

Defense

lost another good lineman (junior Tate McLain) to injury on the second series. We hope to get him back later in the year, so we are being forced to find ways to build depth that we had not planned on.”

Others expected to contribute this season on the defensive front are juniors Jacan Walley and Cameron Coon, and sophomore Meko Anderson.

“We have several guys that are inexperienced, but prac-

tice and play hard and want to be successful,” Prentiss added. “They just need more reps, but we know we are going to count on them to step up.”

Greene County will be especially young in the secondary, but King likes the depth he has back there, with at least seven players expected to be in the mix for playing time.

“We’ve got three freshmen who will be on the field and see a lot of action, which is

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rare,” said King. “But we do have some guys who are returning. Jabari Phillips will be a junior and Treyvon Cooper, also a junior, gives us a little experience back there. Those are two guys we’re depending on in the secondary.”

Coaches said Phillips is one of those players that finds a different gear on game day and had a really nice showing against Columbia in the jamboree.

“It has really been fun to

watch Jabari grow as a player,” Prentiss said. “We have several other guys that we are counting on in the secondary that will need grow up fast.”

“They are pretty good in pass coverage, but are going to have to do a better job of tackling. That is an area we are focusing on and we are already seeing improvement.”

Junior Treyvon Cooper and sophomore Tylan Blackston, will be joined by freshmen Braeden and Bryson Spivery, and Lakeus Franks.

“We’ve got big expectations for that group and so far they have brought great

attitudes and effort to the field,” Prentiss added.

As for giving up 49 points to Vancleave, Prentiss said he wasn’t going to lean on excuses or allow his players to do so.

“We were down a starting tackle going into the game and lost another starter to a

broken collarbone really early in the game,” Prentiss said. “And, Vancleave did a great job of coming out and being physical against us.”

“I give them credit for that. We are going to take the loss and wear it on our chins. We are going to learn from it and move on.”

Junior Tate McLain was expected to be a mainstay for GCHS along the defensive line this season, but after suffering a collarbone injury in the season opener, the Wildcats expect to be without him for much of the season, but hope he can return for some of the region matchups and a potential post-season run by the Cats. McLain is shown here making a big impact with a tackle in the backfield against Columbia. Also shown is sophomore linebacker Landon Green (21).



Photo by RUSSELL TURNER / Herald Editor



Offense

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fast as you can. And for a long time, we put people in a bind with that.”

“But now, defenses signal their stuff in like we do on offense, and they can combat that a little better.”

Greene County sophomore Coby King is in charge of the offense at quarterback, and the Wildcats see him as an ideal game manager.

“He’s a decision-maker,” King said. “He has to know when to give the ball off and when to pull it back and throw. We have a lot of pre-snap pass-run options going on at the line of scrimmage. He’s really smooth as far as ball fakes and getting guys lined up in the right place.”

“Believe it or not, we’re huddling up this year, so he’ll be getting signals from the sideline. He’s going to be kind of a field general.”

But, don’t think the sophomore play caller will settle into the role of ‘game manager’ for his team. He put on a few extra pounds of muscle himself in the offseason and has shown he too can come up with big plays. While his play was not spotless against the Bulldogs in the opener, his final stats were solid as he completed 21-of-30 pass attempts on the night for 300 yards and a touchdown. He also rushed three times

Along with the three known weapons, the Kings (coach and quarterback) will have several up-and-coming playmakers to distribute the football to. And, with some unfortunate cramping issues in the opener, several of them got a chance to show what they have to offer.

One of those is freshman Jase Matthews who

is making a case for more playing time with each outing. Matthews was a real bright spot for GCHS in the loss to Vancleave, finishing with a team-leading six catches for 131 yards.

Other weapons on the offense to look out for include junior slot receiver Peyton Errington, sophomore Cole Helton, freshman Joshua McCann and senior tight end Andrew Lott. Errington had a nice game and earned kudos from coaches with the way he stepped up against Vancleave. Like Matthews, cramping issues among players higher on the depth chart going in the game opened the door for Errington to shine. And, he took full advantage, picking up 22 yards on three carries and showing he was willing to lower his shoulder to earn the extra yard.

Helton had two catches for 16 yards and a touchdown, while McCann finished with five carries and 31 yards to his credit.

Up front on offense, Greene County will be counting on a pair seniors to anchor the line.

“Trey Snell, our big offensive tackle is a kid we’re really excited about,” said King. “He’s long and athletic.”

“Probably one of our best leaders is Chad Rester, who will play center and guard for us. He’s one of those guys who hustles full speed everywhere he goes.”

Junior Keaton Byrd appears set at center for the Cats, while sophomores Sam Moody, Keaton Smith and Levi Erkhart combine to hold down the other spots. All three of the sophomores saw plenty of playing time against Vancleave.

While some among the Wildcat faithful might have struggled to find positives in the Wildcats’ loss to Vancleave in the season opener, there were plenty to choose from. One of the biggest, and possibly one of the bigger surprises, was the emergence of freshman wide receiver Jase Matthews. The youngster found a different gear once he recorded his first varsity catch, and before the game was over, he was the team leader with 131 receiving yards. He is shown (Left) spinning away from a defender after one of his team-high six catches.

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