



Offense

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our final game when weather was a factor and prevented us from being effective in the passing game.”

“So, we went into the off-season committed to trying to establish a stronger running game. We expect Jacob to be a big part of that as the season progresses, particularly in shorter yardage situations.”

So far, Mitchell has been strong in both areas. He missed a few opportunities in the passing game during the Vancleave scrimmage and in the season opener against Biloxi, but he also had some really nice throws along the way. He tossed a TD in two quarters against the Bulldogs and ran for another. Versus Biloxi, Mitchell was 16-of-21 for 158 yards and a touchdown. He also looked strong running the football on five attempts and while avoiding pressure in the pocket.

But, while Mitchell will be expected to contribute to the Cats’ running game, he won’t get the lion’s share of the carries in King’s offense. That will be spread out among a talented, but mostly untested group of running backs and slot receivers.

Senior Anthony Calhoun will get the starting nod alongside Mitchell in the backfield. The 5-7, 175-pound tailback saw time as a running back as a sophomore, but spent last season in the Wildcats’ defensive secondary. So far, King is happy with what he has seen from Calhoun as he has been making the transition to the offense.

“Anthony fits what we are looking for in a running back,” King said. “He has the ability to run inside the tackles and outside. And, he catches the ball well and is a good option for us out of the backfield in the passing game.”

Calhoun appears to be getting more comfortable with each snap and will hopefully continue to progress as the season moves toward region play. He got a big boost in the opening scrimmage with a 65-yard TD run, but had a little tougher sledding against a talented 6A

Biloxi squad last Friday. Still, there were plenty of bright spots for Calhoun in that loss and plenty of reason for the Wildcat faithful to be excited about having No. 2 in the backfield this season.

Another option for the Cats is tailback Dallarus Cooper. The sophomore’s height and weight are not listed on the roster, but it is a fair bet he is going to be the smallest player on the field most of the time he is out there. But Cooper, whose nickname is ‘squirt’, doesn’t let that bother him and runs hard with a lot of moxie when his number is called. He saw limited action as a freshman, earning some tough yardage and a lot of respect from teammates and GCHS fans. He will see expanded opportunities this season and gave a glimpse of his ability with a nice 25-yard TD run against Vancleave.

Other players expected to play big roles in the running game are senior Peyton Roberts, sophomore Cameron Dunnam and true freshman K.J. Miller. Roberts had a breakout season as a receiver during his junior season, accounting for 312 yards and a TD. He has a knack for making would-be tacklers miss and has put that on display this year, following up a nice catch-and-run for a TD against Vancleave with a 24-yard TD run against Biloxi in season the opener.

“Peyton is like the ultimate utility type player with all he brings to the table for our team,” King said. “How intelligent he is and his ability to run the football, catch the ball and make plays in the kick return game make him unique and a big part of what we do.”

“Plus, he is really a good team guy that lets his play speak for him. He is not a big talker and is just this cool competitor that is very steady.”

“Freshman K.J. Miller has been a nice surprise as well. We are really excited about his ability as a playmaker. Even as a freshman he has shown he can be a guy that can produce

explosive plays for us.”

Miller has shown glimpses of explosiveness in his first two games and it appears to be just a matter of time before the youngster breaks a big play for the Cats. Dunnam, on the other hand, isn’t as flashy, but has made quite an impression on the coaching staff in working his way into a starting role as an H-back in King’s system.

Dunnam has so far looked good as a blocker, a physical rusher and a receiver both in and out of the backfield. He had a huge catch against Biloxi, hauling in a pass from Mitchell across the middle and bullying his way into the end-zone for his first career TD.

“Cameron has been a really nice surprise,” King said. “He has worked extremely hard and has really come along for us.”

“We are hoping for big things from him. And, when you look at how he and K.J. played against Biloxi, that’s pretty exciting. They were a little wide-eyed at times as two guys that have never played a varsity snap and to get that type of production out of them is huge.”

Of course, senior Drake Henderson will be expected to be a big producer this year as well. Henderson, at 6-3 and 180-pounds showed last season that he can be a matchup problem for opposing offenses. He led the team with 762 yards receiving a year and was second in catches (58) and touchdowns (5). Henderson can stretch the field for deep passes, catch the ball in traffic and draws a lot of praise for his commitment to blocking downfield.

He played sparingly in the Vancleave scrimmage, but looked true-to-form against Biloxi, catching nine passes for 115 yards and providing good downfield blocking.

“Drake is our big play guy in the passing game,” King said. “He is a deep threat that breaks the first tackle a lot and can make some explosive plays.”

“But, I think I am most proud of his willingness to be physical and block on the edges and downfield. That’s



Photo by Randy Whitley / Herald Contributor

Greene County senior Peyton Roberts is the closest thing you will find to a utility player in football. Roberts not only plays receiver and running back for the Wildcats, but also returns punts and kicks for the team. Coaches love his running game and his ability to make big plays in the passing game. He is shown here fighting his way in for a TD against Vancleave.

unselfish play and is contagious when the younger guys see him working so hard at that part of the game.”

Sophomore Conner West will see snaps at quarterback this season behind Mitchell. Coaches like his size, at 6-4, and say he really came on strong over the offseason, improving his arm strength as well as his overall understanding of the offense.

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Photo by Shelley Eubanks - Herald Contributor

Greene County sophomore Cameron Dunnam impressed coaches during the offseason and earned a starting spot at H-back. He made the coaching staff look good in his first varsity game with several big plays, including a 24-yard TD reception. Dunnam is shown here running past Biloxi’s leading tackler for the score.

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