

CITRONELLE



The 2019 Citronelle High School Wildcats

Citronelle photos by William Gray/Call News

Wildcats ready for challenge

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Jason Barnett knows there are a lot of things that have to fall into place for his Citronelle Wildcats this season if they are to be successful and reach their goal of qualifying for the Class 5A state playoffs and hopefully making a solid run there.

He's got an untested sophomore starting a quarterback, he has to replace both starting tackles on the offensive line, some players must be found to fill slots on the defensive front, the running back will be replacing a 1,000-yard producer from a year ago and there's a challenging schedule ahead.

But Barnett, in his second year as head

coach of the Wildcats, the first without the interim tag attached to the title, sees the glass half full, and he said he sees — if all things fall into place — good things ahead for the Wildcats, who finished 6-5 last year, including a first-round loss in the playoffs and a four-game win streak to start the season.

"I think this is a team that's going to find itself," Barnett said. "It's going to be a team that will be markedly different from Week 1 to Week 10. I think there are so many young guys — they may be seniors but they haven't played a lot of football on Fridays — so they are only going to get better in my opinion. If we can stay injury free, we're going to be what we are by Week 1,

but by Week 10 we can be really, really good. If we control the forces that are within our control, we'll be OK.

"The offense is going to have to lean on the defense at this point and let those guys on the offense get better every week. They have a little bit more of a learning curve than what the defense does. But I can't wait to see how the offense progresses and how the defense progresses as well and how good they are at the end of the year."

The season start Friday Aug. 23 at home against Class 2A Washington County.

"I think what I want to see, my goal as the head coach, is for us to grow and get better every week," Barnett said. "I think that's every coach's thing. If you do that

you're going to be successful. Whether we have or not, who knows, but I think we have a great opportunity to be successful.

"We've got to have a few guys step up who haven't had to do that in the past. These are guys that we have kind of been grooming and bringing them along slow since they were ninth and tenth graders and now it's time for them to play a major role on Fridays. They're not just special teams guys or whatever now, they've got to step up and do some things playing 50 plays a game. If that happens, I think we have an opportunity to be pretty good by the time we get to Week 10."

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