

# Vikings pursue season of new beginnings

BY AMBER ADAMS

The 2018 Vikings are on the hunt for an exciting fast-paced redemption season. The Vikes are fired up and ready to take the field and run the pigskin.

This year is a season of new beginnings and new tradition as the Vikings welcome Coach Anthony Ballard to the high school team. Ballard led the Jr. Vikings last year and will bring a strong foundation.

The Vikings had a tough year in 2017, ending 0-6 in the region. But with a new coaching staff, strong leadership and an incomparable foundation of seasoned players, the Vikings are on the prowl for the win.

"Our focus for this season is commitment to the program," Ballard stated. "There's nothing else that matters. We have tested these young men and pushed them to their limits to show them their capabilities, which are limitless. Dedication is key when it comes to a strong team foundation, and I can't promise we will win every

game, but what I can say is that these young men are fully capable and dedicated. You will know when the Vikings are on the field."

Humboldt is coming in 12 seniors strong. Seniors this year are Devin Epperson, Adam Hartig, Davante Bradford, Demaris Coleman, Michael Harvey, Quin Verser, Tristan Carey, Thomas Cook, Payne Brittain, Quinn McClinton, Josh Robinson, and Deonte Moore. Team captain for the Vikings is Nakail Williams, with Brittain, and Hartig showing leadership. Coach Ballard emphasized the importance their leadership will play on the field. The prospective quarterbacks Michael Brown and Malik Cox will be relied on heavily as well.

Starting the year strong, the Vikings will jump right into things on Week 1 with one of the most highly anticipated games each year with Class 3A Milan Bulldogs.

"I expect the Bulldogs to be the traditional strong dominant team that their known for, but I know my Vikings

and I know we're ready for them," Ballard stated.

This will be one of the more physical games, and both teams' conditioning and strength will be put to the test. New coaches are leading both teams this year so strategy may be something like you've never seen before. This matchup will be one for the books and the Vikings are just the right opponents to be the ones to tame the dogs early in their season.

The Vikings will have an early bye week this season on week two but this will allow them time to refuel from the Milan game and also give them time to tweak any skills they may want to perfect before they take the road to Atwood to face the West Carroll War Eagles.

"I'm extra excited for this competition," stated Ballard. "This is the first home game and I'm excited to show Viking town their team. I don't know much about West Carroll, but what I do know is the Vikings are ready and they are playing our game this

year."

The War Eagles will be a strong match up for the Vikings. In the past, many games have been separated by a mere few points.

September 7 will bring the Vikings to Trenton to face the Golden Tide. The Tide produced a strong season last year. They will have to stay on their toes and play a strong game but there is no doubt in their capabilities.

Lake County will travel to Viking territory on September 14.

The Vikings will hit the road and stop in region 3A McNairy County to take on the Bobcats. This is a non-region matchup and could be a more physical game. This is one of the tougher matchups for the Vikings this season and will test their conditioning and endurance, as McNairy will have many players ready on the sidelines.

The Vikes next stop on September 28 will be in the Fiddle Stick Capitol to face the Greenfield Yellow Jackets.

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