

MOBILE CHRISTIAN

Mecsko: Leopards motivated to win it all this time

BY MARK R. KENT
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MOBILE — When a player as highly-regarded as Eric Poellnitz leaves high school to play in college it can easily leave a large empty space in the lineup of the high school he just departed.

That is not how Trey Mecsko looks at it. To him, it is an opportunity, something to wrap hands around and something to run with.

“Eric is a great player, but you could say that it could open up more,” he said.

When asked if the sudden end to last season serves as a motivator for this year’s Leopards, Mecsko said, “The past is past, but we obviously remember. Still, we don’t try to focus too much on it, but it definitely is a little bit of motivation this year.”

Mecsko said he is comfortable with the current Mobile Christian quarterbacking crew. “We’ve been working a lot in the offseason, just working, getting the timing down,” Mecsko said.

Head coach Ronnie Cottrell spoke well of Mecsko’s past roles for the Leopards, and what he means to the current lot.

“Trey has been a wide receiver who played a lot as a 10th grader, started every game last year, and had also had to play some defensive back,” Cottrell said.

Mecsko said as a senior he knows leadership qualities will be important to making this year’s team a success. “Leadership will be a really big key, being unselfish, putting things together and playing as a team,” he said.

Mecsko is aware of the value of a good running back that will keep defenses honest against wide receivers. In Nick



Mobile Christian receiver Trey Mecsko

Ellis, Mecsko and his teammates have the ideal counter-weapon. “Nick is a very outstanding player and on the field he’s very quick and shift. He can cut through the smallest holes. And off the field, he’s a great person as well,” Mecsko said.

While Mecsko said he has not yet decided on where he will go with his education after graduating from Mobile Christian, he did say he already has in the bag something that will help make happen whatever future he sees for himself — a good set of college board scores.

McPhillips is leader of Leopard blockers

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MOBILE — Nick McPhillips is a mainstay in the one part of Mobile Christian’s football team that his head coach has the most confidence in — the offensive line.

A senior, McPhillips is described by head coach Ronnie Cottrell as “the leader of that offensive line,” but in addition, he is a “great student” with Ivy League offers on the table.

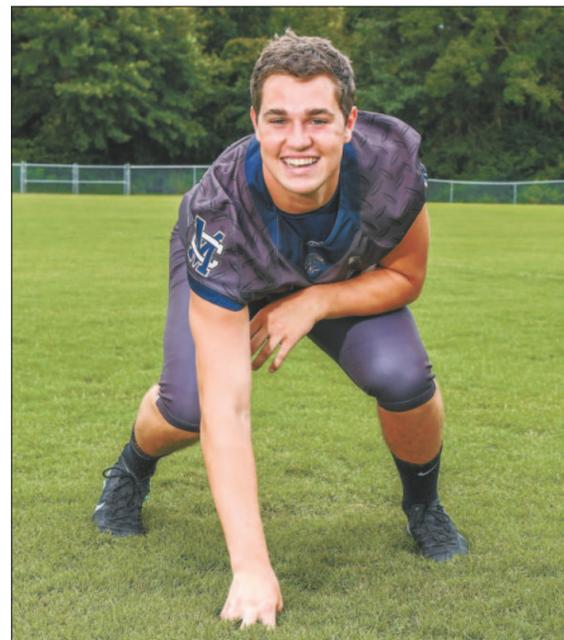
“I feel like the offensive line is going to be very good this year,” McPhillips said. “We do have some people who are coming up, and they’re going to have to learn the plays. We’re going to have to be physical. But I feel that once we learn the plays, we’re going to be really good.”

McPhillips said the team being physical will open the door to opportunities that it did not have in the past. “We’ve been physical in the past, but I feel like this year we have a lot of opportunity for this team to be way better than it was.”

One change McPhillips said Mobile Christian fans should look for is this team will run the ball more, with the maturity of starting running back Nick Ellis leading the way.

But don’t overlook the passing game. “Our pass blocking has improved a lot and we’ve worked very hard learning the plays, so I think we’re going to be very good up front this year.”

Increasing the physical



Mobile Christian offensive lineman Nick McPhillips

side of a team doesn’t happen by itself, and McPhillips said “in practice we’ll be doing drills, very competitive drills, trying to be as competitive as we can, having that mindset that we’ve got to win it pretty much.”

The manner in which the 2018 season ended has been a major force in getting this year’s team motivated, McPhillips said. “I feel like we did let one slip away and I feel the team is motivated. That loss, we don’t want to feel that pain anymore. That pain is lighting a fire under us.”

As a senior leader, McPhillips said he knows

the importance of teaching the newer players and getting them used to being part of a unit. “I’ve been inviting them out to eat, and I’ve been trying to create a unity that will stay together and bond to help us be brothers.”

As for life after high school, McPhillips said he feels as if he’s got a good set of choices in front of him. He said he wants to apply to the U.S. Naval Academy, but he also has offers from Rhodes and Sewanee.

If the academy doesn’t come his way, he said, he hopes to double-major in forestry and business.



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