



The Wildcat defense has been impressive during the first few weeks of the season, smothering opposing offenses, gang tackling and forcing lots of turnovers. Several defenders are shown here swarming to tackle a Northeast Jones running back in the jamboree at Hattiesburg High School earlier this month.

Inexperience not holding back Cats’ defensive unit

Defense proving to be a strong suit for GCHS so far

By RUSSELL TURNER
Herald Staff

Coming into the 2017 campaign, there was no bigger area of uncertainty for GCHS than on the defensive side of the ball. Not only was there limited experience coming back from last year’s team, the program was also getting a brand new defensive coordinator. However, two weeks into the season, it appears most of the questions and concerns have been pushed into the shadows as the Wildcats have posted two impressive defensive shutouts en route to a 2-0 start to the season. “Defense is another area where we have very little experience,” first-year head coach Mike King said. “We’ve got 2-3 guys on that side of the ball that played varsity last year, but so far I have been really happy with the way they have played.” “We’ve been fast to the foot-

ball and played with a lot of intensity. The mistakes we have made have mostly been due to us being overly aggressive. I am really pleased with what I have seen thus far.” Aycock is running a base 4-3 scheme, which gives the linebackers a little more space to work. In the secondary, the Cats’ defensive backs will generally play a ‘cover three’ formation with a lot of man-to-man matchups with receivers. The Wildcats held West Lauderdale to just one third down conversion on 11 tries and also forced three turnovers. GCHS dominated the line of scrimmage and held the Knights to just 46 yards on the ground. The visiting team did manage to complete 12 passes for 94 yards, but most of that came on their final possession when the Wildcats were surrendering the short passing game in a prevent defensive scheme. The defensive outing in the Battle for the Bell was just as impressive. The Cats forced four turnovers and had two big stands deep in their own territory to keep the Rebels out of the endzone and notch their second straight game without giving up any points. “I never thought we’d be winning games with defense,” said King, who is known for his work on the offensive side of the ball. “But, our coaches are doing an outstanding job

and these kids are playing extremely well.” Anchoring the defense at middle linebacker is junior Noah Mitchell, one of three returning starters from a year ago. Mitchell was a solid presence as a sophomore and a leading tackler for last year’s team. He entered this season bigger and stronger and started the season off with a team-high 10 tackles and a forced fumble in the win over West Lauderdale. He had another big game against George County with a team-leading nine tackles. “Noah is our quarterback so to speak on the defensive side and has played very well for us in our first two games,” Aycock said. “But, he isn’t having to do it all alone. We’ve had several guys playing at a high level and have played well as a unit so far.” Starting alongside Mitchell at linebacker are sophomore LaDon Woullard and senior Dylan McDonald. Woullard is the weak-side (or Willy) linebacker, while McDonald gets the starting nod as the strong-side (or Sam) linebacker. Neither are considered big for the position, but both are high-energy, athletic defenders who are physical at their positions. Woullard had seven tackles, a

sack and a forced fumble against the Knights and five versus George County. McDonald has been a big plus for the Cats at linebacker with

See DEFENSE
Page 6-B

Down, Set...Hike

on down for good service, better products & GREAT prices.

Automotive

Hand Tools

Paint Shop

Power Tools

Outdoor Power Equipment

Electrical

Hardware

Plumbing

Sporting Goods

Revette's, Inc.

State Line, MS • (601) 848-7902

Proud supporter of Greene Co. Athletics

We are so proud of you and love you so much Taylor.

HAVE A GREAT YEAR!

Love You, Nana (Dorothy) and Poppy (Truman) Miller

LHS HONEYBEE

Taylor GARRETSON

68

Jay HOVATTER

Senior 2018

WISHING YOU THE BEST ON YOUR SENIOR SEASON!

Love, Dad, SoNanna and McKinley



The GCHS defense has yet to be scored upon this season. George County had a chance with a first and goal-to-go inside the Cats’ 5-yard-line, but the stingy Wildcats kept them out of the endzone. Sophomore linebacker LaDon Woullard (30) and junior defensive tackle Blake Daughdrill (55) are shown here stripping the football away from the Rebels’ big running back McKinley Jackson during the Cats’ 14-13 win in the annual Battle for the Bell.

Dennis DeBar

State Senator - Dist. 43

FIGHTING FOR YOU

I am proud to represent my friends & neighbors as your Dist. 43 State Senator. I appreciate your trust & support as I continue to represent you & your interests in Jackson.

Good Luck Wildcats

PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF DENNIS DEBAR, JR.

My family & I wish all our area’s student athletes great success this year as they represent their schools & our community on and off the playing fields.

Dennis DeBar

State Senator - Dist. 43