

CITRONELLE



Here is the Citronelle High School football coaching staff for 2019. From left are Joey Quimby, Marlon Johnston, Tristan Patrick, CJ Herring, head coach Jason Barnett, Jason Morgan, Derek Darnell, Waylon Rowell, J.D. Phillips and Jeff Pippin.

Barnett on coaches: 'Great situation'

He doesn't want yes men, and assistants have complied by offering lots of opinions

BY TOMMY HICKS
tommyhicks@thecallnews.com

The changes from last year's Citronelle football team to the one that will take the field this season isn't just on the players' roster. There have been a lot of changes on the Wildcats' coaching staff as well, and that will be noticeable for Wildcats' fans throughout the season.

It starts with head coach Jason Barnett, who directs the program this season without an interim tag associated with his title. But it is more obvious just in terms of numbers. The Citronelle coaching staff is bigger this season and, Barnett said, the change has produced good results during spring and fall drills.

"So far it's been very positive," Barnett said. "We have a staff meeting every day and we sit down and talk about what are you seeing versus what I'm seeing, your eyes versus my eyes. The thing about it is, I don't want a whole bunch of yes men. I want them to have their ideas and I'm certainly open to listening to anything somebody says. I don't want a room full of crickets when I'm talking."

"So far it has been a great situation. These guys have offered their opinions and their suggestions — some I've taken and some I haven't. But I'm definitely open to it and they understand that. To this point it's been very good. I told some folks this has been the best first week of practice in terms of organization and things like that."

"It all has to do with those guys. They get out there and bust their tails with their drills and they know what we're supposed to do and when we're supposed to do it. These guys have really bought in. Coaching staffs can be different; there's a lot of testosterone in those rooms. But if the kids see you buy in they're going to buy in."

The staff changes and additions have allowed Barnett to have a sort of CEO role instead of also having the responsibility of being a position coach along with his head coaching duties.

"I'm actually able to look around and see everything (at practice)," he said. "I was going to coach outside linebackers, but I have been able to watch and walk around at practice and throw my two cents worth in every now and then."

Here is a quick look at the Citronelle staff, via Barnett:

CJ Herring, offensive coordinator and O line coach: He's been with us now, well, he's been here the whole time I've been here and he took the job as the OC. He does a great job. Last year's staff I felt was kind of heav-

ily on the defensive side. We pressed the defense more because that's just what I do and I had more influence coaching staff-wise and that's how it just kind of shook out. It was such a late deal (Barnett taking over). We made some changes through the summer and through the year and I think we've got more of a balanced staff.

Jason Morgan, defensive coordinator and secondary coach: He did a great job in his first year. I don't see where that is going to change at all. I think he's going to do a great job again this year for us.

Derrick Darnell, running backs. He does a great job with them. He's still learning the game of football. He doesn't have a lot of football experience but he got better as the year went on (last year) and I can see that continuing to grow as we've gone along.

Joey Quimby: He's a guy that I actually grew up with; he's several years younger than me but I have known him all his life and his parents were some of my middle school teachers who worked with my mom, so I've known him forever. I had the opportunity to bring him in. It was a situation where I didn't know it was going to happen until he walked in the door for his interview last year. This is his second year with us. He kind of does a little bit of everything. He does our film work for us and on practice days if another coach needs some help he just kind of goes with him and helps with those guys. He's been a great addition for us.

J.D. Phillips, defensive line: He's going to be our head baseball coach and he's going to do our defensive line for us. J.D. was the defensive coordinator at Jackson Academy prior to coming here. So he's got some knowledge as far as how the game works and he has a pretty good amount of coaching experience from that side of things and calling defensive signals on Fridays and I think that's going to help us out in the long run. He can help coach Morgan as well.

Waylon Rowell: He is a kid I coached when I was at Monroe County High School 100 years ago and he's going to come in and coach our linebackers for us. He's one of those guys who doesn't have a whole lot of football knowledge as far as coaching — he didn't play football in high school — but he was always around us and the game. He just graduated from West Alabama and he wants to learn. That's all we can ask for. Hopefully with the coaches we have around him they can bring him around a little slower and get him up to speed as well.

Marlon Johnston: Marlon is from McIntosh and went to McIntosh. He's been out of state, out in Oklahoma,

and he has family here in the area. He's been coaching out there in Oklahoma probably the last 20 years, I guess. He was ready to retire from out there. He had actually talked to him a couple of years ago but he had a daughter who was still in high school and she just graduated. It was kind of like the perfect storm. He's going to coach the wide receivers for us. And again, you can't take away 20 years of coaching experience. You take somebody like him and he's going to make sure those kids are doing everything that they should be doing every time. He's someone who knows how to coach, and that's going to be huge for us.

Jeff Pippin, freshman head coach: He is running the freshman only football program. He asked to come in and help with the freshman group and I made him the head coach of the freshmen team. They are going to have their own schedule and everything. They are separate from us. I'm real excited about that. This has been something that we've wanted and needed for years.

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