

LEROY

Bears blessed with standouts

Quarterback Kade Moseley and runner Kelston Fikes are just two of the stars

BY WILLIE GRAY
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After advancing to the third round of the Class 2A Alabama High School Athletic Association football playoffs in 2018, Leroy head coach Jason Massey says he feels good about building on the foundation created by last season's team.

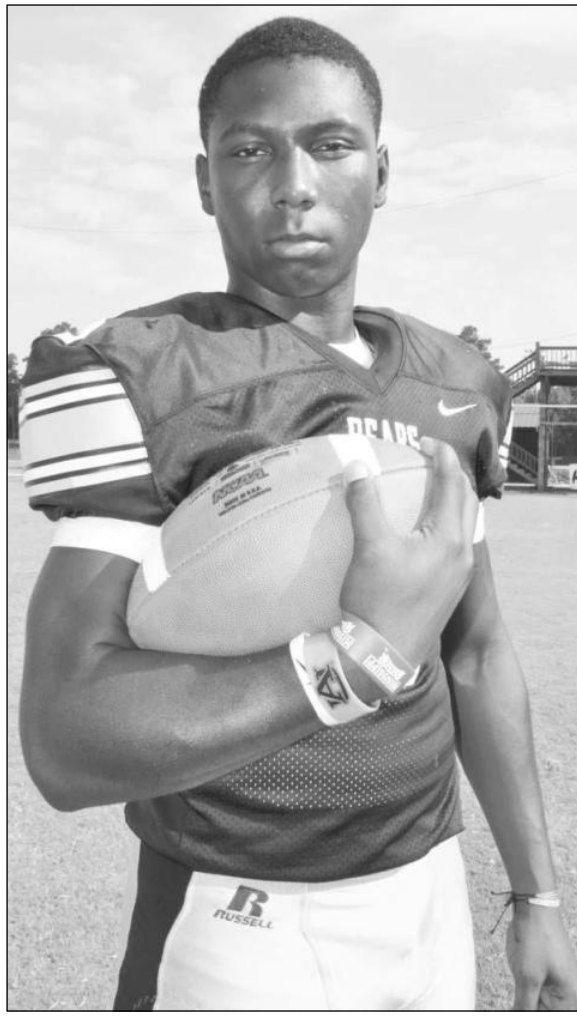
"I really like what I have seen in our guys during the offseason. We have a lot of talent coming back with our starters and we have a number of guys who might not have started last season but saw a lot of playing time and they are now moving up," Massey said. "We still have a lot of things to get worked out, but I like what I see in our players and coaching staff."

Offensively, Massey will have Kade Moseley under center for the Bears. Moseley, a senior this year, comes in at 5-foot-10, 175 pounds. After starting as a defensive back for the Bears the past two seasons and the backup quarterback, Moseley got the nod from Massey in spring training.

"Kade is a good fit for us at quarterback. He played safety for us last year and was good there too, but having him controlling the offense on the field is going to help us this season," Massey said. "He understands what I want and he is a leader on the field and one of our key players this season."

Moseley will be in charge of running an offense that seems to have the ability to steer an offensive attack through the air or on the ground.

"We will be pretty balanced on offense and in the region that we are competing in we have to be able to attack wherever and however we need to in order to put points on the board. Kade has an understanding of being able to read the defenses and gives us an added weapon on the field," Massey said. "We will take



Quarterback Kade Moseley, running back Kelston Fikes and kicker Trey Sullivan are among the leaders for the Leroy Bears this fall.

what the defenses gives us and base our plays around that. But we feel good about both the running game and the passing."

The two main running backs for the Bears will be junior Kelston Fikes (5-11, 190) and senior Hunter Weaver (5-9, 190). Both are players Massey says he is excited to see carry the ball this season.

"Both of these guys had good seasons for us last year and I think they will be as good or better than they were last year. They both have good speed, carry the ball well, they run hard and they both have good hands and can catch the ball coming out of the backfield," Massey said.

In the passing game, Massey has stacked a full slate of players who he said are playmakers on the field. All ranging in height from

6-0 to 6-3 are Leroy wide receivers Dustin Vice, Caleb Moore, Solomon Foster, Jakobi Jackson and Xavier Jones.

"All these guys can go up and get the ball. This will be the first season Caleb Moore has been with us. He has been on the basketball team and decided to come play football and he is going to help us for sure, but overall I like all these guys and a few younger ones who we have. Given their ability to catch and Kade's skills at quarterback, I feel good about our passing game too," Massey said.

Opening holes for the running backs and protecting Moseley against the pass rush will be a group of linemen that many larger schools would like to have on their roster. Massey said his offensive line will average 260 pounds and is made

up of a variety of players who have equal abilities and skills for getting the job done in the trenches.

Defensively, Massey said he had to fill in some gaps left from starters having graduated last year but overall he feels confident about those who will be called on to stop their opponents. Although the Bears' defense will be based out of a 4-3 set, Massey said his players will allow him to change when needed.

"These are some really good kids that we have and because they play hard and understand the game we will be able to go out and use multiple sets, depending on what we see the offense doing, because they understand what we are doing," Massey said.

One of the anchors on the defensive side of the ball for the Bears will be

senior lineman Corey Worthy (5-11, 200). Others who will be counted on include linebackers Braeden Collins (5-8, 190) and JW Langley, a 6-1, 220-pound senior.

"Corey will get after somebody. He has good speed and is strong. We think he will be good for us this year," Massey said. "Both Braeden and JW played almost every snap for us last season. They are athletes and the kind of guys you want on the field for you all the time."

With Moseley moving to quarterback, the only returning starter in the Leroy secondary will be Jakobi Jackson, who Massey says will make an impact and will serve as a leader for the younger players who are stepping in to fill slots on the defense.

While Massey is excited about his players on offense

and defense, he has also shown equal enthusiasm about his special teams.

The Bears will have one of the special weapons returning in senior Trey Sullivan, who handles all kicking duties for the Bears. Having Sullivan's ability on the field is something Massey says might make the difference in some of the more competitive games his team will have this season.

"Trey does all our kicking and is good at all of it because he enjoys it. His punting can easily flip the field for us and his field-goal kicking will make it easier for me to make a fourth-down decision," Massey said.

The Bears will have their first official game of the season at home on Friday, Aug. 30, when they host the Class 5A Citronelle Wildcats.

BEARS: Coach warns that Leroy faces a difficult schedule from top to bottom

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the Bears Friday, Aug. 30 when they host the Class 5A Citronelle Wildcats. Last season, the Wildcats were able to defeat the Bears in Citronelle by a final of 34-7. The two teams have met 32 times since their first game in 1926 and they are evenly split at 16 wins each. The Bears last defeated the Wildcats in 2017 when they won at home by a final of 28-6.

R.C. Hatch will be the first Class 2A, Region 1 game for the Bears. The two teams take the field Sept. 6. Last year the game became a shootout and ended with the Bears claiming a 47-40 victory.

Sept. 13 puts the Bears on the road again to travel to Silas and take on the Southern Choctaw Indians, a team that has created a regional rivalry with the Bears. Last year, Leroy won the match 14-12. Although the Indians hold the edge in the series with 29 wins and Leroy with 27, the Bears have not lost to Southern Choctaw since 2016.

Week 4 pits the Bears against their intercounty rival, the Washington County Bulldogs, in a regional game. The Bears defeated the Bulldogs 35-20 last season to mark three straight years Leroy has defeated the Bulldogs.

At the midseason mark of the schedule, the Bears will return to non-region

matchups when they travel to Thomasville to face the Tigers, who defeated Leroy 35-13 in 2018.

The second round of regional competition has the Bears hosting Chickasaw on Oct. 4. This will be only the fourth time the two teams have competed on the football field. Last year Leroy defeated Chickasaw 35-7.

One week later the Bears will face Cottage Hill, which won the region last year by

going undefeated, including a 35-9 victory over Leroy.

Week 8 has the Bears hosting their last regular-season home game when they take on J.U. Blacksher. Last year the Bears won the matchup 27-14.

The final two weeks of the season have the Bears matched up with Choctaw County in Week 9 for their final regional game of the year before closing with in-county rival Millry on

Nov. 1.

"As I have said, we don't have an easy game on our schedule and these two games at the end of the schedule are as big as any that we have," Massey said. "Choctaw County has new

coaches up there and from what we have been told they have encouraged a lot more students to play.

"We close with Millry and that being one of our county schools and the fact that Coach (Greg) Crager

has them playing some good football will mean we will have to play just as hard against them in order to get the win."

In 2018 Leroy defeated Choctaw County 41-8 and Millry 45-28.




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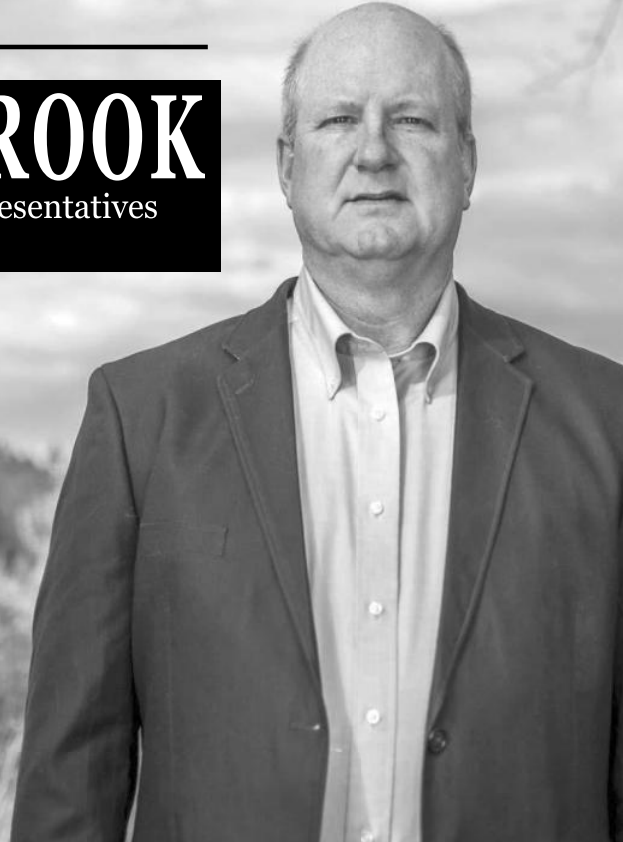
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