

Gibson Co. Pioneers...

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are back and one of my inside linebackers return. So, out of our front eight, we have seven guys that started last year. Even in the secondary, we have two guys returning," informed Coach Finley.

He added, "We have nine of the 11 guys returning from last year's bunch, so we expect our defense to be pretty good. I would think, you never know, but I would think that, if everybody is healthy, our defense should be our strong suit."

The Pioneers will be deployed in a Split Four Defense. "We will have four defensive linemen and four linebackers. You almost have to now with all of the teams running spread. We will have a 40 front. Our front four, all of those guys started last year. We will have Patterson and Stafford at defensive ends, Snow at tackle or linebacker, Kaleb Johnson at nose guard, Watson at middle linebacker; Warren and Wylie or Fletcher at outside linebackers and Little, Holder, McMackin, Cantrell or Lamberson in the secondary," listed Coach Finley.

Other players competing to move up the depth chart are: linebackers – Ward, Rico, Moffett, McGuire and Galimore; cornerbacks – Hollis, McFadden and Smith; free safeties – Anthony and McMullins; ends – Green, Allen and Kylan Johnson; and tackles – O'Brien, Mercer, Samples, Pugh, Plemons, Allen, Teddleton, Travis, Tate, Record and Baker.

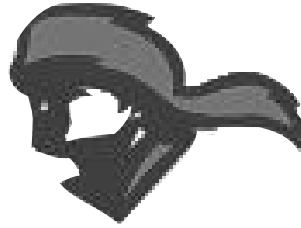
"Another strength is our kicking game, because Henry Todd is a pretty good kicker. He does all of our kicking duties. I am expecting him to have a big year," noted the coach.

Including last year's 4-6 year, Coach Finley begins his second season of revitalizing the Gibson County

football program. He explains the process, "It has been a struggle. I am going to be honest with you. Our guys have worked really hard. It is the style of play on the football field that we have not decided to do yet. The toughness, physical style of play that I want these guys to play with does not happen overnight. It is a process, but we are working on it. I would like us to be a little more progressive, a little more confident in what we do and just be more physical."

Asked about the Pioneers' goals, Coach Finley admitted, "I know you need goals and we want to make the playoffs. My thing is, and for the most part last year I was happy with it, if you go out and play hard and compete and don't quit, those are my goals. These are things you may not be able to do every time, but the more often you can do them, the more likely you are to win. If you don't play hard, you have no chance."

He continued, "And, to be honest, we have got to have some guys be leaders. That has been a problem since I have been here. We don't have 'the man.' Every good football team I have ever coached had one and possibly two leaders. If you asked anybody on the team, they would tell you who the one or two were. There were no ifs, ands or buts about it. We don't have that. So, we need to get that leadership quality and some of those guys to step to the front. You find out leadership abilities when things are bad. Anybody can do it when things are good. If you are winning every game, everybody is good. One of the problems here is that we have accepted losing. It is not as big a deal to them, because it has happened so much. That is a culture that takes a while to change. I think we are going in that direction. We have some talent, but it is up to them, really."



Examining the schedule, Coach Finley predicted, "If you look at our schedule, there are five teams (Peabody, Union City, McKenzie, TCA and Adamsville), for sure, on there that we will be big-time underdogs against. Those are just the facts. We hope we can play well enough to maybe sneak up on one or possibly even two of those guys. You never know. Even last year, we were able to play some of those teams fairly tough for a while. A lot of our season comes down to how we are going to do against teams that we are comparable to. I think we can play with our non-region opponents (Lake County, South Fulton and West Carroll). If we could upset one or two of the big boys, we could get into the mix for the playoffs. That is my goal, for us to get to the playoffs. I don't know if it is doable, but we are going to give it a shot. You never know."

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GC Pioneers &
the Golden Tide
a great season!*



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GCHS WIDE RECEIVERS – Catching passes for the Gibson County Pioneers football team will be (front row, from left) Rylan McFadden, Caden Wylie, Colin Warren, Ethan Ward, Nolen Anthony; (back row) Austin Galimore, Cam McMackin, Brenton Smith, Wyatt Hollis and Donte Holder.



GCHS OFFENSIVE LINEMAN – Offensive linemen for the Gibson County Pioneers football team will be (front row, from left) Trey Baker, Hayden McGuire, Jackson Pugh, Josh Teddleton, Matt Tate; (back row) Aiden O'Brien, Remington Green, Kylan Johnson, Conner Travis, Guy Moffatt, Amarion Allen, Parker Plemons, Darius Allen, Josh Samples, Derek Record and Shawn Mercer.



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