

CHICKASAW

New uniforms, high hopes

Chieftains’ Quintarious Dade, other leaders feel they have ‘a point to prove this year’



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— Quintarious Dade

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One of the first things Chickasaw High football fans will notice about this year’s team are the new uniforms. The home uniforms are grey with red trim, and wide receiver Quintarious Dade came up with the concept. “Actually, the team did,” he said. “I thought of the colors, but the team did (come up with the concept) and we spoke up.”

The uniforms are eye-catching, and Dade, defensive tackle Jason Williams and linebacker-running back Zaqorean McDole hope the new look, along with increased numbers and a disappointing 63-28 loss to Highland Home in the first round of the 2018 Class 2A playoffs, will serve as motivation for the Chieftains to go deeper in the playoffs this season.

“One of our expectations is to host our own playoff (game), making a big run in the playoffs and getting to the championship,” said Williams, who has attended Chickasaw his entire high school career.

“Most of these guys are going to play both ways,” said head coach Jason Rowell, entering his second season with the Chieftains. “They’re going to play a big role for us this year.”

McDole, who will play some running back in addition to linebacker, echoed Williams’ thoughts on improving on last year’s 5-6 record and what the team is expecting for 2019 and added the team could have easily gone deeper into the playoffs if it had remained focused during practice.

“I think we were close, but not as close as we expected to be,” he said. “If we would have stopped playing (around) during practice and took it more seriously, I think we would have had a chance to make a playoff run.”

Williams said he and his teammates remember the playoff loss to Highland Home and there are reminders about not only that game, but doing things to have a better outcome in the playoff rounds this season.

“We talk about it a lot by working hard, serving God and practicing really good in the weight room a lot,” he said. “Our defense is looking good now. We’re ready for that first game.”

As for offense, particularly in the passing game, Dade said by working with projected starting quarterback Tobias Robinson, it will be much stronger.

“He (Robinson) throws a hard ball,” Dade said. “I’ve been working out with him and I finally caught on (to how he throws it).”

With the loss of AJ Phillips to graduation, the temptation for some is to believe the Chieftains will not be as potent as in 2018. McDole said that would be a big mistake, particularly if the team plays to its potential.

“When AJ left, a lot of people were saying, ‘Oh, y’all ain’t gonna be nothing without him,’” he said. “We’re here to show them different. We have the talent to be a championship team, we’ve just got to put it together. We’ve got a solid defense. It’s pretty young, but it’s solid.”

“Everybody thinks we’re going to be underdogs,” said Dade, who will also play cornerback as well as some running back. “But we’ve got to get on the field and do what we’ve got to do. The passing is going to be good. We’ve got some tricks. The running game, I feel, is not going to be stopped. We’ve got a point to prove this year.”

McDole said he hopes to help prove a point by spending some time at running back. Last year, with Phillips getting the majority of the carries, he saw very limited action at that position.

“This is actually my first year getting my hands on and touching the ball,” he said. “Last year, I played a little second-string last year, but with A. there, I didn’t get as many touches as I wanted. This year, it’s going to be a big challenge for me. I’m very excited.”

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