

# FRUITDALE

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# Hill’s goal: Get even better

*QB wants to stay in pocket longer and spread around passes in new offense*



Fruitdale quarterback Dalon Hill

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This could be a make or break year for Fruitdale junior quarterback Dalon Hill, without a doubt the Pirates’ most electric player as he proved scrambling out of the pocket for almost 800 yards last season.

Any improvement at the position this time around though might just get a few college scouts to exit Highway 45 and head toward this tiny western Washington County community on Friday nights.

His goals for the year?

“I just want to have a better overall season,” said the soft-spoken Hill, who also plays basketball and baseball, and with a 3.8 GPA is tantalizingly close to that 4.0 average he wants to achieve.

He finished with just 438 yards passing last season, but ran for another 739 yards and eight touchdowns.

This time, though, he wants to slow his roll and give receivers time to find open spots in first-year head coach Johnny Carpenter’s spread offense.

“I want to pass the ball more accurately this year,” said Hill, acknowledging he might have taken off a little too soon at times last season. “I’m a smart guy, but my goal is to be more calm and collected in the pocket this year.”

Carpenter said he thinks Hill will get a chance to play college ball, which Hill said he desperately wants.

“When I got here I was wondering if there were any next level guys, but I can honestly say Dalon is one,” said Carpenter.

Hill is all for it.

“I’d love the opportunity to play college ball,” he said, with a little extra volume in his usually calm voice.

As a sophomore, Hill was a bright light in an otherwise dismal 1-9 Pirates season. After a rousing 40-12 opening night win over A.L. Johnson, Fruitdale dropped its next nine games.

But Wanda and Patrick Hill’s son showed surprising maturity in keeping his wits about him when chaos was swirling all around.

Now, he’s out to be an even better player, a more vocal voice of reason for his team and maintain intensity whether on or off the field.

“I want to become more of a leader,” he said. “I’m very outspoken on the field and always try to get my guys to do the right things. But I turn it off when I come to the sidelines. I’ve got to stay focused.”

Hill says the entire Pirates team has one goal.

“We want to take the county by storm and make our fans proud of us, and I’m willing to do whatever it takes to win.”

And his biggest motivation?

“My parents always encourage me to do the right thing and that’s what I try to do,” he said. “The team has a saying, too, ‘Pay now, play later’

“Do you know what that means?” he questioned the questioner. “It means to put in the hard work during the offseason and make it pay off when the season starts. I want to try and make everybody around me better,” said Hill. “But, as a team, we want to take the county by storm this year.”



Dalon Hill hands off to a Fruitdale running back as the Pirates held a practice session recently on the high school campus.