


2023 LINEUP

THIS SECTION



REBEL NOTES 3

- Small things add up
- Coming together
- The schedule

OBION CENT. 4-5

Time to step up


TEAM PHOTO 5

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GRID SCHEDULE 7

2023 OPPONENTS 7

THE OTHERS



TWISTER NOTES 3

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- Rich in tradition
- The schedule

UNION CITY 4-5


Experience matters

TEAM PHOTO 5

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DEVIL NOTES 3

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- Workout routine
- The schedule

SO. FULTON 4-5

Devils' weapons

TEAM PHOTO 5

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UTM / TENNESSEE

UT MARTIN 2

Looking to 3-peat

OVC-BIG SOUTH 3

SEMO picked No. 1

TENNESSEE 4

Volunteers better?

For prep previews, we went once, twice, three times a section

One of the first things I thought about when I decided to do three high school football preview sections, one for each team in Obion County, and a four-page section for UT Martin and Tennessee was the prospect of writing three introduction columns.

It's not really that big of a deal, but I'm not much of a column writer (as I'm sure some of many of you will agree). So, writing one of these every year was tough enough. But three?

In the midst of my mounting angst and dread, a thought occurred to me: Work smarter, not harder.

That was immediately followed by another thought: Highlight all, copy and paste.

So, these first few paragraphs — and many that will follow — will be written for all three columns. Only the school names and content info (to some degree) will change.

There, it should be a lot easier now.

So, if you look through all three sections, and we all certainly want you to spend some time perusing all 24 pages, you will notice similarities on page three of each section. In addition, there are some things in these three columns that are also in my column for today's regular edition.

Let's start with that. The next four paragraphs appear in all four columns.

Each team is previewed by offense, defense and special teams. Each team has a grid schedule dedicated to all 10 of its opponents, rather than just the region folks as had been the case in years past.

Playoff histories are detailed again this year, similar to past years, but I have also added a breakdown of each team's schedule that includes historical information about each opponent.

The cover for each section features all the seniors on their respective 2023 teams.

Our advertisers are on board with the changes as over 50 businesses in the county and the Ken-Tenn region chose to be associated with the award-winning preview(s).

Now, for some specifics.

Those seniors at Obion Central are Kevyn Alfter, Kweli Purifoy, Noah Parker, Logan Laird, Landon Cranford, Hamilton May, Ben Pickard, Freddie Martin, Michael Jenkins, Gary Gutknecht, Pacey Gammons, Raxzey Campbell, Case Holcomb and Eildrem Rollins.

Looking at the playoff histories, I have included OC's playoff numbers followed by the records and best playoff seasons of all 10 of the Rebels' opponents.

The research on that is not too difficult anymore. The TSSAA has added TSSAASports.com to its website, and its postseason history of every school and every sport is quite extensive.

Even for Craigmont.

A few names have changed in Region 7-4A, where the Rebels live, but it will be a tough road to the postseason again.

Head coach Justin Palmer, entering his third season, talks about his coaching philosophy and how tough it can be to build a program. Instead of focusing only on the big things, Palmer knows the small stuff can make the biggest difference.

When putting together a section of this size and scope, many people play a role.

Thanks go out to editor Donna Ryder, associate editor Chris Menees, advertising manager Todd Tilghman and David Fuzzell for going over the sections with their eagle eyes and catching all my spelling errors and other mistakes.

There may still be one or two or more. Nobody's perfect. Please remember that, and also follow the old adage of "be quick to praise, slower to criticize."

Speaking of Tilghman, he sold all of the ads that appear in each section, while Lisa Wilson provided her talents in designing the ads.

A special "thank you" goes out to our advertisers for their faith in our ability to put out a product that will keep their ads in the homes and on the minds of area high school football fans for the next several months.

All three head coaches and their staffs, along with Union City Schools communications director Mike Hutchens, had their players ready to go for their respective photo days.

Everything at all three schools went smoothly.

Thanks also to the players for their efforts and patience as we posed them for head shots, group photos and individual shots in addition to the team photo, which appears on page five.

I outsourced the cover designs to Jason Aldridge again this year. When I grow up, I want to be just like Pops.

And, last but not least, the biggest "thank you" goes out to you, the reader.

Enjoy.



KEVIN WEAKS

MESSENGER SPORTS EDITOR

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ROAD TO CHATTANOOGA

TSSAA State Playoffs

Round 1: Higher Seed

November 3

Round 2: Higher Seed

November 10

Quarterfinals: Higher Seed

November 17

Semifinals: Sites TBD

November 24

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