25 Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 3 ACC Championship game (Charlotte), 8 p.m.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS
Sept. 11 at Washington, 1 p.m. (FOX)
Sept. 18 Indianapolis, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Sept. 25 at L.A. Chargers, 4:05 (CBS)
Oct. 2 at Philadelphia, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Oct. 9 Houston, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Oct. 16 at Indianapolis, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Oct. 23 N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m. (FOX)
Oct. 30 Denver, 9:30 a.m. (ESPN+)
Nov. 6 Las Vegas, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Nov. 13 at Kansas City, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Nov. 20 BYE
Nov. 27 Baltimore, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Dec. 4 at Detroit, 1 p.m. (FOX)
Dec. 11 at Tennessee, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Dec. 18 Dallas, 1 p.m. (FOX)
Dec. 22 at N.Y. Jets, 8:15 p.m. (Prime)
Jan. 1 at Houston, 1 p.m. (CBS)
Jan. 7/8 Tennessee, TBD (TBD)

Gators

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

how good is his supporting cast? Consider this: Florida's best offensive lineman appears to be Louisiana-Lafayette transfer O'Cyrus Torrence; Florida's best running back appears to be Louisiana-Lafayette transfer Montrell Johnson; and Florida's best receiver appears to be Arizona State transfer Ricky Pearsall.

So Napier has work to do. But at least he will get to do it in style, with the new building being the centerpiece of Florida's current makeover.

"You're losing any and every excuse because that whole building is really impressive head to toe," said strength and conditioning coordinator Mark Hocke, whose resume includes stops at SEC stalwarts Alabama, Georgia and Texas A&M. "That's going to get us in the ballpark or conversations to where that can be the premier facility in college football. And at the end of the day, if you want to be the best, that's what your resources need to be, too."

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