

# UMS-WRIGHT



The 2019 UMS-Wright Bulldogs

UMS-Wright photos by John O'Dell/Call News

# Another Bulldogs' title?

*Defending champ UMS has stars back, but quarterback leader sought*

BY DARRON PATTERSON  
Sports Correspondent

Most people probably think Terry Curtis casually saunters over to a bookcase in his trophy room before the season, pulls out a blueprint of championship UMS-Wright teams from days gone by, then applies what they did to his latest squad.

Presto! Poof! Another winning team!

After all, going into his 22nd season at the Bulldogs' helm, Curtis has seven state championships to his credit and an overall record of 303-85 that ranks third among active coaches in Alabama, behind only Vestavia Hills' Buddy Anderson (335-150) and Houston Academy's Jamie Riggs (312-85).

So, does he ever try to resurrect something from one team and use with another? "Every team is different," he said, in his trademark gruff Southern drawl. "Sometimes you do see some similarities from teams past, but for the most part, they're all different."

And what about this edition of the Bulldogs? Are they locked and loaded to again run through Class 4A, Region 1 and repeat as state champs?

"We don't have a person who has kind of been groomed to take over at quarterback, and that position is always key," said Curtis. "But we've got three kids who are vying for the position."

Juniors Nick Sellers (6-foot-0, 185 pounds) and Trey Singleton (5-11, 185) will get a push from sophomore Barton Elliott (6-0, 160) to be the starter when the Bulldogs open the season by hosting rival St. Paul's on Aug. 23 in one of the earliest "Battle of Old Shell Road" games on record.

Will he prepare any differently knowing that one of his team's biggest games of the year will be the first one?

"I'm sure they know who they're playing."

Curtis went 31-15 in four years at Shaw and 46-21 in six seasons at Murphy, before settling in for the last 21 seasons at UMS-Wright and amassing a gaudy 226-49 record. He has lost only 11 region games during that span.

The good news this year is that mercurial senior running back Symon Smith (5-5, 150) is back, as is junior wide receiver Edwin White (6-0, 185), along with senior receivers Richard Brinson (6-0, 170) and Keyshawn Woodyard (6-2, 190), who scored



**These Bulldogs** are vying to be the starting quarterback, from left: Nick Sellers, Trey Singleton and Barton Elliott.

graduated and the Bulldogs are still looking for a tight end, center and two tackles to replenish a depleted offensive line.

"Sometimes things change going into fall practice," said Curtis. "And we're hoping some of the guys will step up and take control of some of these position battles."

He said he's hoping the winning culture that's been built at the school will help new players step up.

"These guys have watched players who've come before them and they know what it will take to continue the tradition," he said. "We (coaches) like to think we know what it takes to get them to understand the importance of preparing themselves to play — the lifting, conditioning and mental work."

Defensively, they don't need to replace nearly as many lost starters because the entire defensive front is back, but senior Will Breland (6-2, 210) is the only starting linebacker returning, while White will also come over from the offense to return as the team's lone starting corner.

"These things usually have a way of working themselves out," said Curtis of the work ahead to find guys to fill holes. "At least that's what we're hoping for."

# Keyshawn Woodyard just wants to be best

BY DARRON PATTERSON  
Sports Correspondent

Aside from helping his team threepeat as Class 4A state champs, Keyshawn Woodyard has just one other thing he'd like to accomplish in his last season at UMS-Wright.

"I want to set goals to be the best receiver that was ever here, and I want to set receiving goals that haven't been set yet," he said.

Well, alrighty then.

Is every defensive back on the Bulldogs' schedule listening? At 6-foot-2 and 190 pounds, with baskets for hands and utter determination, Woodyard is on the radar of dozens of Division 1 programs.

He was the Most Valuable Player in last year's title game, snagging four touchdown passes (three before halftime) as the Bulldogs forged a 31-0 lead en route to a 52-0 demolition of Deshler. He finished with nine catches for 128 yards and that quartet of scores, but had another TD called back by a penalty.

He said he felt unstoppable.

"I came to the sidelines and told the coaches to just keep getting me the ball," he said.

As a sophomore, Woodyard caught 47 passes for 554 yards and six touchdowns, then followed that up last year with 43 catches for 659 yards (a 15.3 yards-per-catch average) and 12 scores.

He's back with a vengeance for his senior farewell tour in Region 1, and you can bet No. 9 will figure heavily into each week's gameplan.

"I want to have 1,000 yards receiving ... that's just a personal goal of mine. I want to have more touchdowns than I had last year," he said.

Woodyard gets himself ready to play by checking out the moves of some of the game's best wide receivers.

"I usually watch video of (Atlanta's) Julio Jones on my laptop, and (Houston Texans) Andre Hopkins highlights and I picture myself

in that moment," he said. "And before I go out to play I think about all the videos I've watched and what my dad tells me, to go out there and play."

The fact that his father and the rest of the Woodyard clan are in his corner also plays a big role in his success.

"They give me a lot of motivation. I'll be the first in the family to go play college football," he said. "They're really proud of me and what I've done, but I still try not to get complacent because I want to do so much more. I want to set records and be the best I can be."

"They let me know every day that they love what I'm doing, but also let me know that if I didn't play football they'd still be proud of me."



UMS-Wright's standout wide receiver Keyshawn Woodyard

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