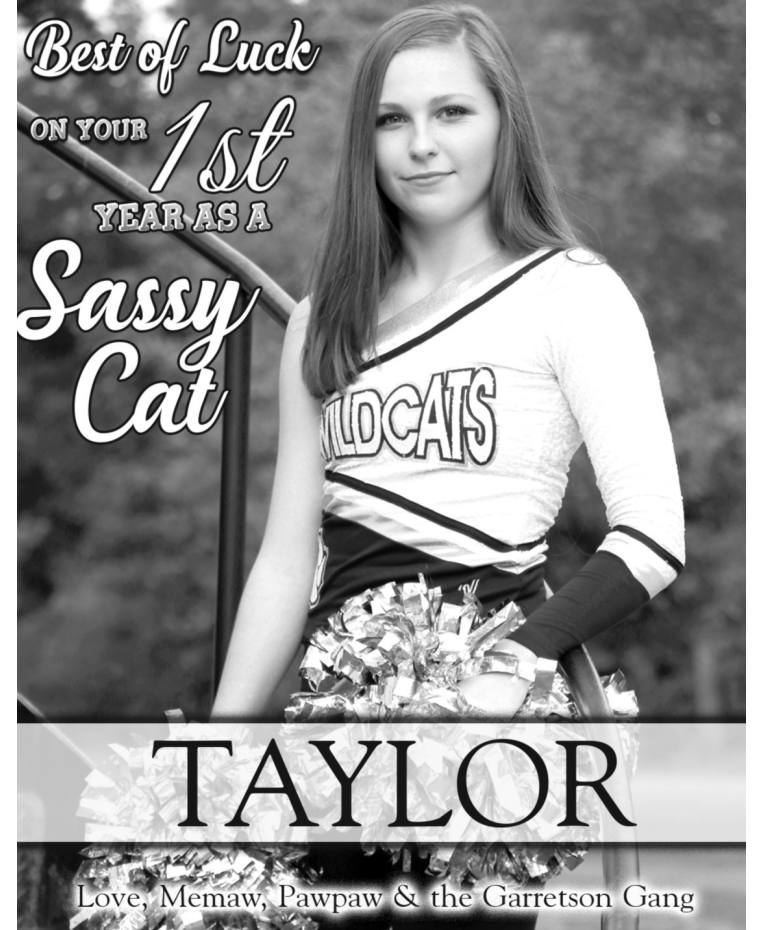




Photo by Shelley Mitchell - Herald Contributor

Senior Josh Cook is a first-year, senior football player who is expected to make a big difference on special teams this year. He is shown here making his first-ever extra point attempt off the hold of Garrett West in the first quarter at West Lauderdale.



Cats hope to see more impact plays from special teams this season

New faces getting chance to contribute on kicking, return teams

By RUSSELL TURNER
Herald Staff

The Wildcats enter the season very inexperienced on all the special teams units with new players in almost every position. That would typically, be a huge concern, but the Wildcat coaching staff feels confident about their kicking and kick return options heading into the year.

"Special teams did not hurt us last year, but we want to be better this year and are putting more emphasis this year," head coach Mike King said. "We want return a kick for a TD, block a punt, just do something to get some big plays out of our special teams."

Kicker Josh Cook is new to the team and has no varsity experience. But, the first-year senior has shown a lot of promise and impressed with his work ethic.

"What we've seen from Josh in practice is good," King said. "He strikes the ball and well and a live rush doesn't seem to bother him."

King says Cook is comfortable within 40-yard range on field goals and does a good job placing kickoffs where King wants them. He did a solid job on extra

points and kickoffs in the opener, and while he missed his lone field goal attempt, it was a solid kick that sailed just right of the upright.

Handling punts will be junior Jacob Mitchell. King says Mitchell, who starts at quarterback, will utilize quick kicks out of the shotgun formation, providing coaches with the option of running a fourth down play or kicking it away without a return man back to field it. King is also comfortable with Mitchell's ability out of the traditional punt formation.

Seniors Hayden West and Alex Magee will handle the snapping duties. West will work with the extra point and field goal units. Magee will be the long snapper on punts, providing King with "consistent snaps" and a good cover guy who can get down the

field and make tackles.

A bright spot that has emerged is kick returner Peyton Roberts. The junior looked very comfortable fielding punts and kicks and had solid returns in the opener. He did leave the game against West Lauderdale after a helmet-to-helmet hit, but is expected to be a good weapon for the Wildcats. He will be joined on kickoff returns by Kevin Dortch, Que Washam, Santez Campbell and Alex Magee. King says all are capable of coming up with big impact plays returning kicks.

"Peyton does a great job fielding kicks for us," King said. "He learned the dangers of picking up a loose ball and had a pretty bad collision, but I really think he will get more confident with the ball in his hands and be a threat to make some big returns."



Photo by Shelley Mitchell - Herald Contributor

Junior Peyton Roberts picked up a lot of confidence as a starter on the GCHS baseball team and looks to be a solid piece of the Cats' kick return teams this season. He is shown here making good yardage on his first ever kick return last Friday.

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