

CITRONELLE

CHS prospects

BY WILLIE GRAY
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The dream of playing football on Saturday at a college or university may be getting closer to becoming a reality for some members the Citronelle Wildcats.

During an interview with newly appointed interim head coach Jason Barnett, he mentioned a number of players on his team who have caught the attention of college coaches across the south.

"I think most of the kids playing high school sports have a dream of playing at the next level, regardless of if it is football, baseball, basketball, softball, soccer or whatever," Barnett said. "I am excited for our guys to have the opportunity to prove they have the ability to play on Saturdays and to get to go to college. Some are Division 1 prospects and others are likely to go with D-2 schools, but the best thing is that they will have the opportunity."

Barnett went on to say it is his opinion, for one reason or another, some of the college recruiters have not paid a lot of attention to the Citronelle program, something he hopes to change.

"I have only been here for about three years and I have seen some of the (players) come through here who should have at least gotten some looks, but they didn't. Some have pointed to the distance we are away from Mobile as being a reason our guys are not getting recruited before now, and to that I say we have a solution," Barnett said.

"If they are not coming to us, we are going to them. We are going to make arrangements to get our kids at Citronelle in front of the college

coaches and help them reach their goals of playing at the college level."

Joeffrey Hutcherson, the starting running back and middle linebacker for the Wildcats, has received an offer from the West Alabama Tigers but he has also caught the attention of some Division 1 schools that include Auburn University and the University of Southern Mississippi.

"Joeffrey is one of those kids who I don't think has realized his full potential," Barnett said. "He was invited to come to a camp at Auburn over the summer and they saw his strength and speed when he ran a consistent 4.5 in the 40. The word started spreading from there and I have no doubt he will get more offers. He will have to find the right fit."

According to Barnett, Aaron Belt, a 6-foot-2, 215-pound defensive back-wide receiver; Aaron Peoples, a 6-2, 165-pound defensive back-wide receiver; and Justin Johnston, a 5-11, 175-pound defensive back-wide receiver, have all been contacted by collegiate programs.

Barnett also said Jamaricus Robinson, a 6-2, 210-pound junior, is on the radar of the coaches for the national champion Alabama Crimson Tide.

"We have some other guys who, if they play to their potential, are going to have schools knocking on their doors, including some of our linemen," Barnett said. "Our guys up front, including the seniors and the younger guys, have a tremendous amount of potential I am proud to have these guys showing the amount of talent and ability that we have."

Dykes arrives to bolster Wildcats' offensive line

BY TOMMY HICKS
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At the close of the 2017 season, members of the Citronelle coaching staff started looking ahead to the 2018 season and the players they would have returning for that team. As they examined each of the position groups one stood out in particular based on the lack of experienced players who would be returning — the offensive line.

Coaches do not like to see inexperience up front on offense; not at any position, to be sure, but especially as it relates to the group that has to offer protection for the team's quarterback and open running room for its running backs.

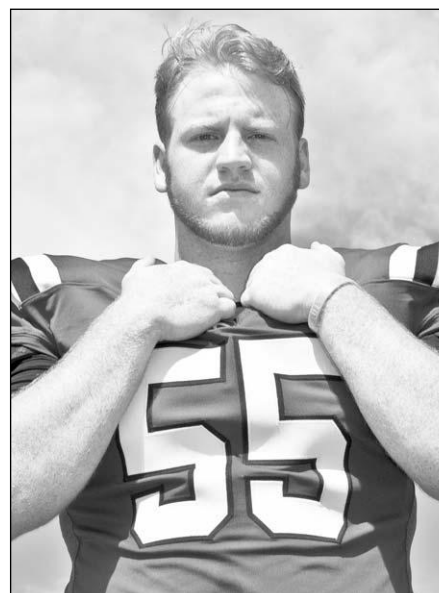
It didn't appear there were a lot of answers available to the question of what the Wildcats' coaches could do to help solve the problem.

And then help arrived in the form of 6-foot-2, 260-pound Dawson Dykes.

A former player at Satsuma where he was a three-year starter, including last season, Dykes, a senior, transferred to Citronelle after the 2017-18 school year. He had lived in the Citronelle area for quite a while but had always attended Satsuma. When a coaching change took place at Satsuma, Dykes decided to make a change as well.

In doing so, he helped alleviate some of the issues Citronelle faced on its offensive line. It suddenly had a talented, experienced and versatile player to add to an offensive line that needed exactly what he offered.

"He was their starting right tackle last year," Citronelle interim head coach Jason Barnett said. "He was their offensive Most Valuable Player last year. When coach (Justin) Thomas got let go (at Satsuma) they (Dykes family) started looking for somewhere else to go; he and coach Thomas are real close. He actually lived in our school district,



Dawson Dykes

but he had gone to Satsuma all these years. Coach Thomas recommended Citronelle because of the job coach (C.J.) Herring does as an offensive line coach and coach Thomas knew coach Herring would take care of him.

"We're tickled to death to have him. We went through the spring without him of course, but as soon as school let out (at the end of the 2017 school year) he enrolled here and started working out. We got to start seeing him in the summer. He had knee surgery back during the spring so he's still a little bit gingerly with the knee, but he's progressing and we can tell he fixes a lot of issues that we were going to have.

"I hate to say that, but we weren't prepared depth-wise to handle this year (on the offensive line). He comes in this year and immediately he's going to be a starting left guard, right guard, whatever he is; coach Herring moves him around just about every day to see where he fits best, because he can play all five positions.

"He's somebody that definitely

fills a void for us. I hate that we only get him for one year, but I'll definitely take him right now, believe me. Literally, he fell in our lap. He's a four-year starter and he's a bigger kid and he's smart and he can pick up what we're trying to accomplish and he's already taken the leadership role on the offensive line. Even though he doesn't know these guys from Adam's house cat, at least not recently (in terms of playing together) they already respect him and if he speaks, they're going to listen."

Dykes said the transition hasn't been difficult and he's ready to do what he can to help Citronelle reach its goals of a winning season, reaching the playoffs and hopefully making some noise once they gain a playoff spot.

"They've definitely been treating me well," he said of his Citronelle coaches and teammates. "I've known most of these guys all my life, so now it's just like when we played together (growing up) before. I'm just glad that I can help any way that I can. It's going pretty good."

As for his health, Dykes said his knee injury and rehabilitation have gone well. "It still gives me issues from time to time, but it's good," he said. "... I just try to play 100 percent, and that's it."

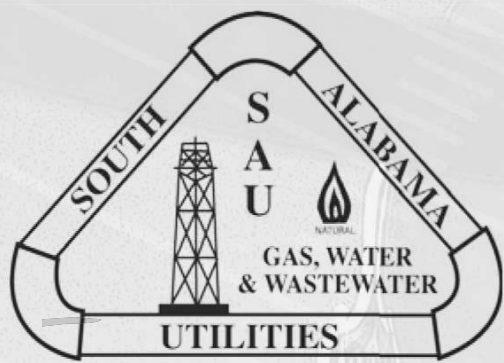
As for the switch from Satsuma to Citronelle, Dykes said the transition has not been difficult.

"It's not hard. A lot of teams they play the game the same, so I already had the fundamentals and things done, I just had to make the switch here," he said. "I definitely feel confident about what team can accomplish and I'm ready to help any way I can."

Dykes' presence alone is a big help for Citronelle, and when his experience and talent is added to the mix, it only adds to the enhancements he brings to the Wildcats' offensive line.



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Good Luck Wildcats. May you have a successful season.

Senator Jack Williams, District 34

*"A proud supporter of
Alabama's future leaders."*



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