

Wildcats excited about 2020 season despite coaching change, stress of pandemic



Photo by SHAE GOFF / Herald Contributor

First-year Greene County High School head football coach Rotch Dungan is shown (Center) speaking to his offensive linemen during a timeout against George County in jamboree action last week in Lucedale. The veteran coach has nearly four decades of experience and is in his fourth season at GCHS, but first as head coach.

Dungan's steady hand has helped GCHS navigate challenges with eyes on the future

By **RUSSELL TURNER**
Herald Staff

A new era for Greene County football got underway last December with the announcement of veteran coach Rotch Dungan as the Wildcats' new leader.

Rotch took over the program after three seasons alongside former coach Mike King, who left GCHS at the end of last season to pursue his dream of coaching collegiate football. During those three years GCHS posted a 28-10 record, including an 8-4 campaign a year ago.

The Wildcats got off to a slow start in King's final season, dropping their first three games. But, they roared back with eight straight wins to win Region 7-4A, before having the season end with a heart-breaking loss to Lawrence County on the final play of the game.

That loss, combined with the coaching shakeup that followed, is the type of combination that can have lingering effects. Those are tough enough things to deal with as a first-year head coach, but add

the disruption of a worldwide pandemic and you have the potential for a program to get derailed.

But, hang around the Wildcat locker room and you don't get the feeling of a program on the slide. In fact, there is optimism and excitement despite all of the craziness and GCHS Principal Scott Bray credits Rotch and his coaching staff for fostering that mentality.

"I have no doubt in my mind that we made an incredible hire with Rotch Dungan," GCHS Principal Scott Bray

said. "His experience and professionalism and just the way he carries himself are exactly what we needed. I could not be more impressed and appreciative of the way he has led our program through these unprecedented times."

"I have been so pleased with all of our coaching staff, on and off the field and in the classrooms. They are doing a great job and so are our student athletes. And that all starts with Rotch."

Dungan has an impressive resume that spans nearly 36

years as a teacher and coach. He also has veteran assistants like defensive coordinator Timmy Story and defensive line coach David Tadlock on staff and has a great deal of confidence in the group of young coaches.

"We were able to bring in four new coaches with very diverse backgrounds," Dungan said. "My number one priority was finding men

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