

Changes abound for Owls in 2021 campaign

2021 Owls Football Schedule

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
AUG. 21	GORDONSVILLE	GORDONSVILLE	7:00
AUG. 27	DEKALB CO.	SMITHVILLE	7:00
SEPT. 3	MAPLEWOOD	CARTHAGE	7:00
SEPT. 10	WESTMORELAND (HC)	CARTHAGE	7:00
SEPT. 17	WALKER VALLEY	CARTHAGE	7:00
SEPT. 24	TROUSDALE CO.	HARTSVILLE	7:00
OCT. 1	STRATFORD	NASHVILLE	7:00
OCT. 15	JACKSON CO.	CARTHAGE	7:00
OCT. 22	MACON CO.	LAFAYETTE	7:00
OCT. 29	EAST NASHVILLE	NASHVILLE	7:00

By Shea Haile

Courier Sports
CARTHAGE — The winter of 2020 was an eventful one for the Smith County High football program. In December, the Owls welcomed 2005 SCHS graduate and former Black-and-Gold football player Matt Dyer back to his alma mater as the new head coach.

In November, Smith County saw a dramatic shift in their upcoming 2021 season with TSSAA (Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association) reclassification resulting in the Owls being placed in the newly formed Region 5-3A which includes East Nashville, Stratford, Maplewood and Jackson County.

Because of the realignment, only three opponents from the 2020 season remain on the schedule for the Owls this fall: Gordonsville, DeKalb County and Macon County.

Dyer addressed the new region after his hiring in December.

“As far as the new region goes, I have coached against Coach (Sean) Loftis and Jackson County for a few years now,” said Dyer about Jackson Co., a program that was in Region 4-2A with Trousdale, his former team. “I have a lot of respect for Coach Loftis and the job he does with that program. I also have coached against Coach Broome at Maplewood. His kids play very hard for him and they always are very athletic. Stratford and East Nashville both made good playoff runs this last year and have great athletes year in and year out. This new region is



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MATT DYER

SCHS Owls head coach

full of good players and teams, and I am excited to compete in it.”

Prior to sporting the Black-and-Gold again, Dyer was an assistant coach at Class 2A power Trousdale County. During his three seasons with the Yellow Jackets, the program made two 2A semifinal appearances and had one trip to the Class 2A title game.

Dyer also helped mentor the Tigers of Macon County for eight years (2009-2017) where he helped the program develop into a 4A contender.

The new Owl head coach who enters his inaugural season explained the significance returning to his hometown program at SCHS for him and his family.

“I am an alumni from here,” said Dyer. “I graduated in the Class of 2005. My dad (Pat Dyer) was also an assistant coach here for Gary Rankin beginning in 1988 and



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2021 SMITH COUNTY HIGH SENIORS — Kneeling from left: Luke Dillon, Andrew Wheeley. Standing from left: Colton Windham, Brycen Claywell, Cole Phillips, Alexa Western - mgr. Not pictured Eligio Tolentino.

when Coach Rankin left in 1989 — he was the next head coach from 1990-1995.”

Legendary coach Pat Dyer served as head coach of the Owls program and at Macon County (1999-2004). The longtime educator and coach passed away on September 17, 2016.

“It did mean something for me to come back here,” Dyer continued. “It was a position I watched just with the anticipation that if it came open — I would apply for it and just hope that I would get it. I am super blessed that I did.”

Dyer had strong ties to the Smith County community before his hiring at SCHS. His mother, Connie Dyer, is currently a teacher at Smith County and has been in education for 40-plus years. Dyer’s wife Stephanie is currently the school nutrition

Please see OWLS page C-4



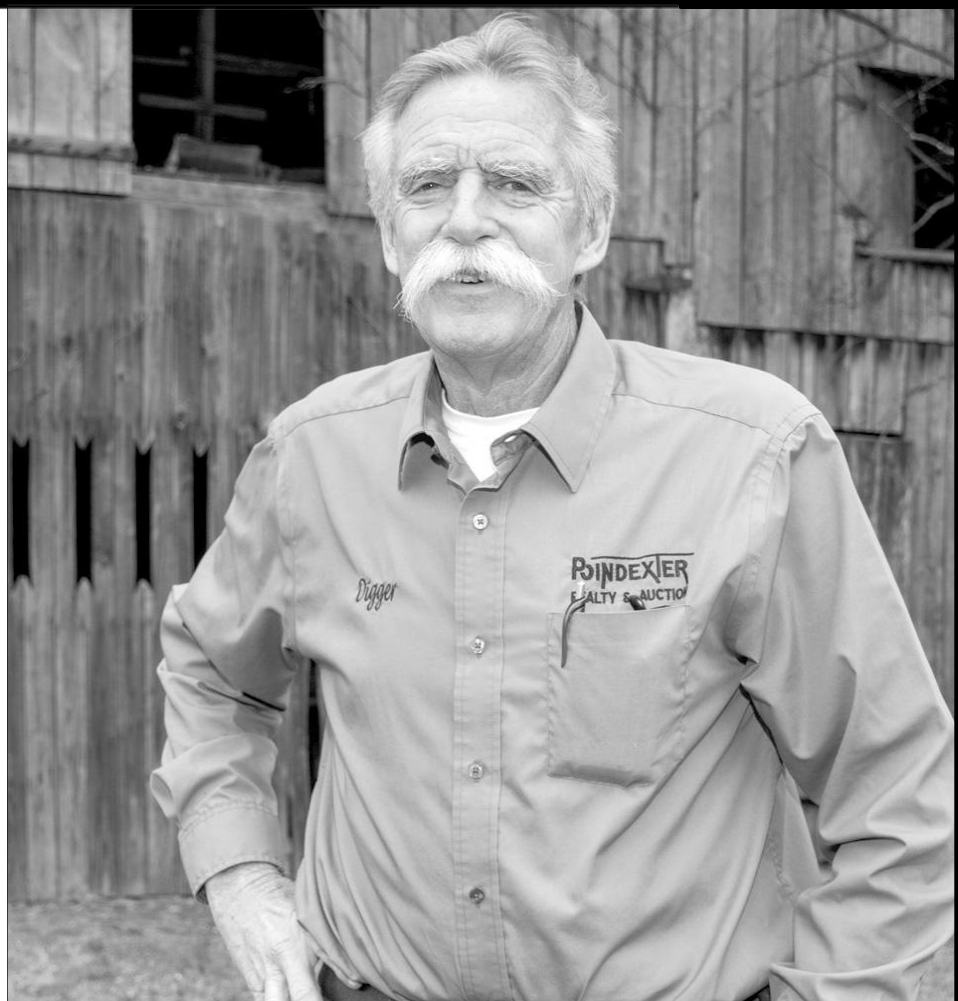
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2021 SMITH COUNTY HIGH FOOTBALL COACHING STAFF — Kneeling from left: Lee Rice, Alex Bray, Carson Hackett, Mark Sampson. Standing from left: Keith Powell, Billy Barnhart, Matt Dyer - head coach, Steve Bray, Jason Harville.

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