

Falcons look ready to take over Region 7A

The Top Team...

1. Lake County FALCONS

If any team is poised to unseat Dresden from the top of Region 7A it is the Falcons. They have it all going for them as they were only one win away from the state title game. Lake County was beaten 7-0 by Cornersville in the semifinals. Anything less than a trip to Cookeville will be considered a disappointment by head coach Josh Puckett, who is entering his sixth year at Lake County. Puckett's team is loaded with 19 returning starters, including senior running back Dezmon Johnson, who many believe should have been a Mr. Football finalist in 2017. Johnson will a fully intact offensive line to run behind, while junior quarterback Tanner Snyder gives the Falcons an added passing threat.

The Rest...

2. Dresden LIONS

There have been a lot of changes at Dresden since it won the state title in 2016. That highly explosive offense had to be retooled last year and the Lions had to say goodbye to their best player from last year, Hudson Nanney, who graduated in May. See page 12 and 13 for a more detailed look at Dresden.

3. Greenfield Yellowjackets

It has been well over a decade and possibly two since the Yellowjackets were picked this high in the preseason. Head coach Don Pitt has a lot going for him this year with plenty of experienced players. A third place finish is a sound pick for Greenfield. See page 16 and 17 for a more detailed look at Greenfield's upcoming season.

4. West Carroll WAR EAGLES

The War Eagles are one team that could leap ahead of Greenfield and squeeze it down to the fourth seed. West Carroll finished 3-3 with a three-way tie in the district and was kept out of the playoffs in a Week 11 loss to Greenfield. Head coach Josh Wolfe is entering his fourth year and has reason to be optimistic about the upcoming season with 18 starters back (nine offense/nine defense). Senior quarterback Trace Fuller gives the War Eagles plenty of reason to be hopeful in 2018. Fuller (6-2, 180) will be joined in the backfield by junior running back Jeremah Bryant and senior tailback PJ Odom. That gives Wolfe plenty of options in the spread/single wing offense.

5. South Fulton RED DEVILS

The Red Devils only have 22 players on the roster and only six of them are returning starters with three on offense and three on defense. Head coach Eric Knott has a stud at running back with junior Greg Davis and a promising young quarter in sophomore Bryce McFarland. After that it gets a little iffy for the Red Devils. However, Knott still may have enough to keep the Red Devils playoff contenders this season.

6. Gleason BULLDOGS

It appears to be a recurring theme for head coach Noah Lampkins — low numbers and young players. Gleason only has two seniors and two juniors. The rest of the roster is made up of good, young talent, so there is hope, if not for this year, then the near future as the wins look like they will be coming soon. For more details on the upcoming season see pages 26 and 27.

6. Humboldt VIKINGS

The Vikings have the lon-

gest losing streak in Class A as it reached 11 games at the end of last season. It will continue, at least through the early part of the season. To make matters worse for the Vikings, they have had four head coaches within the last year. Anthony Ballard Sr. agreed to take over the most recent head coaching vacancy back in June.

Who To Watch...

- **Dezmon Johnson (Lake County, RB/FS, 5-7, 165, Sr.)**

Johnson probably should have been a Mr. Football Back finalist last year. He averaged over 160 yards per game, 10 yards per carry and scored close to 30 touchdowns. Coach Puckett is ready to turn Johnson loose and get him that Mr. Football finalist spot this year.

- **Nyrail Jackson (Greenfield, RB/DB, 5-7, 150, Sr.)**

Jackson is one of those running backs every head coach would like to have. He possesses the speed and the quickness to keep the chains moving and score anytime he touches the football. The only downside to Jackson is durability. He missed a few games last after taking some hard hits.

- **Greg Davis (RB/LB, 6-2, 240, Jr.)**

Davis is the size of a tank and just as hard to stop. Davis saw most of his playing time at linebacker last year, but this season he will also be the primary running back. The Red Devils will count on Davis to get them back in the playoffs.

- **Drake Yates (Dresden, QB/CB, 5-9, 165, Sr.)**

Yates has grown in height and weight, and he has also grown into a leadership role for head coach Levi Estes. The young man can do a lot of things with the football and the Lions will put more on his shoulders this year. The best position for Yates is at quarterback, where he can control the offensive tempo.

- **Dawson Arnold (Gleason, WB/DB, 6-0, 165 Jr.)**

Head coach Noah Lampkins wishes he had a team full of players like Arnold. The junior wingback has the mindset and skills to be a very special player for the Bulldogs these next two seasons.

- **Larry Tubbs (Lake County, RB/CB, 5-11, 185, Jr.)**



ONES TO WATCH

TOP — Lake County's Dezmon Johnson breaks to the outside against Westview in the preseason scrimmage. The Falcons have the potential to win the region this year with Johnson running the ball. Johnson will be one of the premier running backs in Class A this season and a contender for the Mr. Football award.

RIGHT — Dresden's Drake Yates hurdles over a Hillcrest player in the second round of the Class A playoffs. The Lions will need to have a big season from their senior leader if they want to continue their dominance in Region 7A. Yates could also be a contender for the Mr. Football award by the end of the season.




Tubbs will be groomed during the season to be Johnson's replacement next year. Tubbs will complement Johnson this year as he gives the Falcons the extra option in the backfield. Opposing teams will see a lot of John-

son and Tubbs in the backfield at the same time this season.

- **Armani Bonds (West Carroll, DT/NG, 5-8, 291, Jr.)**

Bonds has gotten bigger and stronger since last season. The senior defensive lineman added

a good 30 pounds to his frame, and most of the added weight is in muscle mass. It will take a sizeable offensive lineman or even a double-team to block him and keep the big nose-guard in check.



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