

# OBION COUNTY CENTRAL REBELS: IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Moms' Camp is one of Obion Central's numerous team bonding programs.

## Small changes have big impact

By KEVIN WEAKS  
Sports Editor

Sometimes, the small-est things have the biggest impact.

Something like a door knob, for instance.

“One thing I’ve learned as a head coach is that all the things you want to change, you can’t change in one day or one year,” Obion Central head coach Justin Palmer said. “I think the best way to do it is have a list of all the things you want to improve or get better, and then attack those things one at a time.

“Anytime you can check something off the list. Changing a door knob — something as small as that is a victory in changing the program because before fixing that door knob, people were like, ‘We can’t get anything right around here. We don’t even have good door knobs.’ They don’t say that now. That negative thought is gone, all just because of something as minor as a door knob.”

Palmer talked about some cosmetic changes that improve the overall feel of the practice building.

There are new wraps on the door, big screens throughout the building that have photos, team messages and notices scrolling daily, new lights and name plates in the locker room. And, of course, the team got new uniforms with three sets of jerseys last season.

He also pointed out that the football field will have a new scoreboard and play clocks when this season gets under way.

While some little, and big, improvements have been made as Palmer enters his third season at the helm, he pointed out some things needed by the program will have to come through out-side help.

“There are some things beyond my control,” Pal-mer said. “I want new weight equipment because what we have is not good. But, I don’t have the money. I can build toward it, I can ask for it, but I need help in some of that. If you want to have a good and stable program, it can’t just come from inside the building. Everybody has to be involved and willing to help.

“We’re moving toward that as well. Having a good product on the field makes more people want to get involved. So, we have to do our job on the field.”

**TIMES TO BOND:**  
When it’s time to practice football and think about football, Palmer makes sure his players are focused on football.

But, that doesn’t have to be 24/7/365.

There is time for fun and for bonding.

At Obion Central, Palmer has implemented several ideas that keep the competi-tive fires lit without pound-ing football plays and strat-egies into the players’ head all the time.

“In this day and age, if you’re not enjoying some-thing, you just don’t do it,” he said. “So, there’s no rea-son to make things miser-able. I know it gets said all the time that football is supposed to be hard or tough, makes you a man or whatever. And, yes, you hope it develops you as a person. But it doesn’t have to be miserable. I don’t want to be unhappy. Why would I want my players to be unhappy?”

The stuff Palmer talks about are things like the house system. Players

come in and are drafted by the veterans into houses with names like Legacy, Vengeance, Different and Conquer (this year’s four) and participate in numerous football and non-football events, including skits that help players develop public speaking skills.

There was the Moms’ Camp and kids’ camp held in the summer, freshman signing day and the big brother program where those incoming freshmen are assigned an older play-er to help them make the overall transition to high school as well as various other activities that help the team bond.

“I think team chemistry is the most important thing you need to be a successful high school football team,” the coach said. “If you have good team chemistry and play hard for each other, you can win some games.”

Palmer saw the togeth-er-ness of this year’s team up close in a three-way scrim-mage at Caruthersville, Mo., in late July.

“I was really proud after that scrimmage,” he said. “When the younger guys went in, the older guys had their helmets on and were into the game. I told them that was my favorite part of the scrimmage.”

**WEEKLY BATTLES:**  
With a five-team region, meaning only four guaran-teed games, Obion Central had to go searching for opponents in a hurry after the TSSAA announced the region schedules for all of its member schools.

“It was interesting how they did the scheduling this year, releasing it over the Internet,” Palmer said. “It was stressful that day, but it was fun and exciting, too. I was on the phone back and forth with people, because after the region schedules came out, it was a mad dash to fill your non-region games.”

There are not many bigger schools, classes 4A and up, in rural West Tennessee, so Palmer filled his slate with Lake County, Westview, Jackson North Side, Fulton County, Ky., Dresden and Craigmont.

LC, Dresden and Fulton County are all single-A sized schools but should provide tough challenges with athletic, skilled and well-coached players.

North Side remains on the slate, while Fayette-Ware and Dyer County are new Region 7-4A opponents. Haywood and Crockett County are the other region foes for the Rebels.

OC and Dyer County have played scrimmages and 7-on-7 camps, and Palmer expressed a great respect for Choctaw head coach David Whittle.

Josh Puckett takes over as head coach at Haywood, following Chris Smith’s departure for Bartlett.

Craigmont is in the same classification and could be a playoff opponent, so play-ing them in the final week of the season could make for an interesting matchup.

Sports editor Kevin Weaks can be contacted by email at [kweak@ucmessenger.com](mailto:kweak@ucmessenger.com).

# Have a Safe, Fun & Winning Season!

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# Good Luck

to all students & teachers during the 2023-2024 school year!

We are wishing you all the best and hoping for a great year!

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