

New look for Martin Middle, same goal as always

Randy Cavin
Sports Editor

Martin Middle School football appears to be on the right track with the thoughts of last year being put on the shelf.

It was not a good debut season for head coach Kyle Pack as he had to deal with a lot of adversity. He was named the head coach two weeks before the season opener against Milan. That left him very little time to get the players adjusted to his style of coaching and playbook.

Then the injuries started piling up with quarterback Ty Simpson being the biggest blow to the team as he suffered an injury to his throwing hand in the first game. The injuries never stopped for Pack and Panthers as they finished the season 3-6 with a first-round loss in the TMSAA play-offs.

Martin is no longer called the Panthers as the school has adopted the same mascot and name as the high school — the Chargers. This year looks to be a much better for the head coach as the returning players have had a full season and summer practice under his system.

Even more important is having Ryan Damron back as the quarterback for the Chargers. The eighth-grader got thrust into the starting role last season when Simpson got injured. Damron has gotten bigger, stronger and is now an experienced middle school quarterback.

It showed during the McKenzie Middle School Jamboree as he guided the Chargers to a 22-14 win over the host school.

“Ever since the season ended, he also plays basketball and baseball, he has been down here doing football activities,” Pack said about Damron. “He has asserted himself to be the leader, verbally and by example. He is always encouraging the guys, correcting things, and just doing what is right. I could not ask for a better situation heading into the season.”

It takes more than just having a good quarterback to win games. It takes a team effort, which the Chargers had in the jamboree. Martin had a balanced offensive game with several players contributing in the win.

The Chargers are expected to carry that over into the season. They have a pair of running backs in Quincy Hamilton and Will Gal-



limore.

Hamilton and Gallimore will carry most of the load in the run game, but opposing teams will also see Damron take off with the ball when he sees an open lane to run through.

Then there are the receivers,

who will not only be catching the passes from Damron but also running with the ball on various sweeps and other packages Pack has in his playbook. Pack will not hesitate to use Hayden Smith, Will Gallimore and Omarion Harris, along with some other receivers

as ball carriers.

“Right now I am very blessed to be in a great situation with guys who are going to carry the ball for us,” Pack said. “I have Quincy, Hayden, Omarion, Will, Drew Shanklin and Ryan will tote the ball for us. My biggest problem

right now is trying to figure out ways to get them all touches with the ball. They are all hard workers, talented, athletic and they are going to do some big things for us.”

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Martin Middle School 2018 Football Schedule

Aug. 14 Milan
Aug. 21 @Medina
Aug. 28 @Crockett Co.
Aug. 30 @Dresden
Sept. 6 Dyersburg
Sept. 13 Henry County
Sept. 20 Union City
Sept. 27 @Paris Inman

TMSAA playoff dates to be announced.

All game begin at 6:30

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