



8th straight conference title is goal for Dresden Middle School in 2018

Randy Cavin
Sports Editor

Dresden appears to be ready to defend its Reelfoot Conference title for the eighth straight year with an offense poised to be explosive.

The Lions were looking for an offense this time last year as it lost 90 percent of its production to the high school. Justin West had to replace his quarterback and running back, so he turned to Tatum Oliver to call the signals, throw and run with the ball.

It took time for Oliver to get adjusted to his new role as the starting quarterback and the Lions struggled the first three games before the adjustment was completed.

Oliver is ready to use last year's growing-up experience and lead the Lions to another conference championship.

"Last year was his first year to play quarterback after being the running back for us," West said. "He has grown and is now around 200 pounds. He is smart, strong, fast and just everything you want in a quarterback. He can throw the ball much better this year and he can obviously run with it. This year he looks like a totally differ-

ent kid than he was last season."

The Lions may need some big games from the quarterback as he is the only returning offensive starter. Dresden is loaded with eighth- and seventh-graders and that usually spells trouble for its opponents.

Dresden showed what it is capable of doing offensively at the McKenzie Jamboree. It scored twice in the first three downs it played.

In the backfield, alongside Oliver, most of the time will be eighth-grade running back DeAngelo Lambert and seventh-grader Tristen Jett.

"This will just be DeAngelo's second year playing football and he is much improved over last year," West said. "Tristen is quick with great balance and is a tough kid. We have two pretty good running backs.

Dresden is loaded with receivers as West can pick and choose whomever he feels is the best fit for any given situation and opponent. West is not shy about throwing the ball in his spread offense.

"We have Mace Wilson, who was a defensive starter for us last year and of course we play with four receivers every down,"

West said. "We have Raymond Johnson, who is a pretty good athlete. We will also have Will Bradberry and Amare Curtis on the field when we have the ball. We have several good receivers we can use and rotate."

The Lions have several players they can rotate on the offensive line. Expect to see eighth-graders Cayson Pittman, Brock Ellis, Jaydon Dolack, McConnell Forrester, Gabe Parnell, Hunter Hamilton, seventh-graders Jon Mark Melton, Austin Barnes, Milo Phlueger, Tanner Thomas, Isaac Butler, D'Sean Martin and Wylie Ogg rotating in out when the Lions have the ball.

West has the most returning starters on the defensive side of the ball with three coming back. Oliver, Lambert, and Wilson are his returning starters and will be the linebackers. The rest of the defense will be made of some who had playing time last year.

"Our linebacking corps will be strong, but we will be replacing everybody else," West said. "We will have to rely on the linebackers until, hopefully, the other kids figure out how to play. We have been fortunate the last few years with some players to win us seven straight conference titles.



DRESDEN MIDDLE — (First row from left): Abigail Farris, Autumn Brackett, Kennedy Smith, (second row) Anniston Perry, Ariel Tackett, Tilley Hopper, Alivia Workman, (third row) Avery Cogburn, Rebecca Frazier, Kyli Huguely, and Sophia Brackett. Not pictured: Izzy Burkett and Macy Gliderwell.

Hopefully, we can once again."

South Fulton was Dresden's biggest challenger its first two seasons in the conference. The Red Devils fell off somewhat last year and it ended up being Greenfield taking second place

and Gleason claiming third.

The conference has a new addition this year as Lake Road has joined the league. The Lions will see what Lake Road has to offer Thursday night to open the conference schedule.

Dresden Junior High 2016 Football Schedule

Aug. 9 @McKenzie

Aug. 16 Lake Road*

Aug. 23 @Henry County

Aug. 30 Martin

Sept. 6 @Huntingdon

Sept. 13 Greenfield*

Sept. 20 @Gleason*

Sept. 27 @South Futlon@

Denotes * Reelfoot Conference game

All games begin at 6:30 unless noted

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