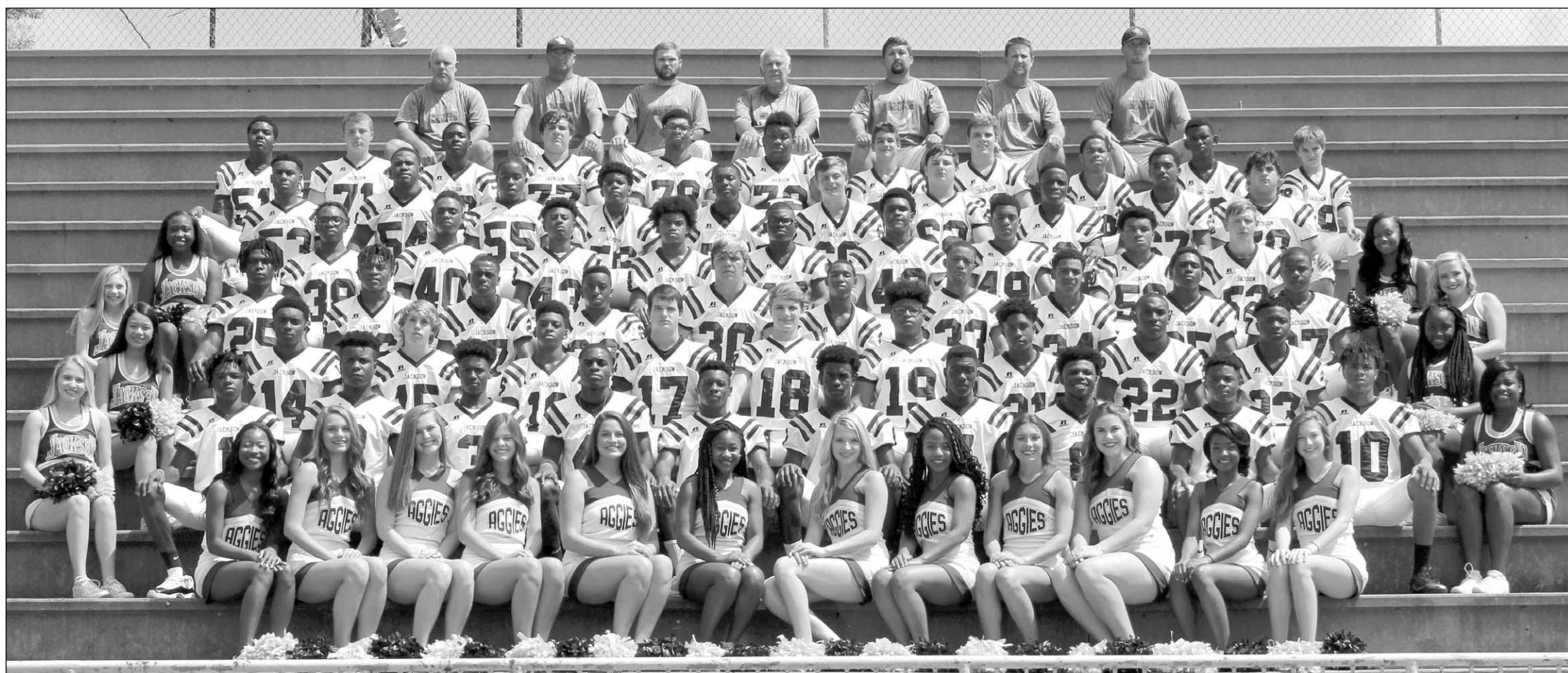


JACKSON



The 2018 Jackson High School Aggies

Photo submitted

Aggies ready for return to glory

BY LEEQUINTON BLACKMON
Sports Correspondent

Coming off of their worst season since 2007, the Jackson Aggies are approaching this year with a lot of team goals, but they all center around their ability to simply be a better team than they were last year.

It seems a simple goal, but according to Jackson head coach Danny Powell, being a team was something the Aggies struggled with last year.

"I think our kids have gelled and bonded better," Powell said. "That wasn't there at times last year, but we can see it now. I think the leadership is better and the attitude and work ethic is better than it was last year. I really like the feel of this football team. I think there's a new energy that the coaches have brought in and the players have responded well to that energy.

I've got a good feeling about this year and I think we're going to have a good football team this year."

The Aggies will be relatively young this season as they only return nine starters, with four being on offense and five on defense. Despite being young on both sides of the ball and having a host of new coaches on defense, Powell said he doesn't consider this to be a rebuilding year for the Aggies as they're coming in with the same goal they've had since he got there in 2011.

"We're always striving to be state champions around here," Powell said. "It's no secret that we want to win the state championship and we've come close to having an opportunity to do that again here recently. Before last year, we'd been to the semifinals for three (straight) years but came up short in three straight years.

So, we've been knocking on the door. We'd like to win the region, which we haven't done in a while, so we'd like to get back to that as well."

Winning the region championship won't be an easy task for the Aggies this year. Sure, their region rival St. Paul's has moved up to Class 6A, Region 1, but two-time region champion Vigor is still there. Last year, Vigor came to Legion Field and held Jackson scoreless in a 33-0 rout that proved to be a devastating loss for the Aggies. It's because of losses like that Powell said he believes he has seen a different team show up during the spring and summer.

He said last year's uncharacteristically bad season has sparked a drive in his team he didn't see at this time a year ago.

"I think it has a lot to do with the type

of work ethic the kids have shown so far," Powell said. "We're all disappointed because last year wasn't the kind of year we've come to expect up here. I think the kids know that and it's made them come into this season with a lot more work ethic than usual, because they want to go out there and prove that we have a good football team.

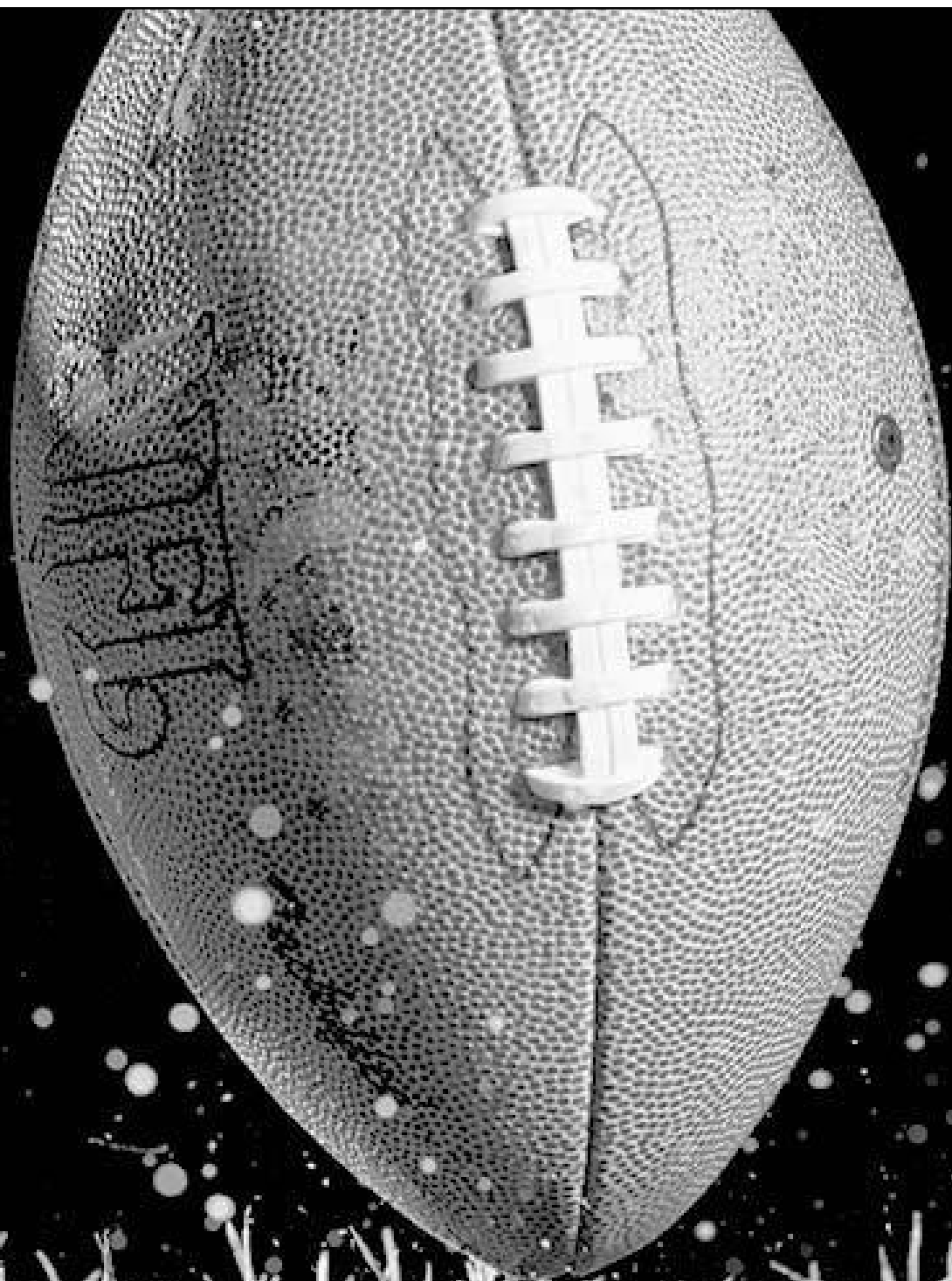
"They came in this year ready to work. That's not to say that they didn't come ready to work last season, but it's just something different about this team. When you look at them you can tell they're ready to get after it and go have a good season."

There will be some changes on the sidelines and new players in the starting lineup, but Powell said he is hoping Jackson's winning tradition is the one thing that stays the same.

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