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Mississippi College Choctaws

Frye (Southeast Missouri) have been added to the mix.

Mike Hall, who had 12 tackles for a loss among his 43 stops, returns at linebacker, and there are a couple of starters back on the D-line: Kris Reliford and Chris Humphries.

MC's 3-3-5 defense allowed 33.9 points a game in 2016, yielding 24 passing touchdowns and 22 rushing scores.

"I think we're improved in all areas on defense," Bland said. "We can cover [against the passing game], and I think we'll get more pressure on the passer. We've brought in some kids who'll add to the talent we've already got at linebacker and on the defensive line. We ought to be pretty good."

Newcomers who could emerge among the front six on defense include linemen Jordan Barrett (EMCC) and Preston Reed (Tennessee Tech) and linebackers Colton Magee (Copiah-Lincoln CC), Justin Stewart (Gulf Coast CC) and Trey Thompson (Tennessee Tech).

On special teams, Turcotte averaged 42.6 yards per punt, and place-kicker Matt Brasher hit five field goals (out of seven attempts) in 2016, including a last-second game-winner against

Cumberland University. He scored 34 points all told.

The schedule does the Choctaws no favors. MC will begin the season with three away from home, starting in Atlanta on August 31 (a Thursday) against Clark Atlanta, an NCAA Division II school in the SIAC. The first conference game is at West Alabama on September 16.

The home opener is September 23 against GSC foe Florida Tech, and rival Delta State comes to Robinson-Hale Stadium the next Saturday. The Statesmen whipped the Choctaws 61-31 last year.

"The big challenge is the three road games to start," Bland said. "After that, the schedule balances out. We want to get through those first three with some success."

Bland's career record as a head coach is 81-50. His three-year record at MC is 6-24. He said he knew it would take time to remake the team from a D-III program to one that could compete in the GSC. But the Choctaws may be about to turn that corner.

"After seeing where we were three years ago," Bland said, "I'd say we're pretty close to where we wanted to be by this time."

Retired MC professor, student union director visit old stomping grounds



Special to The Clinton Courier

Retired Mississippi College modern languages professor Emily Fokeladeh, and her son, Samir Fokeladeh, join Caby and Betty Byrne for lunch at the MC cafeteria. A 1954 MC graduate, Caby Byrne served as the school's Baptist Student Union director from 1958-63. His wife, Betty, is a 1963 MC graduate. The Clinton residents are pictured at the cafeteria earlier this year. The guests enjoyed the campus dining food and fellowship at the Baptist-affiliated institution in their hometown.

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