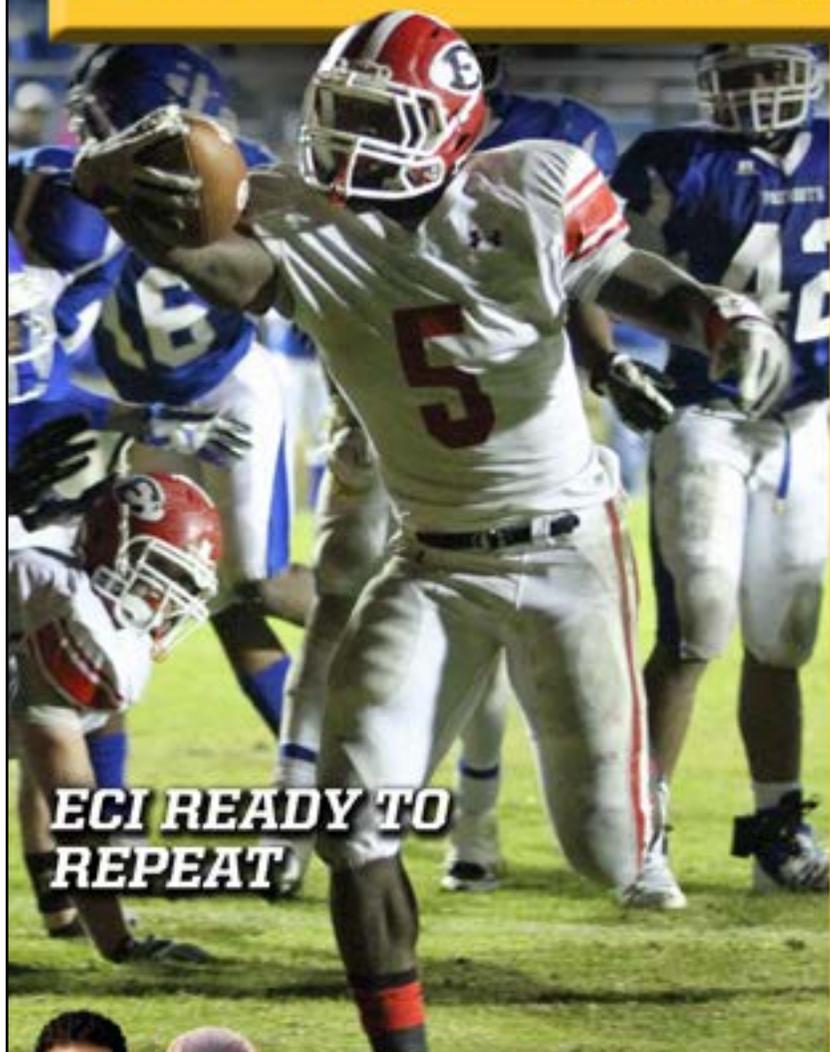


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WILCOX CO. PREVIEW



Patriots set to extend 10-win streak

By Chris Nieman

For the upcoming 2013 high school football season, the Wilcox County Patriots plan to continue and press forward on their quest to not only rack up the program's seventh consecutive 10-win season, but also to achieve its first Class A state title since the 2009 season, when head coach Mark Ledford lead his team to the promised land by beating Savannah Christian 30-21 in the Georgia Dome.

The Patriots, who made it to the semifinals last season, have been a powerhouse in Class A with Ledford at the helm. Ledford firmly believes that he has a solid team in his

hands and should do some damage in 2013.

"I think we have a good chance to have a pretty good team again," said Ledford.

During spring ball the team seemed to be in high spirits and this past spring practice reflected that according to Ledford.

"In the spring the kids had a really good attitude and I think we've got a chance to have another successful year," said Ledford.

Every year teams all over the country have to adapt and overcome when it comes to replacing talent. The Patriots will have to fill the shoes of quarterback Makail Grace who

was voted as the Region 2 player of the year, as well as wide receiver and UNC Tar Heel signee-Jonathan Howard, who was named Region 2 offensive player of the year.

On the bright side, Wilcox County is returning seven players on offense and five on defense. Ledford believes the team has a strong nucleus and familiarity with the spread offense due to the fact that the team has all but two skill players returning.

An area where the Patriots should be a force to be reckoned with is in the trenches.

"One thing that makes me feel good about where we are is that we're pretty big and athletic up front on the offensive and defensive sides of the ball," said Ledford.

The offensive line as well as junior running back Maurice Edwards, who finished the 2012 campaign with 665 rushing yards, should relinquish the pressure on new sophomore quarterback Antwan Benjamin, who has shown Ledford and is staff plenty of promise even though he doesn't have much experi-

ence as a signal caller.

One name to keep your eye on this season is senior defensive tackle Johnny Dwight, who measures at about 6-foot-3, 300 pounds. Dwight can play on both sides of the line of scrimmage, but is being recruited as a defensive tackle by big time division one schools such as Alabama, LSU, Georgia, Florida and North Carolina just to name a few.

As far as the 2013 schedule, the Patriots will have their hands full with a relatively tough schedule on their quest for greatness. The Patriots tallied an impressive 5-1 record in their region and look to build on that for the upcoming season.

Wilcox County's natural rival is Turner County, which the Patriots edged 27-26 last season. Another region rival is Charlton County. The Pats have not forgotten about last season's loss to the Indians and look forward to redemption.

Nieman can be reached at cnieman@scoreatl.com.

ELCA PREVIEW



ELCA restocked for title run in 2013

By Craig Sager II

Eagles Landing Christian solidified itself among Georgia's top football programs last season when it claimed its first state championship. The wealth of talent that we have become accustomed to seeing is present with this flock and they are returning as the favorite to repeat in Class A-Private.

The 2012 offense averaged 44 points per game and the starting defense gave up just three. The Chargers overpowered defenses at times while running track meets by them at other times. Their near 40-point scoring differential per game from a year ago, gives them the luxury of dropping off slightly and still holding

an incredible advantage this season.

The roster graduated a lot of key players, but a possible drop off does not look to threaten this team's championship aspirations. Valuable replacements are everywhere and head coach Jonathan Gess is aiming to once again optimize his talent-laden roster.

Purdue signee Keyante Green trucked his way through defenses in 2012, but the power run game will still drive these Chargers without him.

"The power run game is who we are and what we do," said Gess.

"We have a great offensive line and running backs along with an outstanding fullback

in Josh Shockley. Our offensive linemen are big and powerful guys and that's where the power run originates."

Notre Dame signee Isaac Rochell starred as two-way weapon at defensive end and tight end in 2012, but will have one of the most talented prospects in the state replacing him. Andrew Williams stands 6-foot-4, 231 pounds and is listed by 247sports as a top 20 recruit in the state. The four star athlete has received 44 total scholarships offers and governs the line of scrimmage with his combination of speed and power.

"It's hard to replace an Isaac Rochell," said Gess "But when you have a guy like Andrew Williams filling in for the role, you can make up for a lot of it."

Brad Moore will be one of the featured playmakers in the backfield this season and demonstrated his ability to make big plays last year. In the 33-0 route over Prince Avenue in the state championship, he took a reverse and broke three tackles before falling into the end zone.

Dalton Etheridge remains the quarterback after operating one of the state's most

prolific offenses a year ago. Etheridge has 6-foot-3, 200-pound Jamal Tookes headlining his exterior targets.

Jevious Terry was an explosive playmaker for the Chargers on offense, defense and special teams that will need to be replaced. Bryson Durden who will see action at running back and defensive back this season brings the dynamics needed to replace Terry as the Chargers' return man.

With spring ball in the books, Gess will test drive his squad in a scrimmage with Class AAAA Dutchtown on Aug. 15. Their season opener matches them up with Class AAA power Washington County, who handed them their only loss of the season last year (24-19).

"You have to be excited for the season and playing each of those 10 games," said Gess. "There are always surprise teams and we are obviously looking forward to playing Washington County week one."

The Chargers open up region play at home against Holy Innocents' Sept. 27.

Sager can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

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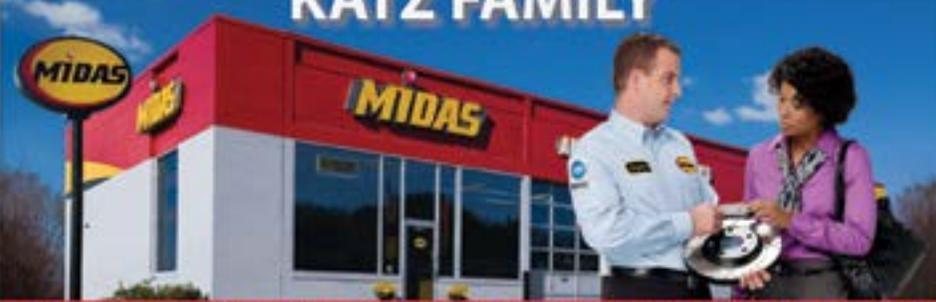
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ECI PREVIEW



ECI eyes repeat in A-Public football

By Craig Sager II

The Bulldogs capped off a 13-1 season with a 47-7 blowout over Dooly County in the Class-A Public state championship. Head coach Chris Kearson's team was dominant throughout the season, but really hit its top gear midway thru the it. The same greatness seen towards latter part of the championship run could be present in this team from the start. Eighteen players made the 2012 first-team all-region, and the far majority is returning. The offensive line that helped ECI score 62 rushing touchdowns last season remains almost completely in tact.

"We lost Gunnar Brown," said Kearson. "All the other starters will be back and they are one talented group."

Offensive linemen Jarrod Downer, Jarret Henry, T.J. Hackle and Mitchell Cowart were all named first-team all-region last year and will be a force to be reckoned with.

Greg Percell was the leading rusher a season ago and will need to be replaced, but James Brown and Michael Sutton are proven playmakers. Brown rushed for 1,138 yards and 13 touchdowns last season, and Sutton, who is a rising junior, scored 12 touchdowns with 585 yards on the ground. It is expected for both to put up even bigger numbers while they costar in the 2013 backfield. This abundance of returning starters is something Kearson can credit to a decision to focus on depth a few seasons ago.

"Coming into this past year [2012] we worked extremely hard on improving and developing depth, and I think that really worked out well for us last year," explained the 2012 AJC Class A Coach of the Year.

"We were more energetic towards the end of the season and had everyone contributing at a high level."

The depth rewarded the Bulldogs last season, and a long line of state championship experience now fills the roster for 2013.

Defensively, Taiwan Daughtry's production will need to be replaced. The do-it-all tight end/linebacker and running back had a team-high 123 tackles in 2012. He posted a sack, forced fumble, fumble recovery and 13 solo tackles against Class AAA-powerhouse Washington County in ECI's only loss of the season (48-22). Daughtry also had a 90-yard interception return against Wilcox County in the state semifinals, and posted 19 tackles in the win against Trion.

Des Williams could be the next great defensive leader at ECI, and the rising junior comes off a breakout 2012 season. Williams had 96 tackles in his 13 starts and is still filling out his frame.

"Des has gotten huge since last season," said Kearson. "He is a space eater on the field and he is probably 6-foot, (and) about 245 pounds right now."

As for the offensive leader, Caleb Pressey got the job done at quarterback last year with an outstanding senior campaign. Jakobie Boatright is next in line to take the starting job and brings explosiveness to the position. Boatright was named all-region first team at defensive back last year and got reps throwing the ball, receiving and rushing. He had eight carries for 145 yards and two touch-

downs, averaging 18.1 yards per carry. He caught three passes for 37 yards and found the endzone in two of them. His two completions went for 60 yards and a touchdown. Boatright is an will add a dangerous dimension to the Bulldogs' offense. Zach Cowart will also see action at quarterback and brings different skillsets than Boatright that Kearson believes can complement the Bulldogs' attack as well.

The schedule sets up big games before region action begins. They open the season Aug. 24 at Georgia Southern University against Metter in Allen E. Paulson Stadium. A bye week after the opener sets up a battle with Washington County as the Bulldogs will have an opportunity to make an early statement by toppling one of Class AAA's best programs.

The focus of the team is there, and Kearson says he does not has not had to spend his time motivating this group.

"We got out of school late and all the way up to the last day we were working hard. We start back up after just a two-week break, but I can't keep the kids away from here and out of the weightroom," laughed Kearson. "They can't get enough."

We can expect this ECI team to rely on defensive effort and a powerful offensive attack to make them serious contenders for the 2013 Class A-Public title.

Sager can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

GWA PREVIEW

Williams leads championship-contending Bulldogs

By Jennifer Ballard

George Walton Academy has made an appearance in the GHSA state playoffs every year since joining the GHSA in 2010 but has not yet won the state, something the second-ranked Bulldogs did four times at the GISA level.

Head Coach Don Williams has been leading the Bulldogs for 19 years, and has won two of the four state titles (2003 and 2009, per GHSFHA.org).

The 2012 season fell short in the semifinals against Eagles Landing Christian Academy, the eventual state champion.

"We lost a lot of linemen last year so we have some big holes to fill in the offensive and defensive line. We have some players that have to grow up fast. So the line of scrimmage will be a big concern for us early in the season," said Williams.

Even though there are spots that need to

be filled, the Bulldogs are hiding a couple of weapons that should fill the missing pieces seamlessly.

"Well, I see our running backs are our biggest strengths on the team and our secondary and our kicking game... we brought back our kicker who is one of the best around so we feel really good about that," said Williams.

Speaking of running backs, Stanley Williams is going to be the glue that holds this team together offensively. Williams, a former UGA commitment, has received offers from multiple SEC and ACC schools. The plan is to put the ball into this playmaking athlete's hands as many times per game as possible.

"He is a big part of the offense this season," said Williams. "He had over 2,000 yards last year with over 200 carries in the season. We are looking for Stanley to carry the ball up to 25 times a game and do a little bit of return game for us. Stanley is our go-to

guy, our big play guy. If we win, Stanley will have a good game."

As good as Williams is on the field, he is just as important to the team off it.

"Stanley is the leader of the team," said Williams. "He does a very good job with keeping everything in perspective by not putting himself above the team. He is the total package... he is a good person and a good player."

Williams will also have the pleasure of bringing back OL/LB Patrick Stewart with offers from Texas and North Carolina to name a few, TE/DE Josh Holton and K Cole Fisher.

Each game will be important to the Bulldogs, so starting off strong and fast will have to take place in order to win the championship. The Bulldogs will open on the road with No. 7 First Presbyterian on Aug. 8.

Ballard can be reached at jballard@scoreatl.com.

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BASEBALL RANKINGS

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BOYS

GIRLS

Class AAAAAA

1. Milton
2. Parkview
3. Roswell
4. Walton
5. McEachern
6. East Coweta
7. Lambert
8. Tift County
9. Lowndes
10. Marietta

Class AAAA

1. Redan
2. Marist
3. Crisp County
4. Troup
5. Veterans
6. Columbus
7. South Effingham
8. Stephens County
9. Locust Grove
10. Carrollton

Class AA

1. Lovett
2. Westminster
3. Pepperell
4. Benedictine
5. Westside-Augusta
6. Wesleyan
7. GAC
8. Jefferson
9. Toombs County
10. Calhoun

Class AAAAA

1. Pope
2. Greenbrier
3. Starr's Mill
4. Loganville
5. Whitewater
6. Gainesville
7. Winder-Barrow
8. East Paulding
9. Evans
10. Riverwood

Class AAA

1. Cartersville
2. North Hall
3. Blessed Trinity
4. St. Pius X
5. Chapel Hill
6. Woodward Acad.
7. Pierce County
8. Pike County
9. Pierce County
10. Appling County

Class A- Public

1. Charlton County
2. Gordon Lee
3. Treutlen
4. Trion
5. Baconton Charter

Class A- Private

1. ELCA
2. Mount Paran
3. George Walton Acad.
4. Darlington
5. First Presbyterian

Class AAAAAA

1. Centennial
2. Lambert
3. Harrison
4. Lassiter
5. Roswell
6. Milton
7. Chattahoochee
8. Walton
9. Mill Creek
10. North Gwinnett

Class A-AAAAA

1. Decatur
2. Westminster
3. Northview
4. Lovett
5. Blessed Trinity
6. Holy Innocents'
7. Pope
8. Allatoona
9. Whitefield Academy
10. Marist

Class AAAAAA

1. Milton
2. Lassiter
3. Walton
4. Mill Creek
5. Centennial
6. West Forsyth
7. Chattahoochee
8. Alpharetta
9. Harrison
10. Kennesaw Mountain

Class A-AAAAA

1. Westminster
2. McIntosh
3. Northview
4. Starr's Mill
5. Sprayberry
6. Kell
7. Woodward Academy
8. St. Pius X
9. Cambridge
10. Marist

SOCCER RANKINGS

BOYS

GIRLS

CLASS AAAAAA

1. Berkmar
2. Collins Hill
3. East Coweta
4. Harrison
5. Lassiter
6. Centennial
7. Lambert
8. Brookwood
9. Central Gwinnett
10. South Gwinnett

CLASS AAA

1. St. Pius X
2. Woodward Acad.
3. East Hall
4. Oconee Co.
5. West Hall
6. Cartersville
7. Savannah Arts
8. Blessed Trinity
9. Islands
10. North Murray

CLASS AAAAA

1. McIntosh
2. Houston Co.
3. Starr's Mill
4. Pope
5. Allatoona
6. Clarke Central
7. Gainesville
8. Glynn Academy
9. Lakeside-Dek
10. Windsor Forest

CLASS AA

1. Westminster
2. Calhoun
3. GAC
4. Lovett
5. Benedictine
6. Atkinson Co.
7. Toombs Co.
8. Vidalia
9. Fitzgerald
10. Murray Co.

CLASS AAAA

1. Dalton
2. SE Whitfield
3. NW Whitfield
4. Johnson-Gainesville
5. Spalding
6. Alexander
7. Carrollton
8. Chestatee
9. Marist
10. Grady

CLASS A

1. Paideia
2. Hebron Chr.
3. AIS
4. Holy Innocents'
5. Savannah Chr.
6. First Presbyterian
7. Fellowship Chr.
8. Aquinas
9. Our Lady of Mercy
10. Pinecrest Acad.

CLASS AAAAAA

1. Mill Creek
2. Parkview
3. South Forsyth
4. Lassiter
5. Harrison
6. Collins Hill
7. Brookwood
8. Grayson
9. Tift County
10. Hillgrove

CLASS AAA

1. St. Pius X
2. Blessed Trinity
3. Buford
4. Woodward Acad.
5. Chapel Hill
6. Pike County
7. Central-Carroll
8. Savannah Arts
9. Lakeview-Ft. Og.
10. Pierce County

CLASS AAAAA

1. Northgate
2. Whitewater
3. McIntosh
4. Starr's Mill
5. Northview
6. Pope
7. Riverwood
8. Allatoona
9. Lakeside-DeKalb
10. Flowery Branch

CLASS AA

1. Westminster
2. GAC
3. Lovett
4. Wesleyan
5. St. Vincent's Acad.
6. Putnam County
7. Vidalia
8. Dublin
9. Oglethorpe Co.
10. Thomasville

CLASS AAAA

1. Marist
2. Columbus
3. Veterans
4. Heritage-Catoosa
5. Cairo
6. River Ridge
7. Wayne County
8. Locust Grove
9. Grady
10. Lanier

CLASS A

1. Paideia
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4. Aquinas
5. Holy Innocents'
6. Hebron Christian
7. Calvary Day
8. Savannah Cry Day
9. Mt. Paran
10. Providence Chr.

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