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Thursday, August 29, 2019

GREENE COUNTY

GCHS looking to become consistent contender in King’s third season



Greene County High School head football coach Mike King is shown (Center) talking over play selection with veteran assistant coach Rotch Dungan and senior quarterback Jacob Mitchell early in the Wildcats’ season opener at Biloxi. The Cats lost the battle with the Indians, but coaches feel the matchup with the 6A school will pay dividends in October when region play gets underway and the teams battles for the top spot in Region 7-4A.

Big offseason is giving Cats lots of confidence as season gets underway

By RUSSELL TURNER  
Herald Staff  
The Greene County High School Wildcats have put together two solid seasons under the guidance of Head Coach Mike King and his coaching staff. That has expectations pretty high as the Wildcats get the 2019 campaign underway. The Wildcats are 20-6 over the past two seasons with back-to-back second place finishes in Region 7-4A and two trips into the the Mississippi High School

Activities Association State Playoffs. But, with a host of returning starters and some solid young players coming into their own, GCHS would like to compete for a championship and push a little deeper into the playoffs, if not all the way to the title game.

“Poplarville has been the team to beat the past several years and we are working to close that gap and compete for a region championship,” King said. “But, we try to keep our focus on what we have immediately in front of us.” “We have longterm goals,

but we talk to our guys more about taking things one day at a time, one game at a time. The most important game for us always is the next game.” King and his coaches came out of the spring feeling good about things and

entered fall camp with a lot of momentum. However, off-the-field issues took a bit of that spark as a student who transferred into the school district last spring was deemed ineligible by the MHSAA. The state’s ruling body for varsity athletics had originally ruled the student-athlete eligible, but just a couple of weeks before the start of the season, notified the school that a complaint had been filed by another school and that a subsequent review had deemed him ineligible. King and school officials said they weren’t happy with the ruling, but were bound by the MHSAA officials’ decision. “It is really disappointing, but at this point we have to rally the troops and move on,” Coach King said earlier this month. “It has definitely been a distraction and an emotional situation for our coaches and players.” Losing the highly-touted prospect complicated King’s efforts to replace the group of talented players that were lost to graduation in May. That group included nine starters and five

players who went on to pursue collegiate playing careers at three different state junior colleges. Replacing that type of production is tough any season, but having a major piece of that effort taken away at the 11th hour didn’t help. But, that’s part of the deal that comes with being a high school coach, and King and his staff had no choice but to circle the wagons and make the best of a bad situation. Thankfully, positive momentum from back-to-back winning seasons has created a lot of good vibes around the GCHS field house. Participation remains on the rise with the Wildcats dressing out over 90 players this season. And, off-season workouts went about as good as King and his assistant coaches could have hoped. “We have almost 90 kids that came out this year in grades 9-12 and we are really excited about that,” King said. “And our summer par-

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GCHS has a host of returning seniors on this year’s roster. Linebacker Ladon Woullard (No. 30) is shown taking a leadership role on the sideline at Biloxi.



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