

# McINTOSH DEMONS

## McIntosh schedule filled with familiar foes

Only change from last year is opener against Chickasaw, which replaces Citronelle

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There are at least a couple of ways to look at McIntosh's 2017 schedule. On the one hand, the Demons will face 10 teams with a combined 52-57 record last season and 22 of those wins were recorded by two teams — 13-1 Linden and 9-3 Sweet Water.

There's also the fact that only half of the teams on the Demons' schedule made the playoffs last season and four of those came from Class 1A, Region 1 where McIntosh resides, though it should be noted every region in the class sends four teams to the playoffs.

There's also this: The nine teams that McIntosh played last season that are on this year's schedule — this is the first season the Demons have played Chickasaw, the season-opening opponent on the road on Aug 25 — outscored the Demons 470-134. Chickasaw re-

places Citronelle, which slammed McIntosh 71-0 in last year's season-opening game in a season in which the Demons set the school record for most points allowed in a season (541) and most points allowed in a single game (78 by Marengo, McIntosh's Oct. 27 opponent this year).

So what may at first appear to be a schedule that can be negotiated by a team that needs something good to happen — McIntosh was 1-9 last year and is 5-33 over the past four seasons, with three of those wins coming against J.F. Shields — there are lots of pitfalls too.

Chickasaw, a 2A school, posted a 2-8 record last year and is a young program that some feel is on its way up. Next up is Shields (Sept. 8) and this has been the saving grace opponent for the Demons in past years. McIntosh won 58-0 last year, the eighth consecutive win

over Shields, which is 1-26 since restarting its football program in 2014 after three seasons without fielding a team (2011-13).

The next three games are all on the road against Linden, Fruitdale and Pleasant Home. Linden slammed the Demons 69-0 last year and its past four meetings against McIntosh have all been shutouts: 43-0, 49-0, 46-0 and 69-0. Fruitdale topped McIntosh 31-6 a year ago and has won its past four meetings against the Demons, though McIntosh leads the all-time series with a 12-6 mark. Pleasant Home have met only once before this season and that was last year's game which McIntosh lost 62-32. Pleasant Home was 6-4 last year, one of just four 2017 opponents that posted a winning record last season.

A pair of home Region 1 games are next in line, with the Demons hosting Millry and Sweet Water. Millry, 4-7 last year, topped Mc-

Intosh 55-14 last year and has won the past 12 meetings between the two teams though the all-time series finds Millry leading just 18-13. Sweet Water, 9-3 last year, shut out the Demons 67-0, a seventh consecutive victory over McIntosh. Sweet Water leads the series 12-2.

A trip to A.L. Johnson for another region game is set Oct. 20. Johnson was 4-6 last year and has won three of the past four meetings and leads the series 8-3. Johnson won 50-6 last year. Marengo, which handed the Demons a 78-12 loss last year, visits McIntosh on Oct. 27. It has won the past four games against the Demons but McIntosh leads the all-time series 12-7. The season finale is on the road on Nov. 3 at J.U. Blacksher, a 5-6 team last year that included a 58-6 win over the Demons. Blacksher has won the last three meetings and leads the series 6-5.



These players will be counted on as leaders for McIntosh this season. From left are running back/defensive back Cameron Johnson, offensive lineman/middle linebacker Cameron Weaver, running back Keanu Davis and linebacker Michael Snider.

## DEMONS: McIntosh hopes to compete in Region 1

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the past. We've got a good enough bunch of guys who have put in a lot of work over the summer, and I'm hoping that we will be able to compete."

The McIntosh roster will feature approximately 25 players, according to Gates, who said they only lost about five players from last year's team via graduation. There are a handful of newcomers on the roster but the majority of those on the roster played for Gates and his staff last season.

Noting some players he expects to step forward and claim leadership roles on this year's Demons' team, Gates said, "We have Keanu Davis, who will be seeing some touches at running back. Cameron Weaver is our leader on the offensive line and he'll also be playing middle linebacker.

"Cameron Johnson is a guy we didn't have on the team last year but he is going to impact both sides of the ball; he'll be running the ball and also playing in the secondary. We have some young guys coming up too, including Michael Snider. He'll be playing linebacker and he wasn't on the team last year."

There will be a different look on offense as the Demons attempt to hold on to the football longer and turn drives into scores instead of three-and-outs that kept the defense on the field for long stretches of games.

"Last year we did a lot of spread and we're still going to have the spread at times, but we're going to run a lot out of the Wing-T," said Gates. "They have looked good with it. I think that's going to be a difference-maker for us. We have a big line and we have some pretty

good skill guys. I think last year staying in the spread may have hurt us and the defense had to stay out there on the field a lot."

On defense, look for the Demons to set up in a 4-3 alignment. Usually, The biggest thing on this side of the football Gates wants to see is improved technique.

"We have run a lot of drills this summer on defense and worked hard on a lot of drills, getting more aggressive and making them tougher," he said. "Hopefully that's going to help us this year. Last year most of the guys were trying to arm tackle and reach and we've been stressing being tough and putting helmets on the ball and driving through. We'll primarily line up in a 4-3, but it could change from week to week, depending on who we are playing."

McIntosh travels to

Chickasaw for its season-opener on Aug. 25.

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