

CITRONELLE

CHS attack will get physical

BY WILLIE GRAY
williegray@thecallnews.com

During the 2017 season the Citronelle Wildcats’ offense scored an average of nearly 23 points per game with a season high of 44 against Washington County to close the season and a season low of six against the Leroy Bears in Week 3.

First year Wildcat head coach Jason Barnett says he hopes a new look with his team’s offense will result in a higher scoring average for his team and more victories than the 5-5 record of a year ago.

“We’re excited about the season, there is a lot of energy with both the team and the coaching staff and we are all working in the same direction,” Barnett said. “We have made some adjustments on the offense this season in an effort to take advantage of the personnel that we have this season, and in the end I think it will be productive for us.”

Among the biggest changes to come to the Citronelle offense will be the coach who is making the offensive calls. Former Citronelle player turned coach C.J. Herring was named the offensive coordinator going into the season. According to Barnett, Herring was named as the O.C. soon after Barnett was named as the interim head coach following the departure of former head coach Rusty Funk.

“When I got the job here the first thing I did was to talk with C.J. and tell him he was going to be the offensive coordinator, there is no ifs, ands or buts about it; let’s get things going, I have faith in him and he is going to learn and get better as he goes along,” Barnett said.

“I really don’t know of anyone in this part of the country who has any more football knowledge than C.J. He is a true student of the game because he is always studying the game to learn more and to



Among the leaders for the Citronelle offense this season are this trio of fleet skill players, from left, wide receiver Aaron Peoples, wide receiver Aaron Belt and running back Joe Jeffrey Hutcherson. “Aaron Peoples and Aaron Belt are natural-born leaders and the kind of kids you love to be around and have playing for you,” said coach Jason Barnett. As for Hutcherson, “He is as good of a football player as I have ever coached,” Barnett said.

get better. On top of his knowledge of the game, he is a local guy who grew up here and played here. He loves this school, community and coaching these kids. There is no doubt that he is an asset to our staff.”

One of the changes Barnett says he and Herring have agreed on is a change in the offensive gameplan. For the past couple of seasons the Wildcats have been operating in a Wing T formation that utilized mis-

direction and different blocking patterns. This year Barnett says the system will change in order to adapt to the playing ability of those on the offensive unit.

“Our guys have been running the Wing T for the last two or three years and the style offense we are going to run is very similar, but with a few different looks. Our guys are performing well with it so far because again, they are running an expanded version of what we have been doing,” Barnett said.

“We are going to be more balanced with the run and passing game, we are just doing it with a few different looks. When the defenses pull in to stop the run we are capable of hitting them long or hitting them underneath.”

Barnett added should his team continue to develop in the way it is preparing, the Wildcats will play a more physical brand of offensive football than in previous years.

“When we first started here at Citronelle about three years ago our guys were a lot smaller than those we have on the field today. They were young because a lot of the seniors who are on this year’s team were freshmen that first season we were here.

“They gave us all they had but they were small and young and weren’t able to be as physical as the teams they were playing against. That seems to have changed and they are now the older guys and ready to mix it up and stand their ground,” Barnett said.

Like many high school programs, Citronelle has to identify and solve some problems that might prevent the Wildcats from having the successful season they seek. Barnett says one of the goals for this year’s team will be ball control on both offense

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