

2018 FOOTBALL PREVIEW



THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT





Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent
 Bracken County's Tad Fisher runs the ball during a Nov. 10, 2017, second round Class 1A Russell Athletic/KHSAA Commonwealth Gridiron Bowl playoff game at Paintsville.

John Flavell, The Daily Independent
 Mason County's Jayden Riggs (2) catches a touchdown pass during a Saturday, Sept. 2, 2017 game against Rowan County at Morehead State University.

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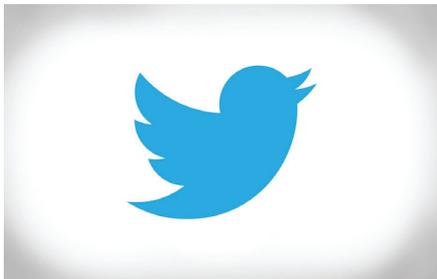
Photography: Terry Prather, Evan Dennison and Jared MacDonald

**Special thanks to those that submitted photos*

Cover & Design: Denise Adkins

Thank you to the coaches, athletic directors and school staff who helped make this preview happen. Without all of you, none of this would be possible. We look forward to another fun year for these student-athletes.

THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT



Follow us on Twitter @LedgerSports for all the action during the fall sports season. @EvanDennison1 and @JMacDonaldSport will be providing game and feature stories, live-tweeting games, uploading video highlights and the Ledger Sports handle will post all the scores and game stories from the action.



Follow us on the Facebook pages of Evan Dennison and Jared MacDonald as well as The Ledger Independent page. Evan and Jared's personal page will upload game stories, features, photo galleries and videos of the action this season.

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MASON COUNTY ROYALS

Royals start new year with many fresh faces

Productive senior class departs as underclassmen look to fill void of what's gone

EVAN DENNISON
edennison@cmpapers.com

It may not have been a large senior class departing from the Mason County football team, but it sure was a productive one.

The Royals now seek ways to replace what was nearly 90 percent of their offense accumulated in '17 with the 10 seniors that have now departed.

As Royals coach Jonathan Thomas enters his fourth season with the team, it may feel like he's back to square one with a roster filled with youth.

"We lost 90 percent of our offense. We're bringing back two starters on the o-line and Seth (Chambers). We've got a lot of kids to replace," Thomas said, who's compiled a 12-20 record in his first three seasons.

"We're just going to take it one day at a time."

One day at a time it is as the Royals are again tasked with dealing with limited numbers on the roster for a 4A team, majority of them underclassmen.

"We're just trying to get the young guys up to speed. That process cannot be rushed at all, I don't care what you do. We're basically trying to get the younger guys some reps. Usually the younger guys that haven't played varsity before, it's the speed of the game that gets to them. I've preached big time about not making the same mistakes over and over," Thomas said. "We've tried to video a lot more things and share it with the kids so they can see it. We have some talk sessions before practice starts to get the kids up to par on the playbook and things like that."

The scheduling part sets up nicely for the Royals as they play the first five

weeks with matchups that include Fleming County and Rowan County with a bye week before they enter district play.

"We'll go in and play as many kids as possible our first four games because we are so thin and then see where we are. We'll have a bye week as we go into district play. Hopefully we've got some things figured out and some kids in the spots that they need to be in," Thomas said.

Three of those first four games are at home. District play opens up at Scott and Bourbon County, the two teams expected to vie for the Class 4A, 7th

kind of flip roles this year in a sense. Harrison will be good for how young they were and the experience they got with those young kids, they'll be back this year full force," Thomas said.

As for personnel, starting under center will be a new face with Carson Brammer. Brammer, a junior, enters the starting role after backing up Chandler Dunaway last season. He threw three passes last season in the backup role, one going for a touchdown in the season opener against North Adams. He also rushed for two touchdowns on three carries. Brammer features a big arm and can definitely

Devine who had over 1,100 rushing yards in '17. While playing fullback, Chambers had 18 carries for 82 yards and three touchdowns.

"He came in a little bit out of shape, but he's a big strong, workhorse kid. Just a kid once we get him in the football mode he needs to be in as far as his body and getting in shape and things like that. He's switching positions a bit, he's going from fullback to tailback so things will be a little different for him early on," Thomas said.

In order for the offense to click, the Royals will have to get their line up to speed. They lose three starters along the o-line, including Dalton Kindt, a staple of their program the last few years. Kindt is off to Hobart College to continue his playing career, while the line is trying to piece things together to be on the same page. Jacob Ledford and Jared Collins will be the two experienced starters helping the more inexperienced players along.

"Us older guys we kind of lead the way at the beginning of practice. We always get the five lines set up, older guys just kind of take charge and show the younger guys what to do," Ledford said. "We've got a couple of new offensive linemen coming in. We've got to teach the lineman and teach the quarterback, make sure everyone is doing their job."

Defensively, Thomas is pleased where they're at early on.

"The bright spot has been defense early on. Defense is a little easier to pick up than our offense. You can just go out and play a little bit. Just go play, hit, run and tackle people," Thomas said.

Leford and Collins will also be a big part of the defensive line. The two combined for 52 tackles last season. Chambers will be a key with the linebacking core while Riggs will play a big part in the secondary as the team tries for a similar output on the defensive side of the ball, as opponents put up less than 20 points in seven of 11 games last season.

The Royals open up play with North Adams at home on August 17 in the



Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

2018 Mason County Royals

District title, the last year of the district being together before the Royals move down to 3A. They'll close out district play with Harrison County and Holmes at home. The Royals have been tabbed anywhere from three to five in those spots, the top four teams making the postseason.

"Bourbon will bring a lot back, Scott will be good because of the (Quincy) Perrin kid and their quarterback (Chad Ohmer). Holmes will be athletic, Holmes is always athletic. Harrison was really young last year. Us and Harrison will

open up the vertical passing game.

"If we start out with short routes, the long ones will come," Brammer said. "I just get the whole offense running, get everybody set, make sure that they know what they're doing."

His top target will be Jayden Riggs. Riggs is more of a possession receiver, helping the offense move the chains.

Playing behind Brammer in the backfield will be Seth Chambers. He will be the feature back to carry the load this season. Chambers played fullback last year, helping pave the way for Malkolm

MASON COUNTY ROYALS

Meadowview Regional Kickoff Classic.

When the season begins, Mason County will again look for ways to be successful with limited depth, while doing so with many underclassmen this time around.

“I’ve told them we’re not going to make excuses, we’re not worried about how many kids we got, who’s here, who’s not here, that kind of thing. Just show up and do your job. Show up and do your job, do your thing, listen to your coaches have high energy and give a great effort,” Thomas said.

STAFF:

Head Coach: Jonathan Thomas (4th Season)

Assistants: Dean Ravencraft, Jim Stice, Michael Fegley, Tristan Foster, Andrew Okruch, Daniel Akers

Middle School Staff: Joey Shepherd, Josh Huron, Scott Stamm

Radio (95.9 WFTM): Danny Weddle, Travis Scaggs

Manager: Matt Miller

Pressbox: Daniel Scilley, Tony Sapp, Kelly Faris, Larry Dunaway

Field Crew: Jim Brown, John Roberts, Johnny Walker, Joey Waddell, Todd Johnson, Chad Thomas, Matt Jolley

Stats: Rodney Washington

Film: Butch Chain

2018 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE
Aug 17	North Adams	Home
Aug 24	Meadowview Regional Kick-Off Classic Fleming County	Away
Aug 31	Cheaps Chevrolet Classic Rowan County	Home
Sep 7	Maysville Premier Auto Football Classic Morgan County	Home
Sep 21	Homecoming Scott	Away
Sep 28	Bourbon County	Away
Oct 5	Harrison County US Bank Football Classic	Home
Oct 12	Holmes	Home
Oct 19	Think Pink Night Grant County	Away
Oct 26	Lewis County Senior Night	Home

*All games kickoff at 7:30 p.m.

ROSTER

NO	NAME	POS	YEAR	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
2	Jayden Riggs	WR/DB	11	5-11	150
3	Cole Jones	WR/DB	11	6-0	165
4	Alex Flinders	RB/LB	9	N/A	N/A
5	Cody Jones	WR/DB	10	6-1	150
6	Allen Riggs	WR/DB	11	6-1	165
7	Andrew Malone	LB/RB	12	5-7	150
8	Brandon Dearing	RB/LB	9	N/A	N/A
9	Carson Brammer	WR/DB	11	6-2	180
10	Nick Frame	WR/DB	12	5-8	150
11	Dravin Rountt	LB/FB	9	N/A	N/A
12	Dylan Osgood	QB/DB	10	5-10	163
14	Ashton Adams	QB/LB	9	N/A	N/A
15	Tyler Stice	QB/LB	10	5-11	148
16	Austin Kitchen	WR/DB	12	5-10	145
17	Matthew Chambers	WR/DB	10	5-8	145
19	Mason Baxter	FB/LB	10	5-10	166
22	Seth Hutchinson	WR/DB	9	N/A	N/A
23	Kaden Allison	WR/DB	9	N/A	N/A
29	Colton Riggs	WR/DB	10	N/A	N/A
32	Tyler Lawson	WR/DB	10	5-5	108
39	Seth Chambers	RB/LB	12	6-1	200
40	Josh Irwin	WR/DB	10	5-5	132
45	Jonathan McKee	WR/LB	9	N/A	N/A
50	Clay Soward	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
51	Eli Sweet	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
52	Hunter Thompson	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
54	Andrew Denham	OL/DL	10	6-3	250
55	Lleyton Poe	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
57	David Selby	OL/DL	12	5-10	225
58	Greg Meadows	OL/DL	N/A	6-1	240
59	Lang Touchton	OL/DL	11	6-3	210
60	Chase Lykins	OL/DL	12	5-11	230
62	Jacob Ledford	OL/DL	12	5-9	230
63	Shawn Monteith	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
64	Austin Reetz	OL/DL	10	5-9	160
65	Max Moran	OL/DL	11	6-1	240
67	Jared Collins	OL/DL	12	6-1	215
68	Gabe Devine	OL/DL	11	5-7	238
72	Kaden Stone	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
74	Shephard Dalton	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
75	Jayven Hesler	OL/DL	9	5-8	258
76	Jackson Turner	OL/DL	9	N/A	N/A
80	Mario Soto	K	12	6-1	180
81	Brock Gilligan	K	12	6-0	160
84	Joseph Tull	TE/DL	10	5-10	215
86	Cody Wachter	WR/DB	9	N/A	N/A



Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

Mason County Coaching Staff

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MASON COUNTY ROYALS

Multi-sport presence should help Brammer along



Evan Dennison, The Ledger Independent

Mason County's Carson Brammer hands the ball off during a preseason practice in preparations for the 2018 season. With limited experience, Brammer's roles in other sports should help bring the first-year starter along.

Carson Brammer takes on QB role for Royals

EVAN DENNISON
edennison@lee.net

Carson Brammer has been able to show his arm strength on the baseball diamond the past two years.

He'll get his chance on the football field this year.

Brammer enters the role as the starting quarterback for the Mason County football team as they approach their sea-

son opener on Friday. The junior, standing at 6-foot-2, features a big arm that could stretch a defense with the vertical passing game. He features the intangibles one would want in a quarterback, but the Royals will slowly bring him along as he takes his first snaps under center.

"He's got some growing up to do. He's got the tools, he's got the talent and he's got the arm. He's a three-sport athlete. We don't have many kids anymore that can actually do that, but he can play. There's very few things that he can't do. Just for him, especially at the spot at quarterback, it's kind of like it was with Chandler, it's giving them the time and

the reps. Get comfortable and seeing things at game speed and reading defenses and things like that.

Brammer received limited playing time last season, but did get the start in the season opener against North Adams last year, the Royals not needing to do much throwing in a 68-7 blowout. Brammer threw just two passes in that game, completing one of them for a 24-yard touchdown. He'd only throw one more pass the rest of the season.

His situation might be a little different than others entering their first year as a starter. Brammer plays three sports, football, basketball and as mentioned before, baseball. He's seen valuable playing time

in the other two sports, most notably baseball where he's been a two-year starter at shortstop and also seeing time on the mound.

"He can play, he's very talented, he's very athletic. Playing those other sports really helps him out a lot," Thomas said.

Brammer attributes his learning curve to being Chandler Dunaway's understudy the past two seasons. Dunaway threw for over 1,500 yards and 16 touchdowns in that timeframe. The majority of Dunaway's targets that he looked to are pretty much all departed now to graduation.

"I just want to take the steps that Chandler did, follow in his footsteps and play like he did last year. I worked with

MASON COUNTY ROYALS

him in practice, he really taught me a lot. Working hard, getting set," Brammer said.

With all the personnel changes the Royals will experience both at the skill positions and along the offensive line, things might take a little while to get going. As far as receivers, they only return six receptions from last year. Five of them coming from Jayden Riggs, the other a reception from Chambers. Everyone else either graduated or is no longer

with the team.

Will we see many changes within the Royals offense to adapt to Brammer's style?

"It really depends on how quickly Carson picks things up," Thomas said. "How comfortable he gets as far as speed of the game, reading defenses and getting rid of the ball and things like that. We're trying to give him an individual period every single day in practice. He doesn't play any defense. He plays scout

team quarterback, just trying to give him those reps and any reps we can give him live will help as much as we can give him."

Brammer isn't too concerned with trying to throw the ball down the field right away.

"If we start out with short routes, the long ones will come," Brammer said.

He's also confident in his line play early on, returning just two guys, Jacob Ledford and Jared Collins.

"I think our line is getting a lot better, they've been playing good in practice," Brammer said. "My job is to get the whole offense running, get everybody set, make sure that they know what they're doing."

There's no doubt a lot of differences will be seen with this year's Royals compared to last, but Brammer nor the Royals are letting that influence them early on as they approach Friday's kickoff.

"We're just trying to get the young guys up to speed. That process cannot be rushed at all, I don't care what you do.

We're basically trying to get the younger guys some reps. Usually the younger guys that haven't played varsity before it's the speed of the game that gets to them. I've preached big time about not making the same mistakes over and over," Thomas said.

The new product will be on display Friday night as the Royals open up with North Adams in the Meadowview Regional Kickoff Classic at 7:30 p.m.



Evan Dennison, The Ledger Independent

Mason County's Carson Brammer pitched in the 39th District Championship for the Royals in the spring. He'll be the Royals starting quarterback when the season opens up Friday night.

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FLEMING COUNTY PANTHERS

Panthers plan to continue program's success

New players stepping up for Fleming County football team this fall

JARED MACDONALD
jmacdonald@cmpapers.com

FLEMINGSBURG – The Fleming County football team claimed their first outright district title since the 2001 season, and if they plan to repeat this fall, they'll need to do it with several new faces.

The Panthers enter the season after losing several key players, including their starting quarterback, two running backs, several receivers and a number of kids off the line, but they're focused on what they have coming back this season with hopes of another title in Class 3A, District 5.

"It's all in our culture and our expectations. We've never said that to our kids - that we lost all these guys and we're starting over. We hope that everybody else thinks that and there is going to be a little difference, little changes, but we try to breed that in through our culture that we expect to win regardless of who is playing. We expect to have success because we're going to work hard and do things right and that's what we've preached to them all summer long," said Fleming County coach Bill Spencer. "There's never been a minute in practice where we've said, 'Oh, Josh [Crump] could have done this, or Jaden [Campbell] could have done that.' We talk about who we've got and what they can do."

Crump has started at quarterback for the Panthers for the last several seasons. Last year he was named the district Player of the Year after completing 128-of-210 passes for 2,091 yards and 24 touchdowns. He also led the team with 546 rushing yards and nine touchdowns on 81 carries.

Taking over will be Jonathan Maher, a rising junior that played quarterback at the junior varsity level last year and saw limited snaps at the position at the varsity level. He completed three passes for 52 yards at the varsity level as a sophomore, including a 49-yard touchdown pass against Lewis

County. He got a close look watching what Crump did last year as a receiver.

"Jonny throws the ball well. He was a receiver for us before. He can obviously run when he gets in the open space and things," said Spencer. "We're just focusing on what he does well and trying to build his confidence up and kind of letting him learn as he goes."



2018 FLEMING COUNTY PANTHERS

Maher says he's more of a scrambling quarterback, but has been working on staying in the pocket and making throws.

"I've been doing pretty good," said Maher. "I've been throwing the ball decent, so I think we'll actually be pretty good this year - better than most teams and newspapers expected for us to do."

He'll have several new players to throw to as well. Gone are the likes of Brad Glascock, Jaden Campbell and Zac Alexander, as well as running backs Nick Clark and Josh Hamm. Cole Saunders will be the leader of the group.

Saunders is expected to be the senior leader in the new group of receivers, after recording 14 receptions for 260 yards and four touchdowns last season.

"I'm just telling the young guys that they need to focus. In practice, we're all just trying to learn the routes, teach them the routes and some kids that haven't played varsity, they're going to have to this year

and that's a big deal if they want to play," said Saunders. "It's a lot different game."

Spencer is looking at players like Andrew Jackson, C.J. Gulley, Jesse Bays and Blake McKibben to step into a larger receiving role this season. He's also expecting Kaleb Flanery to get the ball in his hands more this year, whether throwing to him or handing off to him, after

not solid up front on offense and defense, you're going to be in for a rough year all the way around."

Tyler Lunsford, Jacob Werline, Austin Hunt and Kyron Humphrey all saw varsity action on the line last year, and the two returning starters haven't noticed too much difference early on, partially because they've grown up together.

"We've got a lot of kids that are really strong on the line this year. I think we have a great line this year. We're all strong, big and we'll have a powerful line," said Grannis.

"We've been playing with these kids ever since we were little. It's just been really easy," added Grannis. "We know how each other plays, so it'll be really easy going into this year."

Fleming County was 11th in 3A last season in scoring defense, allowing an average of 21.1 points per game. The Panthers were also eighth in their class defending the pass. They allowed opponents an average of just 83 yards per game through the air.

"We preach to them that we want to be a hard-nosed defensive football team. We want to force turnovers. Our offense gets a lot of credit, but we always tell them that if we score, we might win, but if they don't score, we can't lose. That's our motto and what we go by," said Spencer. "We want to try to shut people out and give up the least amount of points as we can."

Defense will be key in district play, as Fleming County will face several teams returning offensive threats, including Bath County, who was picked to finish first in Class 3A, District 5 in the Cats' Pause pre-season poll with star running back Landan Swartz returning.

Russell was picked to finish second and West Carter, who Fleming County has only beaten by a combined 15 points the last two seasons, was picked fourth. Improved Lewis County and Pendleton County teams were picked fifth and sixth, respectively.

"It's going to take beating some very tough teams this year," said Taylor. "A lot

Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

collecting 17 passes for 210 yards and five touchdowns.

"Kaleb was a kid that was hurt for part of the year last year, but whenever he was healthy he made plays for us," said Spencer. "If you remember the Mason County game and the Greenup County game out here, he's a kid that when he gets the ball in his hands, he's a special kid and we're going to try to find ways to get it to him."

In addition to Flanery, Aaron Christian-sen and Tanner Weaver will be getting touches to try to replace the production of Clark and Hamm from last year's team.

The Panthers bring back Jayston Taylor and Sebastian Grannis on the line, and Spencer is expecting them to step up as the only starters coming back in that spot.

"It all starts and ends with the offensive line - offensive and defensive line," said Spencer. "The other guys get a lot of the press and a lot of the talk, but if you're

FLEMING COUNTY PANTHERS

of people got a lot of people back.”

The Panthers will have five games to prepare for the district slate, starting with Harrison County at home on Aug. 17. They’ll host a young Mason County squad the following week, before traveling to Greenup County and Rowan County the following next two weeks.

They’ll host Class 5A, District 6 favorite Montgomery County on Sept. 14, before traveling to Lewis County to open district play. Fleming County will host Russell the following week and then head to West Carter. They’ll finish the regular season with home games against Bath County and Pendleton County, before a bye in the final week of the KHSAA regular season.

“We know in our district we’ve got our hands full and we’ve got five games before then to get ready for it,” said Spencer. “But we know when districts start, we’re going to have to play every week to win.”

DATE	2018 SCHEDULE OPPONENT	SITE
Aug 17	Harrison County	Home
Aug 24	Mason County Cheap's Chevrolet Game	Home
Aug 31	Greenup County	Away
Sep 7	Rowan County	Away
Sep 14	Montgomery County	Home
Sep 21	Lewis County	Away
Sep 28	Russell	Home
Oct 4	West Carter	Away
Oct 12	Bath County	Home
Oct 19	Pendleton County	Home

**All games kickoff at 7:30 p.m.*

NO	NAME	ROSTER POS	YEAR	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
2	Jayden Argo	WR/DB	9	5-11	135
3	Jesse Bays	WR/DB	11	5-11	150
4	Austin Paige	K/WR/LB	12	5-11	180
5	Caleb Faris	WR/DB	12	5-9	125
6	Zeke Conn	QB/LB	10	5-7	211
7	Jordan Raikes	WR/DB	10	5-9	140
9	Levi Denton	WR/DB	9	5-9	140
10	Tanner Weaver	RB/LB	10	5-6	140
11	Larkin McKee	QB/WR/DB	9	5-11	139
14	Logan Pinkley	WR/DB	9	6-1	150
15	Buddy Morgan	QB/DB	10	5-9	135
18	Cole Saunders	WR/DB	12	5-10	147
19	Kaleb Flanery	RB/DB	11	5-9	165
20	Jonathan Maher	QB/WR/LB	11	6-0	155
21	Carson Gully	WR/DB	11	6-0	152
23	Aaron Christiansen	RB/DB	12	5-9	170
24	Blake McKebben	WR/DB	11	5-11	143
25	Matthew Everidge	AQ/WR/DB	9	5-6	115
26	Braden Clark	QB/LB	9	5-8	183
27	Justin Fields	TE/LB	11	5-11	175
30	Hoss Morgan	RB/DB	9	5-5	130
31	Zach Davis	RB/DB	10	5-6	150
3	Matthew Dugan	TE/LB	10	6-1	202
33	Braxton Igo	FB/LB	9	5-9	172
34	Andrew Jackson	TE/LB	11	6-3	162
35	Payton Roark	WR/LB	10	6-2	205
40	Brayden Allen	RB/LB	10	5-9	195
42	Waylon Justice	TE/DE	11	5-10	216
45	Grayson Hurst	FG/LB	10	5-8	172
50	Darren Arrasmith	C/DE	9	6-0	202
51	Sebastian Grannis	OT/DT	12	6-1	270
52	Kenley Manning	C/DE	10	5-10	206
53	ustin Hunt	OT/DT	11	6-1	276
54	Kyron Humphrey	C/OG/DT	11	6-0	249
55	Daniel Watkins	OT/DE	10	5-11	241
56	Andrew Hedge	OT/DE	9	5-10	200
58	Brad Applegate	FB/OG/LB	11	5-10	215
59	Jose Sanchez	OT/DT	10	5-9	254
60	Marcus Weaver	OG/DT	9	5-11	220
6	Jett Hamilton	OT/DE	11	6-1	230
62	Ryan Bolar	OG/DT	9	5-7	238
64	Tyler Hardin	OG/DT	10	5-10	229
66	Jayston Taylor	C/DE	12	6-0	228
68	Tristan Emmons	C/G/DT	10	5-8	190
69	Carson Oldham	OT/DE	9	6-0	171
70	Dallin Muse	OG/DT	9	5-9	203
72	Harrison Doyle	OG/DT	10	5-10	198
74	Austin Hyatt	OG/DT	9	5-11	231
76	Cooper Schwartz	OT/DT	10	6-2	305
77	Brant Layne	OT/DT	9	5-6	242
78	Tyler Lunsford	OT/DT	12	6-0	313
79	Jacob Werline	C/DT	11	5-8	293
88	Tristan Still	WR/DB	9	5-9	125

STAFF:

HEAD COACH: Bill Spencer (9th Season)
ASSISTANT COACHES: Jordan Fritz, Todd Glascock, Jimmy McKinney, Aaron James, Heath Burnett
SUPERINTENDENT: Brian Creasman
PRINCIPAL: Stephanie Emmons
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR: John Elliott
TEAM DOCTOR: Mike Boyd
TEAM MANAGERS: Katie Hickerson, Molly Spencer
VIDEO: Aubrey Montgomery, Bryan Manning
STATS: Kym Campbell



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

FLEMING COUNTY COACHING STAFF

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Maher making contributions on both sides of ball

Fleming County junior
quarterbacking offense
and defense

JARED MACDONALD
jmacdonald@cmpapers.com

FLEMINGSBURG – Josh Crump was the star on Fleming County’s high-powered offense the last few years, but the time has come for a new player to step into the role of quarterback.

The Panthers believe Jonathan Maher can lead the team when they have the ball in their hands this fall, but they’re also looking at the junior to quarterback the team when they don’t have possession.

“We talk about him [Maher] at quarterback, but he’s returning as a starter at inside linebacker, which our inside linebackers are kind of the quarterbacks of the defense. He’s back and he’s calling the defense for us this year,” said Fleming County coach Bill Spencer. “He’s done well for us this summer.”

Maher played all 11 games on a Fleming County team that was 11th in Class 3A in points allowed per game in 2017. Opponents averaged 21.1 points against the Panthers and allowed only 83 passing yards per game, good for eighth-best in their class.

He racked up a total of 82 tackles during the season, while also recovering two fumbles and intercepting a pass in the second quarter against Rowan County and returning it 53 yards to the end zone.

“I like playing defense a lot better,” said Maher. “I like hitting people rather than getting hit.”

The weak point in the Fleming County defense last year came against the run. The Panthers allowed just over 200 yards per game on the ground, but Maher believes that’s something the team’s improved upon entering the 2018 season.

“Our defensive line is big and I think we’ll be able to stop the running game a lot,” said Maher. “Our outside linebackers are fast and they aren’t afraid to hit anybody. They’re both really strong, so I think we’ll do good this year.”



Maher

Offensively is where he'll likely feel the most pressure. Maher saw varsity action as a receiver last year, but hasn't had experience starting at quarterback. He did make it into some games last season in his new position, but only when there was a large point differential.

"That's the main thing not just Jonny is lacking, but a lot of our guys," said Spencer. "They got to play in some games, but they never got the start and there's a lot more pressure on you when you're the starting quarterback, or you're the starting running back and things."

Maher had never played quarterback until last season when he was tabbed to take over for Crump, who completed 128-of-210 passes for 2,091 yards and 24 touchdowns as a senior. Crump was the district player of the year.

Maher took over the position at the junior varsity level and his coaches have been focusing on what he does well, instead of what worked well with Crump the last three years.

"We knew down the road we were going to have to have a quarterback. First and foremost, he's not going to be

Josh Crump. We know that and everybody else knows that," said Spencer. "Jonny is a capable player, a capable kid. He has his strengths and we're working on some of the things we perceive as his weaknesses right now."

At the varsity level, Maher completed three passes for 52 yards, 49 of which came on a touchdown pass to C.J. Gulley in a 44-0 rout of Class 3A, District 5 foe Lewis County.

His first touchdown pass wasn't a picturesque play, however, as the snap went through his hands and up into the air. But he was able to catch it, regain composure and fire it down the field, which was something Spencer was happy to see, and not only because it ended up putting more points on the board.

"That kind of shows his composure that he doesn't get rattled when things happen and that's what we've been happy with him this summer," said Spencer. "Things haven't always gone perfect for him, but he doesn't get rattled and frustrated when things go bad."

The summer has included work on his passing game. Crump was also the team-

leader in rushing yards last year with 546, and Maher believes his own ability to scramble is his strong point early on.

"I ain't got the arm Josh does. Josh can do both of them, but I ain't got the arm," said Maher. "I'm working on it because [assistant coach Jordan] Fritz is making me stay in the pocket more and read better."

Maher caught 12 passes for 222 yards and three touchdowns last year, so he's familiar with that end of the team's passing plays.

He'll be working with an overhauled group of skill players this season, as the team lost the likes of Jaden Campbell, Brad Glascock and Zac Alexander, as well as running backs Nick Clark and Josh Hamm. He's found senior Cole Saunders, who caught 14 passes for 260 yards and four touchdowns last year, as well as Gulley, to be a couple of his favorite targets early on, but the Panthers are also looking at Kaleb Flanery, Andrew Jackson, Jesse Bays and Blake McKibben to get their hands on the ball.

"Jonny has been throwing the ball

a lot better lately and I like that. He knows the offense, he knows how we run our routes, so he does a pretty good job," said Saunders. "I'm comfortable with him."

While there are several changes to the offense and added responsibility for Maher, the Fleming County coach is confident in his new quarterback's ability to help the Panthers on their quest for back-to-back district titles.

"We've got a lot of expectations and maybe a little extra pressure on him. Josh just had to play offense and worry about that. Jonny has to play both sides and control everything," said Spencer. "We're putting some pressure on him, but we think he's a good kid and can do it."





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Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Manchester football coach Dustin Cook watches a drill during a preseason practice, Wednesday, Aug. 8, in Manchester.



Evan Dennison, The Ledger Independent

Bracken County runs some drills during a preseason practice in preparations for the 2018 season. The Polar Bears are coming off a 9-3 season and the program's first-ever playoff victory.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Manchester's Avery Reed participates in a tackling drill during a preseason practice, Wednesday, Aug. 8, in Manchester.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Lewis County quarterback Zach Lehn (14) prepares to deliver a pass during a preseason practice, Tuesday, July 31, in Vanceburg.

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BRACKEN COUNTY POLAR BEARS

Bracken County not backing down

Polar Bears continuing to build after historic season

JARED MACDONALD
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BROOKSVILLE – 2017 was a historic season for the Bracken County football team.

The Polar Bears picked up their first-ever postseason win in program history, knocking off Fairview, 36-6, in the first round of the Class 1A Russell Athletic/KHSAA Commonwealth Gridiron Bowl Playoffs before seeing their season come to a close in Paintsville.

This year, the goals are set even higher.

“We got that taste of a playoff victory last year, which the kids were excited about and we want to build on that and hopefully go a little bit farther. They’ve gone from eight to nine [wins] and now we want to go to 10 or more. There’s no doubt about it – we’re not going to try to hide from that or run from it in any way,” said Bracken County coach Dave Brausch. “There’s a lot of people out there saying, ‘Oh, will they fall back? Will they remain?’ Only time will tell, but I think we’ll be up for a challenge.”

It’s the second year in Brooksville for Brausch, who took over after Mike Sizemore decided to return to his native Clay County. A year under Brausch’s belt provides more familiarity with the players he’ll have returning this season.

“Just knowing the players better, obviously, knowing more families. Yeah, there’s a little more comfort, I think, for everybody involved,” said Brausch. “They know me a little better, I know them a little better and all the guess work, to say, is done. I think that definitely helps.”

Entering last season, there was one player who didn’t have to try to get to know. That player – his son, Trey Brausch – will be back for his senior season this fall to quarterback the Polar Bears.

The younger Brausch completed 79-of-133 passes last season for 1,334 yards and 13 touchdowns. He’ll do it with several new receivers, as the likes of Trey Deaton, Tanner Fisher and Logan Teegarden, along with fullback Griffin Appleman, were lost to graduation after combining for 40 receptions last year for over 500 yards.

Despite the losses, Bracken County is aiming to create a more balanced offense this season with new receivers. They’ll bring back Mason Tucker, who had 10

they get in a few games, get varsity-level experience under their belt they’ll be good to go and we’ll be ready to roll by district play.”

Bracken County will also look for players to fill in on the line. Chris “Honeybun” Thomas is back this year, as well as Cooper Teegarden, Kysten Morales and Rice to provide some blocking.

“We got off to kind of a slow start throwing the ball basically because of breakdowns in protections I thought early in the year last year, but we got

“I think I’ll be pretty comfortable taking on the responsibility,” said Fisher. “Griffin helped out a lot last year. He’d get the yards when we needed them. We kind of flip flopped and it was good having him right there beside me and knowing he was there for me at all times.”

While Fisher provided plenty of offensive explosion last year, Bracken County’s “Bear Down” defense kept several opponents off the board. The Polar Bears surrendered only 13 points per game and shut out four opponents, while holding four others to eight points or less.

They allowed only 93.5 yards per game on the ground and 85 yards per game through the air in 2017. Brausch points to another son, defensive coordinator David Brausch, as well as fellow assistants Stephon Butler and Eli Florer for the team’s success on that side of the ball.

“They do a great job preparing the kids and they just get them ready to play. We try to get the kids where they’ve got an idea of what’s coming at them each time before the ball is even snapped. If they can play with that kind of confidence knowing that, it makes a big difference in how they play,” said the head coach. “We take pride in a shutout.”

The second-year head coach is expecting the more experienced players, like Fisher and Brausch, to continue to lead the team on that side of the ball, but he’s also looking at players like Morales on the line and Woods at cornerback to have big years.

“We’re looking to be faster, more athletic, harder hitting,” said Morales. “Defense, it’s aggressive. I like it. Speed is key.”

If there was a point of emphasis for the Bracken County defense last year, it was avoiding the big plays. Their two regular season losses came against Ludlow, 27-24, when Justin Blackburn broke open for long touchdown plays, and against Paris, who is the preseason No. 1 team in Class 1A, District 5. They also have the preseason district Player of the Year in Matthew Barber, who carried the ball



Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

2018 BRACKEN COUNTY POLAR BEARS

catches for 266 yards and two touchdowns as a junior, as well as Tyler Rice at tight end.

“We want to be a little more balanced. I think it will help us, especially come playoff time or big game time and one of the things I think we’re able to do is add some receivers,” said the Bracken County coach. “We’ve got a few more receivers out this year, which I think is going to help us improve.”

The Polar Bears will look for young players like Emery Woods, Payton Gilvin and Nathan Jefferson to be some of the players stepping up in those positions this season.

“It’s been fun. They’re younger guys, so just trying to get them up to speed,” said the Polar Bears’ quarterback. “After

better at that,” said Dave Brausch. “If we can continue to be better at giving our quarterback some time - I think we’ve got more receivers than what we had last year - so I think we can spread the ball around a little bit more and keep people from keying so much on our backs and being able to move the ball in the air a little bit.”

It’s no secret that the Polar Bears have liked to run the ball the last few years. Last year alone, Bracken County posted 3,192 yards on the ground. Tad Fisher led the team with 1,606 yards and 19 touchdowns on 202 carries, but will be without Griffin Appleman, who posted 820 yards and 13 scores on 110 touches. Brausch says fans can expect mostly one-back sets this season.

BRACKEN COUNTY POLAR BEARS

18 times for 211 yards and three touchdowns in the Greyhounds 34-14 victory over the Polar Bears last season.

“I’d agree with the poll. Until they get beat, they deserve to be number one. I think Brossart will be pretty good again and I think Nicholas County will be better than what they were last year,” said Brausch. “We’ll see what happens from then on, but I definitely think they got the top four right, and maybe the order may be, hopefully, off a little bit.”

Outside of district play, Bracken County will see a similar schedule to last season. They’ll host Switzerland County (IN) to open the season, travel to Ludlow and Pendleton County and then get a bye. They were originally schedule to host Trimble County for their fourth game, but the Raiders were unable to field a team this year. Instead, they’ll host Owen County on Oct. 26. They’ll also host Jackson County on Sept. 14 and travel to Dayton on Sept. 21, before opening district

play in Paris the following week.

Bracken County made school history last season, but they aren’t satisfied. This year, the sights are set even higher.

“I think our goal this year is to go 10-0. It’s something we’ve never done before in school history,” said Fisher.

“We’re just taking it one step at a time, one game at a time,” added Fisher. “We’re just working on the little things and those little things will make big things happen.”

NO	NAME	ROSTER POS	YEAR	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
2	Trey Brausch	QB/LB	12	6-1	205
4	Emery Woods	WR/DB	10	5-8	140
5	Morgan Thorpe	WR/DB	11	6-0	150
8	Payton Gilvin	RB/DB	9	5-11	195
10	Mason Tucker	WR/DB	12	6-0	150
12	Richard Prewitt	RB/DB	9	5-6	160
14	Ashton Muse	WR/DB	9	5-6	145
16	Charlie Schultz	QB/DB	9	5-11	160
21	Nathan Jefferson	WR/DB	10	6-2	170
22	Tad Fisher	RB/LB	12	6-1	200
24	Brady Smith	WR/DB	9	5-7	120
25	Carson Hord	HB/LB	10	5-10	195
34	Caleb Jefferson	HB/LB	9	5-9	195
42	Amy Craycraft	HB/LB	10	5-8	160
52	Kysten Morales	G/LB	10	6-0	245
54	Mathew Bishop	G/LB	10	5-11	210
55	Travis Tucker	T/DE	12	6-6	240
56	Shelton White	T/DT	9	5-7	215
60	Austin Holder	T/LB	9	5-10	190
61	Logan Reed	G/DT	11	6-1	260
65	Chris Thomas	C/DT	12	6-2	275
66	Jonathon Rose	T/DT	9	6-0	215
70	Tyler Davenport	C/DT	9	5-8	230
71	Jared Tucker	G/DT	11	5-9	270
72	Joe Simpson	G/DE	11	6-5	295
73	Kupr Teegarden	T/DE	12	6-3	250
74	Brady Ballard	G/DT	10	6-1	260
75	Lane Stewart	T/DE	9	6-0	180
77	Jesse Spangler	G/DT	12	5-11	320
78	Klint Tucker	T/DE	11	6-4	230
84	Tyler Rice	HB/DE	12	6-3	210

DATE	2018 SCHEDULE OPPONENT	SITE
Aug 17	Switzerland County (Vevay), IN	Home
Aug 24	Ludlow	Away
Aug 31	Pendleton County	Away
Sep 14	Jackson County	Home
Sep 21	Dayton	Away
Sep 28	Paris	Away
Oct 5	Bishop Brossart	Away
Oct 12	Berea	Home
Oct 19	Nicholas County	Home
Oct 26	Owen County	Home

*All games kickoff at 7:30 p.m. except Aug 24 is 7:00 p.m.



COACHING STAFF:

HEAD COACH: Dave Brausch (2nd Season)

ASSISTANT COACHES: David Brausch, Stephon Butler, Eli Florer

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR: Daniel Fisher



Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

BRACKEN COUNTY COACHING STAFF

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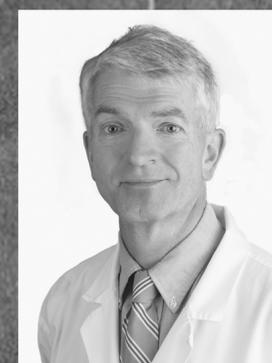
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Brausch, Fisher form dynamic duo

Quarterback, running back find success, friendship on the field

JARED MACDONALD
jmacdonald@cmpapers.com

BROOKSVILLE – Tad Fisher has spent his life in Bracken County.

Trey Brausch started at the Brooksville school last year as a junior.

Now, as both enter their senior seasons, the two have formed a friendship on and off the field, and also a dynamic offensive attack for the Bracken County football team with Brausch at quarterback and Fisher at running back.

“I’m a lot more familiar with the guys. They’re starting to turn into like brothers to me. Me and Tad, we have, I think, a unique bond where me and him got along right away,” said Brausch. “I’ve

made really good friends here.”

The quarterback made the move to Bracken County with his father and head coach, Dave Brausch, who took over the program in 2017 for Mike Sizemore, who left for his native Clay County. Brausch had most recently coached at Amelia in Ohio, but spent the majority of his career at Lebanon High School, where he won the 1998 state championship. Also coming along was another son, defensive coordinator David Brausch.

“Some days one guy’s your best friend and the other guy’s kind of criticizing you every time,” said Trey Brausch. “It’s nice, because you’re comfortable with them and I learn a lot from them and I can trust in them for sure, 100 percent, with anything. That helps a lot.”

Fisher was one of the first people the quarterback met when they arrived in Brooksville. His father, Daniel Fisher, is Bracken County’s athletic director, which made Tad part of the welcoming commit-



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Bracken County running back Tad Fisher (left) and Trey Brausch (right) participate in a drill during a preseason practice, Thursday, Aug. 2, in Brooksville.

tee.

“I first met him when he came last year with his dad and we kind of looked around a little bit and it started from there,” said Fisher. “We’re pretty good friends now.”

The two got off to a good start on the field as well. After making the trip to Switzerland County, Indiana, in the season opener, Fisher rushed 11 times for 139 yards and two touchdowns, while Brausch completed 8-of-14 passes for 81 yards. Fisher caught three of those passes for 44 yards.

Brausch fired his first touchdown pass in a Bracken County uniform the following week in Brooksville. The recipient was Fisher from 29 yards out to give the Polar Bears an 8-0 lead over Ludlow.

The two complemented each other well throughout the season, with Fisher’s running, combined with fullback Griffin Appleman, opening up plays through the air.

“Everybody’s expecting the run, run, run - play action, boom. Get them real quick,” said Brausch. “It’s nice having a run threat like that. You don’t have to have all the pressure on you.”

Fisher finished with 1,606 yards - a

single-season record for the Polar Bears - and 19 touchdowns on 202 carries. Brausch completed 79-of-133 passes for 1,334 yards and 13 touchdowns. Fisher was a main target out of the backfield, collecting 24 receptions for 461 yards and five touchdowns, all team-highs.

In a 52-0 rout of Berea, Fisher broke the school’s single-season record for total touchdowns with his 23rd - he has 34 total touchdowns entering this season, the most in school history - and Brausch broke the single-game record for passing yards with 334.

“Me and Trey, we’re pretty comfortable. It’s probably the most comfortable I’ve been through my high school career with my quarterback,” said Fisher. “Whatever it takes to get the job done, we’ll do it.”

With Appleman, who rushed for 820 yards and 13 touchdowns on 110 carries, gone this season, the second-year Bracken County coach is expecting Fisher to carry the majority of the running load.

“We’ll probably be more of a one-back team this year. We just don’t have the true fullback in the group this year. Payton Gilvin, he runs the ball real hard and Richard Prewitt, another freshman,

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who's looked good running the ball," said Dave Brausch. "We've got some good young kids there to run the ball there too, but I think you'll mostly see one-back sets from us."

The Polar Bears claimed their first-ever postseason win last season, knocking off Fairview, 36-6, and look to improve upon that this season. They're predicted to finish second in the Class 1A, District 5 poll. Fisher believes the key to success this fall will come from doing the little things right.

"Little things just like making sure we're hitting the right hole, making sure we're reading blocks right, making sure the lineman are still doing it right," said Fisher. "It starts up there with them and give them all the credit for working hard this summer and making the team what we are."

The two also played on the other side of the ball – Fisher as a linebacker and Brausch as a defensive back. They combined for 102 tackles and four interceptions, including one by Fisher that he took back to the end zone. Brausch also recovered a fumble. He'll be moving to inside linebacker this season.

"I played linebacker my freshman and sophomore years, so it's not that big of a change to me. I always played linebacker growing up, so it's not like it's a huge change," said Brausch. "My brother's a linebacker's coach, so we're fitting real good wherever I'm at."

The "Bear Down" defense kept several opponents off the board last year, allowing only 13 points per game while shutting out four opponents and holding four others to eight points or less. They also allowed only 93.5 yards per game on the

ground and 85 yards per game through the air.

Those two will likely be staples on the 2018 Bracken County defense, which will be key if they want to reach the top of their district. Paris, the preseason favorite, also features the preseason Player of the Year in Matthew Barber, who rushed for 960 yards and 14 touchdowns on 95 carries last season.

But as Fisher and Brausch enter their senior season, their focus is on Bracken County and their wins and losses, instead of other teams or personal numbers.

"I don't really look at that stuff. I just focus on me and us. It's not really about the Player of the Year. It's about how the team does," said Fisher. "I'm just focused on the team this year."



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger
Independent

Bracken County quarterback Trey Brausch (right) hands the ball off to running back Tad Fisher (left) during a preseason practice, Thursday, Aug. 2, in Brooksville.

LEWIS COUNTY LIONS

Lions hopeful to end playoff drought

Its been since 2013, is this the year the Lions break through?

EVAN DENNISON
edennison@cmpapers.com

A returning quarterback, tailback, wide receiver and four offensive lineman has some optimism presenting itself in Vanceburg.

Lewis County enters 2018 starving for the postseason, having missed out the last four second seasons with their last appearance coming in 2013. With nine wins in that timeframe and four in the last three years, there's only one way to go.

"We want to build on last year. We've gone 1-9 and then 2-8. We're looking at a possibility of a 5-5 season which is a large improvement for us. We want to mature as a team and build it up, get the younger kids involved, get a foundation so we can be better in the years later," Lions running back Garrett Applegate said.

The offensive side has the experience and playmakers to help them obtain their goals, but it's the defensive side where the Lions will have to show improvement. In '17, Lewis County allowed on average 44.8 points per game.

"A lot if it was tackling. It seemed

like we were there, just didn't make the plays. From day one we've spent a lot of time. We make sure that's 10-15 minutes of something that we do each day," Lions coach Josh Hughes said. "Breaking down what we're supposed to do to make that tackle. Hoping that good muscle memory will take over and finish some of the plays."

guys coaching both sides of the ball. Everybody on the staff is new. They're all guys I knew. I think that always helps. They've brought a lot of energy to practice and I think the kids feed off of that," Hughes said. "We hit the ground running when we started. We spent a lot of time with each other in the offseason."

kids know it bothers us, then the effort goes down. We've done a good job as a staff not letting that happen. If there's only two people in a group for a drill, then those two people will get every rep in that 10-minute period. I think because we've made that part serious and we're going to work no matter what, the kids have responded to it," Hughes said.

Getting back to the offensive side of the ball, some key returning skill players will be quarterback Zach Lehn, Applegate and wide receiver Zach Roberison. Lehn experienced his first year at the position last season, throwing for 1,049 yards, eight touchdowns and 13 interceptions, completing 55 percent of his passes. Another year at the position has him seeing things better and slowing things down.

"Everything just happened so fast last year. Last year was really my first time getting varsity experience and timing was everything. I was slower at stuff and this year I think I'm picking it up and things are going a lot smoother," Lehn said.

Helping along will be the sure hands of Roberison, who caught 43 passes for 450 yards and two touchdowns in '17. Roberison has the hands and the height at the position, standing at 6-foot-1. He may not have the explosiveness that departing senior Tay Offut had, but Lehn feels really comfortable looking No. 3's way.



2018 LEWIS COUNTY LIONS

Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

With a somewhat revamped coaching staff to help in the matter, the Lions are hoping the defensive woes are in the past.

"We've got two new line coaches, a new running back coach, some of these

Depth will be of concern with 34 players on the roster, but Hughes will not be using that as an excuse.

"We're lucky if we have 25 guys at practice every day leading up to school days. We can't let that bother us. If the

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LEWIS COUNTY LIONS

“Zach will step up in that spot. I think Zach is just as good if not better than Tay. I know that’s hard to say because Tay was such an offensive threat, but I think Zach will show a lot of people what he’s made of this year,” Lehn said.

Then the Lions have Applegate in the backfield, coming off an 820 rushing yard season to go with 12 touchdowns, averaging nearly six yards per carry in doing so. A lot of that damage came in back-to-back weeks against Nicholas County and Fairview last season as they hope to get more consistency at the position heading into ’18.

“The first part of the season, we were trying to do something else, I hate to say, but we were sharing the ball too much,” Hughes said. “You can’t share the ball and run too many different plays, you have to find something you’re good at. Once we were able to get the ball in his hands, we were able to run the ball much better.”

The key to making the consistent effort in the ground attack and keeping Lehn upright will be along the offensive line. As Hughes pointed out at the start, they return three every day starters and another who started the majority of the contests last season. Heading

the line will be senior Randy Irey.

“We’ve been working on our technique a lot, knowing what plays to run and getting it together,” Irey said.

In order to break the playoff drought, the Lions will have to break into the top four of the Class 3A, 5th District, featuring six teams. Russell, Bath County and Fleming County are all projected by many to be the top three teams with West Carter being the fourth one to get in, as has been the case since the district formed in 2015. That would leave the Lions and Pendleton County as the odd teams out. Over the last three seasons, Pendleton has been the Lions only win in district play each year.

In order to change that, they know they’ll need to take care of business against one, if not two of the other four.

“I don’t think there’s a lot of people giving us love there. I think that can play to our advantage if we work and be a better football team than what we were. You play those same teams, get a better grasp of what they are going to do, we just didn’t get our jobs done. Hopefully that’s the difference,” Hughes said.

The Lions will open up with four games prior to district play, starting

with Greenup County on August 17. That will be a tough matchup as the Musketeers gave the Lions a 62-10 thumping to open up 2017. Then follows East Carter, Nicholas County and Fairview in what should be competitive contests for the Lions, possibly giving them some momentum heading into district play starting with Fleming County on September 21.

“That’s a really good test to start out district play and gives you a good idea of where you’re at. We kind of tell these kids those first four games are preseason and we’re trying to get ready for this game. Hopefully with the early tests we have, we’ll be able to do that,” Hughes said.

Following Fleming is Pendleton, Bath, Russell and West Carter before they close out with Mason County on the road.

Will this be the year the Lions break the playoff drought?

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Josh Hughes (11th Season)

Assistants: Kody Willis, Donald Ginn, Ryan Bentley, JD Preston, Brandon Hughes



Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

LEWIS COUNTY COACHING STAFF

DATE	2018 SCHEDULE OPPONENT	SITE
Aug 17	Greenup County	Home
Aug 24	Paul Westerfield Bowl East Carter	Home
Sep 7	Nicholas County	Away
Sep 14	Fairview	Home
Sep 21	Fleming County	Home
Sep 28	Pendleton County	Away
Oct 5	Bath County	Away
Oct 12	Russell	Away
Oct 19	West Carter	Home
Oct 26	Mason County	Away

**All games kickoff at 7:30 p.m.*

ROSTER

NO	NAME	POS	YEAR	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
1	Dylan Hardy	QB/DB	9	5-7	120
3	Zach Roberson	WR/DB	12	6-1	180
4	David Keen	WR/DB	11	5-8	160
5	Jared Lovinggood	OL/DL	12	5-8	170
7	Peyton Spencer	WR/DB	10	5-11	150
8	Zach Lehn	QB/DB	12	6-3	180
10	Parker Stone	TE/LB	12	6-1	180
11	Austin Howard	RB/DB	9	5-8	145
13	Ashton Evans	RB/LB	10	5-9	160
15	Brycen Dummitt	QB/DB	10	6-0	180
18	Caiden Lumpkins	RB/LB	9	5-8	160
22	Garrett Applegate	RB/LB	12	5-10	180
23	Morgan Steadman	RB/LB	11	5-10	175
25	David Grayson	TE/LB	12	6-0	180
26	Ethan Sizemore	RB/DB	9	5-8	165
45	Zared Lewis	RB/DB	9	5-9	200
49	Immanuel Manning	RB/DB	12	6-0	180
50	Dylan Suttles	OL/LB	11	5-10	190
52	Dustin Stone	OL/DL	2	6-1	190
55	Braxton Smith	OL/DL	9	5-10	180
56	Randy Irey	OL/DL	12	6-0	220
57	Dallas Smith	OL/DL	12	6-1	230
59	Austin Cain	OL/DL	9	5-8	155
60	Kade Walters	OL/DL	9	5-7	150
61	Ryan Turner	OL/DL	11	5-10	185
71	Josh Thayer	OL/DL	11	6-0	220
72	Hunter Bradford	OL/DL	12	6-2	210
74	Connor Kidwell	OL/DL	9	6-0	200
75	Josh Rister	OL/DL	12	6-1	220
80	Dylan Tully	TE/DB	9	5-10	145
82	Jordan Keen	WR/DB	9	5-10	145
84	Russell Bauer	WR/DB	9	5-9	140
85	Adam Montgomery	WR/DB	10	5-10	165
88	Moses Jackson	WR/LB	11	6-0	175

LEWIS COUNTY LIONS

After breakout year, Applegate anxious to get going

With numerous lineman back, Lions ground game looks to be a strength

EVAN DENNISON
edennison@cmpapers.com

Two big games propelled Garrett Applegate to a breakout junior season in 2017.

In back-to-back games against Nicholas County and Fairview, the senior tailback ran for 353 yards and eight touchdowns on his way to an 820-yard rushing season to go with 12 touchdowns.

He's hoping to produce a bigger output in 2018 at a more consistent effort as the Lions approach the season opener on Friday against Greenup County. Applegate knows in order to do so, it will be a team effort.

"I can't do it by myself obviously. We have to have a willingness to and we all have to commit to it," Applegate said. "We have to have a pass game to even things out, our lineman have to help me out. That was a big help in those games, our lineman really dominated in the trenches and that's the reason I could do that."

Applegate credits his line's dedication in the offseason as well to what they can improve on even more from a season ago.

"Our lineman are definitely a lot stronger, a lot faster. They've worked so



Applegate was productive in games he had over 10 carries, producing the bulk of his work in those contests.

John Flavell, The Daily Independent



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LEWIS COUNTY LIONS

much harder in the offseason. It's a big improvement," Applegate said.

He also has Immanuel Manning at the fullback slot to help pave the way as well.

If the Lions can put a more competitive product out on the field in '18, it should help the Lions run game exponentially. Six of eight losses came by 30

points or more in '17, causing them to abolish the run game in some instances and focus more on the aerial attack to try and comeback. Another factor helping Applegate's cause is he'll be the feature back this year. It took a couple of games to get that established last season as he tallied 10 carries the first two games of

the season.

"The first part of the season, we were trying to do something else. I hate to say, but we were sharing the ball too much," Lions coach Josh Hughes said.

Compare it to a shooter in basketball. Sometimes they need shots to establish a rhythm. A running back has similar

traits, needing to get in the flow to get a good grasp of the game. Limited carries takes away from that.

"You can't share the ball and run too many different plays, you have to find something you're good at. Once we were able to get the ball in his hands, we were able to run the ball much better," Hughes said.

There will be no timeshare this year to start, Applegate is the guy.

"Now we go into week one with he's our tailback, we're going to run the football with him," Hughes added.

In '17 when the Lions fed Applegate the ball, the results showed. It's not the only reason why they won or lost a contest, but in five games Applegate had 18 or more carries, totaling 729 yards and earning their two victories. Five games he had less than 10 carries, totaling 91 yards, losing all five contests.

Applegate can also help in the passing game, one that should also see improvement as Zach Lehn enters his second season under center. Applegate can be a good outlet or checkdown option for Lehn, tallying 31 receptions the last two seasons for 321 yards and a touchdown.

Applegate should also play a big role defensively. He's recorded 113 tackles the last two seasons at defensive back and linebacker. His 60 tackles were second most on the team, trailing just departing senior Tay Offut by one tackle.



2017 SEASON STATS

RUSHES	YARDS	TDS
138	820	12
REC	YARDS	TDS
15	122	0
TACKLES		
60		



Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

Lewis County's Garrett Applegate will be the Lions' feature back for the 2018 season, hoping to build upon an 820-yard campaign from a season ago.

MANCHESTER GREYHOUNDS

Manchester moving forward with momentum from 2017

Greyhounds gearing up for season with returning talent

JARED MACDONALD
jmacdonald@cmpapers.com

MANCHESTER – After a two-win season in 2015 and a one-win season in 2016, the Manchester football team is ready to ride into this season with momentum after hitting the four-win mark last season.

“I think building off of last year’s successes is crucial. We have a few guys that have been starting with us for the last few years, both in the trenches and from a skill standpoint,” said Manchester coach Dustin Cook. “From an expectation standpoint, those guys kind of know what to expect and we’re finally building a culture of hardworking kids that come out in the summer and make sure that they put in the work that they can to be successful in the season.”

The Greyhounds have had about 22 players out at practice early on, which is about what they’ve come to expect at a school the size of Manchester. Cook says the focus throughout the summer and into preseason has been on the fundamentals.

Of the 22 players they’ve had out,

several are returning from the 4-6 season Manchester posted in 2017.

“Any time that you are a small school, 25 seems to be that magic number. That’s usually the number that you’re around and kind of the number that we expect, so having 22 kids is a pretty decent number for us,” said Cook. “The good thing about some of those is you have some returning faces in some of

from the offensive line that have gotten experience in previous seasons, including Jacob Calvert, a four-year starter, and Wesley Jones, a three-year starter.

They’ll be protecting a quarterback that’s returning for his second year as a starter in Shaun Gould. He’s expected to have an even stronger senior season with a year of experience under his belt.

“I think that any time that you start

we move into this year, just having that year of experience where he can come in instead of learning everything brand new, a new position. Now, he can kind of just build on his skill set and try to have a great senior year.”

Avery Reed is a player expected to get a lot of touches, whether it’s being handed the ball or catching it out of the backfield. Brady Flack and Nathan Rife are also expected to be key skill guys seeing action in the Greyhounds’ offense.

“I’m hoping that we can spread it out a little bit more this year,” said Cook. “We’re still going to be a run-heavy option team, but being able to spread it out enough with having enough confidence with those guys up front that we can also start to throw the ball downfield a little bit and also get the ball in space to our playmakers and hopefully have a couple other areas where we can attack defenses.”

Calvert is expected to quarterback Manchester’s defense at linebacker, after recording around 100 tackles last year, according to Cook.

Calvert will be working with many of the same players on a defense that held opponents to an average of 12.5 points in their four victories last season. Beside Calvert will be Reed returning at linebacker, and the greyhounds also bring back several key players on the defensive line.

“Last year we liked to stop the run. Not many teams really like to pass, but



Submitted

2018 MANCHESTER GREYHOUNDS

those spots that, at a school like this, you don’t just have one-way players - you have two-way starters. If you return a starter, most of the time that means that you’re returning a starter both offensively and defensively.”

The Greyhounds return several players

a new position, it’s always uncharted water and he kind of hit the ground running last year,” said Cook. “He had a phenomenal year for us and just having that experience of a year at the quarterback position to kind of lean on – it’s definitely beneficial for our program as



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MANCHESTER GREYHOUNDS

I'm confident that we have out there to stop it in the secondary," said Calvert. "I think up front we're pretty big and we're pretty strong, so I think we can stop the run."

The Greyhounds are once again without a conference, but have managed to fill their schedule with several Southern Ohio Conference schools. They also have a matchup with another Adams County school on Sept. 14, when they take on North Adams from the Southern Ohio Independent League.

But before then, Manchester has another game they're looking forward to – the opener at Fayetteville-Perry, who beat them, 20-12, to open the season last year.

"Obviously, week one is a game you have circled on the schedule and the one you look most forward to, simply just because it's football season again. Obviously, our week one opponent – it's been this way the last few years – is Fayetteville. We don't have to travel very far to get to them, which is obviously a plus. Our guys are very familiar with them as they're in our conference for basketball and baseball as well. It's kind of a familiar face type of deal that they see all year long," said Cook. "That's always an important game for us and someone that we have a great deal of respect for from a player standpoint and a coaching standpoint, going against them the last three or four years. That one is definitely one that we definitely look forward to."

After taking a step in the right direction last fall, the Greyhounds are hoping to make another leap forward with their program when they open the season on Aug. 24.

"Last year, we started to see that some of that success was starting to come out in the field," said Cook. "We're hoping that with another strong summer that we had and practice that now that will continue into this season."

COACHING STAFF

HEAD COACH: Dustin Cook
(5th Season)

ROSTER				2018 SCHEDULE			
NO	NAME	POS	YEAR	DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
2	Dallas Wage	WR/DB	9				
3	Bryce Flack	WR/DB	10	Aug 24	Fayetteville	Away	7:00 p.m.
10	Shaun Gould	QB/DB	12				
11	Alex Walters	WR/DB	10	Aug 31	Miami Valley Christian Academy	Home	7:00 p.m.
14	Brady Flack	QB/DB	12				
20	Trey Spears	WR/DB	10				
21	Jacob Johnson	RB/DB	10	Sep 7	Hannan (WV)	Home	7:30 p.m.
22	Darrian Rigsby	WR/DB	11				
23	Brandon Baldwin	WR/DB	12	Sep 14	North Adams	Home	7:30 p.m.
24	Nathan Rife	RB/DB	12				
25	Avery Reed	RB/DB	12				
31	Mason Dunn	WR/DB	10	Sep 21	Portsmouth East	Home	7:00 p.m.
51	Wyatt Baldwin	OL/DL	12				
52	Carl Ricketts	OL/LB	11	Sep 28	Hillcrest	Home	7:00 p.m.
53	Terry Fletcher	OL/DL	9				
54	Rylan Baily	OL/LB	9				
56	Wes Jones	OL/DL	12	Oct 5	Green	Away	7:00 p.m.
58	Dawson Stevens	OL/DL	9				
65	Patrick King	OL/DL	10	Oct 12	Symmes Valley	Away	7:00 p.m.
66	Aaron Fanning	OL/DL	0				
70	Lucas Ballenger	OL/DL	9				
75	Jacob Calvert	OL/LB	12	Oct 19	Notre Dame	Away	7:00 p.m.
78	Kris Walters	OL/DL	12				
79	Aaron Rowland	OL/DL	10	Oct 26	Eastern Pike	Away	7:00 p.m.



MANCHESTER COACHING STAFF

Calvert commanding trenches with his experience

Manchester senior expected to have impact on both sides of the ball

JARED MACDONALD
jmacdonald@cmpapers.com

MANCHESTER – Many football coaches will say that games are won and lost at the line of scrimmage.

And Manchester believes they have a player who can help command their offensive line this season in Jacob Calvert.

“He’s one of the key pieces in our offensive line,” said Manchester coach Dustin Cook. “This will be his fourth year starting on the offensive line. Having someone like that with the experience and work ethic and attitude that he has is a huge help.”

As one of the more experienced players, if not the most experienced player, on the Greyhounds’ roster, Calvert is looking to lead a small group of around 22 players this fall. He plans on using what he’s learned the last few years to help some of the younger players in the program.

“It’s been a great experience,” said Calvert. “It kind of helps showing a kid that’s started that some other kids can look up to them and hopefully I can help them start and help other things like that.”

He’ll have a few other seniors beside him with Wes Jones, who’s a three-year



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Manchester senior Jacob Calvert participates in a tackling drill during a preseason practice, Wednesday, Aug. 8, in Manchester.

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starter, according to Cook, as well as Kris Walters and Wyatt Baldwin. The team's linemen also include junior Carl Ricketts, sophomores Patrick King, Aaron Fanning and Aaron Rowland and freshmen Terry Fletcher, Rylan Baily, Dawson Stevens and Lucas Ballenger.

"We're tight, just like last year," said Calvert. "We were probably closer as a team than the years before and this year we're just the same. We're pretty tight. We all work hard and work together."

Solid play from those guys up front will be crucial for the Greyhounds' run-heavy option offense that led to an average of nearly 22 points per game. They put up over 40 points on three occasions last season.

"In the trenches, we feel very confident that we have guys that have been there and guys we've asked to do a lot in the past and now that they're in leadership roles as seniors, that has really helped our growth as a team with the young guys and the inexperienced guy," said Cook.

Shaun Gould took over at quarterback and will return for his senior season this year. Calvert feels confident that a similar offense can continue to yield successful results as Manchester rolls into this fall.

"It was great. It just clicked," said Calvert. "We started more of an option offense. It just worked well with the kids we had and it'll really work well this year

too. It's the way that we're doing everything."

Outside of Gould, the Greyhounds will have several new skill players getting touches this fall, as they graduated players like Mason Bilyeu, Nick Woolard, Marcus Neeley and Luke Thompson.

Cook is optimistic that rising seniors like Brady Flack, Nathan Rife and Avery Reed can fill those shoes, and Calvert is comfortable with his classmates taking on larger roles.

"I'm confident with what we have," said Calvert. "Yeah, we lost some people and we're probably not going to get the exact same, but we got some people that can pick up where they left off and hope-

fully do as well."

In addition to leading the offensive line, Calvert will be anchoring a defense that surrendered an average of only 12.5 points in four victories last season

"He's in the middle of our defense, played middle linebacker for us last year. He was around 100 tackles, so he was the heart and soul of the defense in the middle there and he'll be returning," said Cook.

Beside Calvert and returning at linebacker will be Reed. The Greyhounds also bring back the majority of their defensive line from last year's team, according to Cook.

"Really, our front seven is kind of intact from where it was last year. We definitely have some losses – key seniors that departed that we're hoping that, with everybody else that is in there, that we can fill those voids," said Cook. "I thought defensively we played extremely well outside of a game or two. I thought we did a great job of tackling, so hopefully we can put those guys in those positions again and hopefully be equally as successful, if not more."

Using all of the experience he's gotten over the last few years, Calvert's been working during the summer and into preseason to help some of the less-experienced players get ready for the opening kickoff at Fayetteville-Perry on Aug. 24 – no matter what that entails.

"To this point, the main point is to do the best we can and get stronger, get bigger, get faster and basically to just help the team out and do anything I can," said Calvert. "Anything the coaches and players ask to do."



Manchester senior Jacob Calvert (far left) participates in a drill during a preseason practice, Wednesday, Aug. 8, in Manchester.

Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent



CLASS 4A, 7TH DISTRICT PRESEASON COACHES/MEDIA POLL, PLAYERS TO WATCH



RANK	SCHOOL	POINTS	(FIRST PLACE VOTES)
t-1	Bourbon County	22	(3)
t-1	Scott	22	(2)
3	Harrison County	13	
t-4	Mason County	9	
t-4	Holmes	9	

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

BOURBON COUNTY (7-5 in '17)

Max Hill- SR., OL- Three-year starter, "Best leader, lineman and player," according to coach John Hodge.

Camarr Myers- SR., RB- Leading rusher from last year, "Should have a really good year," according to coach Hodge. Myers ran for 947 yards and 10 touchdowns in '17 on 137 carries. Also caught 22 passes for 233 yards and 3 touchdowns. Recorded 52 tackles, recovered 3 fumbles and returned an interception for a touchdown on defense in '17.

Jake Broughton- SO., QB- "Is everything you want in a QB. Smart, athletic, loves the game, first one there and last one to leave. Very coachable and going to be very special," Hodge said.

SCOTT (8-4 in '17)

Quincy Perrin- JR., RB- "One of the top returning rbs in the area. Had 1,441 yards on 146 carries last year. Expect

Similar numbers if not better," Eagles coach Dan Woolley said. Perrin also had 16 rushing touchdowns, older brother Nelson played for the Eagles last year and will continue his career after committing to Thomas More.

Sabeon Turner- SR., SS/WR- "Had a huge off season becoming faster and more physical. Makes all calls and checks on our defense. Also a very solid WR with great ball skills," Woolley said. Turner caught 7 passes for 200 yards and 2 touchdowns in '17. Recorded 53 tackles and intercepted 2 passes defensively.

Jared Kelsay- SR., FB/LB- "Led team last year with over 120 tackles. Moved from SS to LB in middle of year. Should benefit from having a whole preseason and spring getting LB reps," Woolley said. Kelsay also intercepted 2 passes and

recovered a fumble.

Chad Ohmer- SR., QB/FS- "Comes back to take over the reins after last year being first year playing football since 8th grade. Great leader and competitor," Woolley said. Ohmer threw for 1,053 yards with 12 passing touchdowns in '17.

HARRISON COUNTY (0-10 in '17)

Chase Blanton- SR., RB/LB- 163 carries, 763 yards and 5 touchdowns, 15 receptions, 128 yards and 2 touchdowns receiving in '17. 51 tackles, 3 interceptions and a fumble recovery on defense.

Buddy Burns- SR., WR/DB- 13 receptions, 142 yards and 1 touchdown in '17. 23 tackles defensively.

Quenton Pratt- SR., WR/DB- 18 receptions, 189 yards, 11 tackles and an interception defensively.

MASON COUNTY (7-4 in '17)

Carson Brammer- JR., QB- "Big arm, athletic, just needs reps to make it all go," Royals coach Jonathan Thomas said. Brammer started the season opener last year before backing up Chandler Dunaway. Threw a touchdown pass in that game.

Jayden Riggs- JR., WR/DB- "Good feet, experience, will be our No. 1 WR," Thomas said. Riggs caught five passes for 78 yards and a touchdown in '17. 15 tackles and 2 interceptions defensively.

Jacob Ledford- SR., OL/DL- "Big, strong, great feet. Has started every game since his sophomore year," Thomas said. Ledford is one of two returning starters along the offensive line for the Royals in '18.

Seth Chambers- SR., RB/LB- "Big, strong, hard to tackle. Bruising running style. Great in the weightroom," Thomas said. Chambers had 18 carries for 82 yards and 3 touchdowns in '17, primarily playing fullback, paving the way for Malkolm Devine. 52 tackles with an interception and fumble recovery defensively.

HOLMES (3-8 in '17)

James Walker- SR., QB- "James has done a great job maturing physically and mentally this offseason. He is looking to build upon a successful junior campaign. James is a strong physical athlete with a big arm. He has the potential to be the best player in the district this season," Bulldogs coach Ben Nevels said. Walker threw for 967 yards and 11 touchdowns in '17. Also ran for 180 yards and 4 touchdowns.

Cortez Blassingame- SR., RB/SS- "Came into his own last season and we are excited about what this season holds for him. Pound for pound he is one of the strongest players in NKY and his heart can not be measured. Cortez will have an opportunity to impact the game on both sides of the ball this season," Nevels said. Blassingame had 59 rushing yards and 142 receiving yards to go with 4 touchdowns in '17.

Aidan Dietz- SO., OL/DL- "Has an opportunity to be one the best football players to come through Holmes High School. He is a student of the game who possesses tremendous strength and a great team first attitude to go with it," Nevels said. Dietz is a returning starter along the offensive line. The Bulldogs return nine starters on offense.

Outlook: It looks to be a two-team race in the district between Bourbon County and Scott while Mason County, Harrison County and Holmes will vie for the final two playoff spots. With a five-team district, one team will be left home for the postseason.



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Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Mason County quarterback Carson Brammer warms up during a preseason practice, Monday, July 30, in Maysville.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

The Mason County football team huddles up during a preseason practice, Monday, July 30, in Maysville.



Evan Dennison, The Ledger Independent

Mason County's Seth Chambers will be relied on heavily for the Royals run game this season.



Terry Prather, The Ledger Independent

Mason County's Jared Collins recovers a fumble during a game against North Adams last season. Collins will be one of the key returnees along the Royals offensive and defensive line this season.

CLASS 3A, DISTRICT 5 COACHES/MEDIA PRESEASON POLL



RANK	SCHOOL	POINTS	(FIRST PLACE VOTES)
1	Russell	38	(3)
2	Bath County	34.5	(3)
3	Fleming county	30.5	(1)
4	West Carter	21	
5	Lewis County	13	
6	Pendleton County	10	

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RUSSELL (5-6 in '17)

Landon Duvall- SR., RB/DB-

Rushed for 1,053 yards, 12 touchdowns in '17, also had a receiving touchdown.

Grant Wilburn- SR., QB/DB-

Threw for 231 yards in '17, primarily in a backup role.

Reed Galloway- SR., WR/DB-

Red Devils leading receiver with 25 receptions for 465 yards and 2 touchdowns.

Jacon Thompson- SR., WR/DB-

Had 10 receptions for 118 yards and 2 touchdowns in '17. Also had a fumble recovery defensively.

BATH COUNTY (7-4 in '17)

Landan Swartz- SR., RB/DB-

Rushed for 2,196 yards and 26 touchdowns in '17. Had 45 tackles and 3 interceptions defensively.

Andy McFarland- SR., RB/DL-

"Very athletic for a guy that weighs 310 pounds," Wildcats coach Johnny Poynter said. Ran for 96 yards and a touchdown on offense, had 38 tackles and a fumble recovery on defense.

Lane Rogers- SR., RB/LB-

Three-year starter. Had 365 yards rushing and 8 rushing touchdowns in '17. Threw for 336 yards and 4 touchdowns as the primary quarterback. Led team with 71 tackles and also had 2 interceptions.

Austin Reed- SR., TE/DE-

Three-year starter. Caught 8

passes for 120 yards and 3 touchdowns. Recorded 68 tackles and a fumble recovery defensively.

James Fraley- JR., TE/LB- Had 41 tackles defensively and 2 receptions for 49 yards offensively in '17.

FLEMING COUNTY (8-3 in '17)

Kaleb Flanery- JR., RB/DB- Had 17 receptions for 210 yards and 5 touchdowns and 18 carries for 48 yards in '17. Recorded 17 tackles and an interception defensively.

Cole Saunders- SR., WR/DB- Had 14 receptions for 260 yards and 4 touchdowns in '17. Recorded 55 tackles and a fumble recovery defensively.

Johnny Maher- JR., QB/LB- Will be the starting quarterback. Threw for 52 yards and a touchdown in limited action in '17. Caught 12 passes for 222 yards and 3 touchdowns as a tight end. Recorded 82 tackles, 2 fumble recoveries and an interception for a touchdown defensively.

Jayston Taylor- SR., C/DE- One of two starters returning along the offensive line. Had 40 tackles and a fumble recovery defensively.

Sebastian Grannis- SR., OT/DT- Returning starter along the offensive line.

WEST CARTER (5-6 in '17)

Christian Rivers- SR., QB- "Athletic, competitive playmaker," Comets coach Daniel Barker said. Had 1,122 passing yards with 14 touchdowns and 725 yards rushing with 7 touchdowns.

Leetavious Cline- SO., RB/S- "Excelled as a playmaker all over the field last year, will become the featured back this season," Barker said. Caught 20 passes for 275

yards and 5 touchdowns in '17, also rushed for 130 yards. Recorded 92 tackles and 3 interceptions defensively.

Ethan Jordan- JR., LB- Team high 160 tackles last season and a fumble recovery. Three-year starter.

Tristan Jordan, JR., LB- Had 144 tackles in '17. Three-year starter.

Dylan McGregor- SR., OL/DE- "Senior leader of the offensive and defensive lines, tough, hard-nosed player," Barker said. Had 57 tackles defensively last season.

LEWIS COUNTY (2-8 in '17)

Garrett Applegate- SR., RB/LB- Three-year starter on both sides of the ball. Rushed for 820 yards and 12 touchdowns last season. "The key offensive weapon," Lions coach Josh Hughes said. Also had 15 receptions for 122 yards. Recorded 60 tackles defensively.

Zach Lehn- SR., QB/DB- Returning quarterback. "If he gets better at getting rid of the ball our offense will open up," Hughes said. Had 1,049 yards passing and 8 touchdowns in '17, completing 55 percent of his passes. Had 26 tackles and a fumble recovery defensively.

Immanuel Manning- SR., RB/DB- "Will help determine how we stop the run," Hughes said. Had 15 tackles in '17.

Hunter Bradford- SR., OL/DL- "Another one that will determine how we stop the run," Hughes said. Had 42 tackles and a fumble recovery defensively in '17.

Zach Roberison- SR., WR/DB- Caught 43 passes for 450 yards and 2 touchdowns in '17. Will be the Lions top pass-catching target.

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PENDLETON COUNTY (4-6 in '17)

Mason Fuller- SR., FB/S- "First time at fullback, tough as nails and although weighs in at 160 he squats around 550 and power cleans 240. He hits hard," Wildcats coach Brian Burgemeir said. Had 204 yards rushing and 37 tackles in '17.

Lyle Secrist- JR., RB/S- "He can do it all for us. Good balance of size and speed. He has great field vision when running the ball and is probably our best defensive player. We expect a big year from him," Burgemeir said. Had 59 yards rushing, 16 tackles and a fumble recovery in '17.

Matt Campbell- JR., QB/CB- "He has patiently waited his turn and will help balance out our option/running offense with a passing attack. He can read the mesh, make the pitch, and throw it down the field," Burgemeir said. Threw 3 passes and ran for 10 yards in the backup quarterback role. Recorded 19 tackles defensively.

Koby Leazer- SR., WR/DE- "At about 6'3" he has length, speed, and hands. Probably our fastest player. DE will be new for him but he is excelling at it. He qualified for state at high jump last year in his first year doing it," Burgemeir said. Had 3 receptions for 67 yards and a touchdown in a run-heavy offense. Recorded 22 tackles defensively.

Stephen Reinzan- SR., G/DT- "After having to take a year off last year, he has returned with a passion. 6-foot-plus and over 300 pounds, he has great feet and we expect great things out of him on both sides of the ball," Burgemeir said. Had a fumble recovery and an interception in '17.

Outlook: Traditional power Russell enters as the favorite, but the district might be a tighter race than one thinks with Bath County more experienced, not many know what to expect from Fleming County and West Carter with a few playmakers. Lewis County and Pendleton County look to be improved as well. Should be a fun race.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent
Lewis County's Zach Lehn (7) runs the ball against Fleming County, Friday, Sept. 22, 2017, in Flemingsburg



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent
Fleming County's Cole Saunders (18) pins the ball against his helmet in an attempt to make a catch while being tackled by Lewis County's Zach Lehn (7), Friday, Sept. 22, 2017, in Flemingsburg.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent
Lewis County receivers go to work during a preseason practice, Tuesday, July 31, in Vanceburg.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent
Austin Page (4), Cole Saunders (18), Caleb Farris (5), Tyler Lunsford (78), and Sebastian Grannis (back right) get lined up during Fleming County's picture day, Friday, Aug. 3, in Flemingsburg.

CLASS A, DISTRICT 5 COACHES/MEDIA PRESEASON POLL



RANK	SCHOOL	POINTS	(FIRST PLACE VOTES)
1	Paris	25	(5)
2	Bracken County	18	
3	Bishop Brossart	15	
4	Nicholas County	12	
5	Berea	5	

PLAYERS TO WATCH

PARIS (9-2 in '17)

Matthew Barber, JR., RB- Had 95 rushes for 960 yards and 14 touchdowns in '17. Was tabbed as the district Preseason Player of the Year in Cats'Pause the magazine.

Lavonte Sanford, JR., RB/LB- Had 44 rushes for 417 yards and 7 touchdowns in '17. Recorded 33 tackles and had an interception defensively.

Jackson Livingood, SR., OL/DL- Had 82 tackles and a fumble recovery in '17.

Tyreeq Nebbitt, SR., WR/CB- Had 48 tackles and 3 interceptions in '17. Rushed for 92 yards and 29 receiving yards with one touchdown offensively.

Jamuan Clark, SR., WR- Had 20 receptions for 271 yds with 4 touchdowns in '17.

BRACKEN COUNTY (9-3 in '17)

Tad Fisher, SR., RB/LB- Rushed for a program single-season record 1,606 yards in '17 with 19 rushing touchdowns. Was also the team's leading receiver with 24 receptions for 461 yards and five touchdowns. Recorded 58 tackles and 2 interceptions defensively. His 34 touchdowns scored are the most in school history.

Trey Brausch, SR., QB/LB- Threw for 1,606 yards and 13 touchdowns in '17. Also ran for 457 yards and 5 touchdowns. Had 44 tackles, 2 interceptions and a fumble recovery as a safety. Will move to linebacker this season.

Mason Tucker, SR., WR/DB- Caught 10 passes for 266 yards and 2 touchdowns in '17. Recorded 26 tackles, 6 interceptions and had 2 fumble recoveries defensively.

Kysten Morales, SO., OL/DL- Will be a key to keep the Polar Bears run game moving along the offensive line. Had 8 tackles and a fumble recovery defensively.

BISHOP BROSSART (5-6 in '17)

Tyler McDonald, SR., QB/LB- Threw for 2,229 yards and 20 touchdowns in '17, also rushed for 6 touchdowns.

Nathan Bezold, SR., RB/LB- Rushed for 270 yards and a touchdown and caught 21 passes for 258 yards in '17. Recorded 118 tackles with 3 fumble recoveries and an interception defensively.

Mason Dennis, SR., TE/LB- Team-high 135 tackles with an interception and fumble recovery in '17. Caught 6 passes for 53 yards offensively.

NICHOLAS COUNTY (4-7 in '17)

Isaac Fryman, SR., QB/CB- Threw for 230 yards and 2 touchdowns in '17. Rushed for 840 yards and 11 touchdowns and caught 2 passes for 95 yards and a touchdown. Recorded 87 tackles and 3 fumble recoveries defensively.

Ethan Cleaver, JR., OL/DL- Recorded 61 tackles and a fumble recovery defensively in '17.

Caleb Morgan, JR., OL/DL- Recorded 13 tackles defensively.

BEREA (0-10 in '17)

Berea coach Aaron Stepp did not return numerous emails and Berea did not accumulate season stats in '17. They have 18 players on the KHSAA roster for '18 and had to forfeit the Nicholas County game last year due to a lack of players.

Outlook: Paris will be the team to beat, garnering every first-place vote from the coaches and media. Bracken County and Bishop Brossart looked to be in a tight heat for second while Nicholas County should earn a playoff berth at the four-spot, while Berea tries to stay above water.



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Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Bracken County's Mason Tucker catches a ball during a preseason drill, Thursday, Aug. 2, in Brooksville.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Bracken County quarterback Trey Bruasch delivers a pass during a preseason practice, Thursday, Aug. 2, in Brooksville.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Bracken County coach Dave Brausch patrols the fields during a preseason practice, Thursday, Aug. 2, in Brooksville.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Bracken County's Kysten Morales runs through a drill during a preseason practice, Thursday, Aug. 2, in Brooksville.



Jared MacDonald, The Ledger Independent

Manchester's Trey Spears lines up for a play during a Friday, Oct. 27, 2017, game against Eastern Pike, in Manchester.



The Daily Independent

Fleming County's Jayston Taylor celebrates after a play against Paintsville last season. Taylor will be one of the key returners along the offensive and defensive line for the Panthers this season.



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