

McINTOSH



McIntosh's T.J. Jackson, left, will be a dual-threat quarterback for the Demons, and his key target is likely to be receiver Bernard Dickson, right.

Photos by William Gray/Washington County News

Demons look for redemption

McIntosh hopeful of turnaround with lineup of big and fast players

BY WILLIE GRAY
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The kickoff of the 2018 football season in McIntosh comes with a change at the head coaching position, but it is a change with familiarity. Renard Davis, a figure best known for his vast success as a McIntosh basketball coach, will be making his second run at being the Demons' football coach.

Davis was named head coach of the football team just a few weeks before the start of the season, but he said it doesn't concern him to only have a limited time to get his team prepared.

"I have confidence in the kids that are on our football team and in the coaching staff. Our coaches have been getting them prepared for this season since last spring. I am just going to help bring it all together," Davis said.

Similar to 2012

When asked about the team's overall evaluation, Davis compared the 2018 team to that of the team he coached in 2012 that advanced to the Class 1A semifinals. Of the comparison, Davis said this year's team has a lot of similarities.

"The 2012 team was big and fast and they got better each year because they stayed together and things became more productive for them," Davis said. "Although this year's players have not been as successful in the past couple of years as we would have liked, they are just as big (as the 2012 team) and I think they might be a little faster. I think people are going to be surprised at the team we put on the field this year. I like what I see."

Last season the Demons' offense won only one game and averaged less than nine points per game. A new look and tempo for the McIntosh offense is believed to be the key to success for the Demons, according to Davis.

"I am a firm believer in two things when it comes to coaching kids. One thing is that we will set

our offense and defense according to the type players that we have, and the second thing is that we will keep our plays simple to the point that we execute them correctly. Offensively, we may only have five plays but we will be able to execute those plays so that they work," Davis said.

Offensive coach

Jerry Waite, who joined the McIntosh staff last season as a volunteer, will be assisting with the offense this season. Waite joins Davis in his plans to use the team's size and speed to its advantage.

"We are going to be a spread team but coupled with the ability to run the ball when we need to," Waite said. "There will be a lot of times that we come to the line with four wide and an empty backfield. Then there will be other times that we will line up behind our linemen and follow their blocking. We will be able to do a lot of things offensively because of the players that we have."

One of the leaders Davis and his staff have on the field for them this season will be quarterback T.J. Jackson. At 5-foot-9, 150 pounds, Jackson is noted as being talented as

a dual-threat quarterback who can throw the deep ball or tuck it and run.

Jackson's key receiver will likely be Bernard Dickson (5-10, 160).

"These two guys are two of our leaders. They understand the game and when it comes to our passing game, it's just pass and catch for them because they know what they are doing and they will be the leaders on the offense," Davis said. "There are going to be a number of kids who are going to surprise some people."

7-on-7 success

Waite worked with the Demons' offense during the summer months and in an effort to better prepare them for the passing game he had the team participate in a number of 7-on-7 tournaments and training camps in the area. At the end of the summer Waite said the results of the competition were impressive and encouraging.

"We beat some larger schools that included some (Class) 7A programs as well as 5A and 4A teams. Being able to not only compete against those guys but to also beat them was a huge motivator for our kids because they

started to understand that they can win some football games and believe in themselves," Waite said.

One of the most impressive factors about this year's Demons will be the guys up front. They have a host of players who are 6-0 or taller and weight between 200 and 275 pounds.

The linemen include Kelsey Smith (sophomore, 6-1, 260), Emanuel Perry (6-0, 190), Shane Thompson (6-1, 240), Craig Collins (6-4, 275), Condarius Reid (6-1, 250) and Michael Schneider (6-0, 250).

"Our linemen are really a good size, especially for a 1A program. We have guys

who have been dedicated to the weight room over the summer because they want to be better than they were last year. I'm excited to have these guys on the field for us," Davis said.

The Demons will have their first test of the season on Aug. 24 when they host J.U. Blacksher.

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