

# PIGSKIN

PREVIEW  
2024



**NASH CENTRAL  
BULLDOGS**



**SOUTHERN NASH  
FIREBIRDS**



**ROCKY MOUNT  
GRYPHONS**



**NORTHERN NASH  
KNIGHTS**



# NASH CENTRAL

# BULLDOGS



## KEYWORDS -- RECENT TRADITION, DEEP PLAYOFF RUNS NC UNDER THE RADAR

By GEOFF NEVILLE  
Graphic Sportswriter

### ROCKY MOUNT

Rarely has a team experienced so much success while flying under the radar as the Nash Central Bulldogs have over the past three seasons.

In each of those campaigns, the Bulldogs have reached at least the third round of the Class 2-A State Playoffs -- and even advanced to the fourth round in 2023.

And among the accomplishments obtained in those years was back-to-back-to-back titles in the Class 2-A portion of the strong Big East Conference.

But despite a seemingly never-ended laundry list of heroics, the Bulldogs don't seem to get the statewide notoriety that backyard neighbors Northern Nash, Southern Nash and Rocky Mount do.

And given his understated personality, that suits veteran NCHS head coach Chris Lee just fine.

"We don't mind being the underdog," Lee said. "We have gotten some recognition, but we don't have the established program like some of the other schools in (Nash County).

"(NN, RM and SN) have all played for state championships in the last 10 years. Those schools have been successful for

### NASH CENTRAL BULLDOGS

#### CHRIS LEE

Years at School: 10  
Last Season: 11-3  
Record at School: 56-48  
Starters Returning: 0-7 D-3



#### OUTLOOK

Nash Central has quietly built a powerhouse in recent seasons -- including last year's state quarterfinal finish. Now comes the next step -- competing for an outright Big East Conference championship. That's possible with several key returnees, including James Rodgers.

#### 2024 SCHEDULE

- Aug. 23.....SE HALIFAX
- Aug. 30.....SW EDGECOMBE
- Sept. 6.....at Goldsboro
- Sept. 13.....at Beddingfield
- Sept. 20.....at Southern Nash\*
- Sept. 27.....FRANKLINTON\*
- October 4.....at Rocky Mount\*
- Oct. 11.....NORTHERN NASH\*
- Oct. 18.....at Bunn\*
- Nov. 1.....ROANOKE RAPIDS

\* Denotes Big East Games



NASH CENTRAL STANDOUT RUNNING BACK JAMES RODGERS

so long, and we are still a relatively new school (2002)."

But Lee and Company have made garnered a headline-worthy list of excellence since coming out of the COVID Era in uncertain fashion.

At that time, it was easy to wonder about the long-range prospects of the program.

It's still easy now, but in a much different light -- the Bulldogs have become a juggernaut over the past three campaigns.

"When we came back from COVID, we only had 26 guys in our entire program," Lee said. "We really didn't know what to expect. But we had a good stream of athletes coming in, and we were able to build on that."

And build the Bulldogs have done as Lee's crew has posted a combined 27-13 record over the past three seasons.

That list includes an 11-3 worksheet in 2023 that featured three playoff wins -- most notably the unforgettable 71-68 shootout win over Hertford County in the third round.

Look for Central to once again be able to score points this fall thanks to the return of seven offensive starters, including quarterback Winston Lee and superstar running back James Rodgers -- along with the Bulldogs' entire offensive front.

But like just about every other high school team in the area, the Bulldogs are seeking defensive stoppers with only a trio of players back on that side of the ball.

"In total, we lost 20 seniors from last year, and we have 15-16 this year," Lee said. "Next year, we won't have as many seniors."

"We've got a good group of sophomores, and only a few of them



ELIJAH DUNN KEEPS HIS EYES ON THE FOOTBALL

are on the varsity. It's tough keeping a core group of guys together, but we like how things look for the future."

One of Central's top returnees on defense is Oliver Belhomme, who is expected to excel at the defensive end position.

Kam Tucker is a force

at linebacker, while Gabriel Whittington is tough in the middle of the defensive front. Jase Wilkerson, a cornerback, is also sharp in both coverage and run support.

Nash Central's season has gotten off to a solid start from an offensive standpoint as the Bull-

dogs have delivered 78 points in a pair of games, including a 50-point upriser in the school's regular season opener at home against the Southeast Halifax Trojans out of Tillery.

But Central's reloading

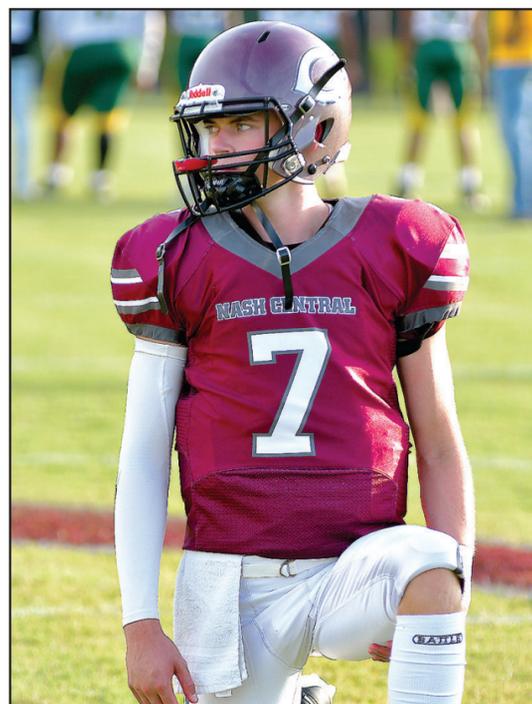
See DOGS, Page 9



LINEMAN GABRIEL WHITTINGTON



NASH CENTRAL BOASTS A VETERAN OFFENSIVE LINE THIS SEASON



NC QUARTERBACK WINSTON LEE

# NORTHERN NASH

# KNIGHTS



## KEYWORDS -- DOWN EAST POWERHOUSE, BACK FOR MORE FOUNDATION IS BUILT

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
Correspondent

### RED OAK

**N**orthern Nash's previous two football seasons have resulted in as much success as any two-year run in program history.

In 2022, the Knights landed in the school's second State Championship game appearance in 58 seasons of football, while 2023 resulted in a loss to Seventy-First in the Class 3-A Eastern Final, accruing a two-year record of 28-3.

Head coach Andrew Farriss now enters his seventh season directing Northern's football program, having now reached double-digit wins in three straight seasons, the only time the Knights have achieved that feat.

Northern had won 10 or more games just five times before Farriss arrived on campus as an assistant coach in 2017 and began his head coaching tenure in 2018, and with the Knights now sitting at 2-0 in 2024, another successful season is possible for



**TOP TO BOTTOM  
HOLTON  
WESTBROOK &  
JORDAN JONES  
WITH SACKS**

### NORTHERN NASH KNIGHTS

#### ANDREW FARRISS

Years at School: 7  
Last Season: 13-2  
Record at School: 54-19  
Starters Returning: 0-5, D-4



#### — OUTLOOK —

The hits just keep on coming at Northern Nash, which has gone 27-3 over the past two seasons, including a trip to the state finals in 2022. With a process now in place, the prosperity should continue at Red Oak -- and NN will once again be one of the teams to beat in the Big East this fall.

#### — 2024 SCHEDULE —

Aug. 23.....WILSON HUNT  
Aug. 29.....at Wilson Fike  
Sept. 6.....at Greenville Rose  
Sept. 13.....DH CONLEY  
Sept. 27.....at Bunn\*  
Oct. 4.....ROANOKE RAPIDS\*  
Oct. 11.....at Nash Central\*  
Oct. 18.....FRANKLINTON\*  
Oct. 25.....SOUTHERN NASH\*  
Nov. 1.....at Rocky Mount\*  
\* Denotes Big East Games

Northern Nash this year.

Though expectations are still high for the Knights in 2024, a lot of the names and faces from the 2022 and 2023 squads have moved onto the next level.

A whopping 2,521 of last year's 2,603 receiving yards for the Knights graduated in May, highlighted by receiver Randall King who took his talents on the gridiron to Campbell University.

Last year's quarter-



**ANDREW FARRISS WAS ONE HECK OF A HIRE FOR NORTHERN NASH**

back Elijah Pitt tossed 2,392 yards through the air and contributed 36 total touchdowns; he graduated as well.

"We lost a lot of skill guys from last season -- guys who played on the varsity since they were sophomores," Farriss said. "But we've got some younger guys who are stepping in. We tell them that their time is now, and they have responded."

Northern also lost some key players defensively from a club that was sharp on that side of the ball in 2023 -- until the Knights couldn't stop



**NORTHERN'S FIGHTING KNIGHTS TAKE THE FIELD!**

71st one single time in the regional final.

That fact still stings Farriss and his staff.

"I would hope our guys have a chip on their shoulder after (the 71st game) even though a lot of the players from that group graduated," Farriss said. "We've been

See KNIGHTS, Page 9

### Edward Jones



**Cliff Joyner, CFP®, AAMS™**  
Financial Advisor  
207 W Washington Street  
Nashville, NC 27856  
252-459-4134

edwardjones.com  
Member SIPC

**AMY BEASLEY**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
CITY EXECUTIVE  
amy.beasley@southernbank.com  
o: 252.459.2117  
c: 252.904.8930  
f: 252.459.4007  
NMLS #756448

**SouthernBank**  
Since 1901  
Our interest is You.  
209 S. Barnes St / PO Box 758  
Nashville, NC 27856  
southernbank.com

**Pink Flamingo REALTY**

**BILL LUMPP**  
Realtor  
252.908.5300  
BillLumpp.com  
BillLumpp@gmail.com

**PRIMARY CARE URGENT CARE OF NASHVILLE**

**SERVING ADULTS & CHILDREN**  
Most healthcare plans accepted including Medicare and Medicaid

**NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED**

- Immunizations
- School physicals
- Sports physicals
- Sprains and sports injuries
- Minor cuts, burns & wounds
- Preventive care
- Pediatric nutrition
- Behavioral medicine
- Sick visits

**Shandal S. Emanuel MD, MPH**   **Wayne Tamberelli PA-C**   **Haley Judd Frazier FNP-C**

**Family. Friends. Community.**

**Sandy Frazier, Agent**  
219 W Washington Street  
Nashville, NC 27856  
Bus: 252-459-2025  
sandy.frazier.cj2k@statefarm.com

**We're all in this together.**  
State Farm® has a long tradition of being there. That's one reason why I'm proud to support our community.

**Here to help life go right.®**

**State Farm**  
State Farm Life Insurance Company (Not licensed in MA, NY or WI)  
State Farm Life and Accident Assurance Company (Licensed in NY and WI)  
Bloomington, IL

**Primary Care • Urgent Care**  
Labs • X-Rays • Physicals • Vaccines

10 Exam Rooms • On-Site X-Ray • Basic Labs  
Trauma Room • Procedure Room

**We're #1** Thanks for your vote!

Thank you for voting Dr. Emanuel as the **BEST DOCTOR** in NASH COUNTY & BEST URGENT CARE in NASH COUNTY!

**PRIMARY CARE URGENT CARE OF NASHVILLE**

Premier Healthcare For Nash County & Surrounding Areas

Primary Care: Mon-Thurs 8am-5pm • Fri 8am -1pm  
Urgent Care: Mon.-Thurs 8:30am-7pm • Fri 9am-5pm • Sat. 8am - 1pm  
107A Nashville Drive, Nashville, NC • 252-676-8285 ~ pcucn.com

## SOUTHERN NASH

# FIREBIRDS



# KEYWORDS -- POINTS IN BUNCHES, PERENNIAL POWERHOUSE ALL ABOUT DEFENSE?

By GEOFF NEVILLE  
Graphic Sportswriter

### STANHOPE

**F**unny as it may sound, but defense will be the key for Southern Nash this fall as the Firebirds look to defend their Big East Conference regular season championship.

On offense, Southern Nash has churned out so many good players through the years that it's almost become a given that the Firebirds, regardless of opponent, are going to pile up the points in a big way.

But it's difficult to win if you can't stop a foe, even if a few times is good enough as in the case with the prolific Firebirds.

And yes, the pieces are in place for Southern Nash to once again be an offensive juggernaut -- and even more daunting for opponents is the fact that several of the Firebirds' skill-position standouts are underclassmen.

But Southern Nash has just three starters back on defense, and head coach Brian Batchelor was less than thrilled with his club's performance on that side of the ball during a 65-42 season-opening triumph over backyard rival East Wake.

One week later, the Firebirds were much stingier, giving up just

## SOUTHERN NASH FIREBIRDS

### BRIAN BATCHELOR

Years at School: 4  
Last Season: 10-2  
Record at School: 27-8  
Starters Returning: 0-3, D-3



#### OUTLOOK

Southern Nash, fresh off a Big East regular season title, should be able to score points in bunches this fall -- as it that assessment is a surprise in Stanhope. But finding some replacements on defense will go a long way toward determining SNHS' 2024 success.

#### 2024 SCHEDULE

Aug. 23 ..... EAST WAKE  
Aug. 29 .....at South Granville  
Sept. 6 ..... WILSON FIKE  
Sept. 13 .....at So. Alamance  
Sept. 20 .....NASH CENTRAL\*  
Sept. 27 .....at Roanoke Rapids\*  
Oct. 11 .....BUNN\*  
Oct. 19 .....ROCKY MOUNT\*  
Oct. 25 .....at Northern Nash\*  
Nov. 1 .....at Franklinton\*

\* Denotes Big East Games

14 points during a road blowout conquest at South Granville.

"The biggest thing on defense is that we need to get better (in the secondary)," Batchelor said. "Graduation hit us hard there. And those guys weren't just talented -- they were also great leaders for us."

If SN can find some key replacements in the back, everything else should fall into place as the Firebirds are solid up front and at line-backer, led by the likes of



**SOUTHERN NASH HEAD COACH BRIAN BATCHELOR WITH CAPTAINS (L TO R) ZAIRE CURTIS, ISRAEL WHITAKER, ASHTON BATTEN AND LUKE FAULKNER**

veterans Luke Faulkner, Chris Harris, Deavon Richardson and Israel Whitaker.

Batchelor is also a bit concerned about his young offensive line, which will be paced by senior returnee Ashton Batten.

There aren't many questions in the backfield, though, as the Firebirds are deep, talented and relatively young.

Experience comes in the form of returning Big East Conference Player of the Year Tylik Mitchell, who carried the brunt of the offensive load in 2023 while helping the Firebirds finish with a 10-2 overall record.

Mitchell finished with 1,783 yards, but he might share more of the work this time around with fullback Faulkner and wingback Jonathan Hines, who combined for over 1,000 yards last season.

Southern is also extremely high on sophomore Jaden Hartsfield, who appears to be 'next in line' of the Firebirds' seemingly never-ending list of backfield superstars.

Then there's sophomore quarterback Isaiah Battle, the son of SN assistant coach and former playing legend Kwamaine Battle.



**JADEN HARTSFIELD SHOWS PERFECT RECEIVING FORM**



**SOUTHERN NASH QB ISAIAH BATTLE**



**AIDEN MYERS SENDS ONE THROUGH THE UPRIGHTS**



**JADEN HARTSFIELD TURNS THE CORNER VERSUS SOUTH GRANVILLE**

**EDWARDS**  
Inc.

INDUSTRIAL  
CONSTRUCTION

SPECIALTY, STRUCTURAL  
& PIPE FABRICATION

CRANE & HEAVY  
RIGGING

**SPRING HOPE**  
NORTH CAROLINA

GREENVILLE | LIBERTY | WILMINGTON | FAYETTEVILLE

## ROCKY MOUNT

# GRYPHONS



## KEYWORDS -- RETURN TO FORM, STRONG JUNIOR CLASS RM BACK TO THE FUTURE

By GEOFF NEVILLE  
Graphic Sportswriter

### ROCKY MOUNT

**T**aking a step back in time in the near future is the chief goal within the tradition-rich Rocky Mount High School football program.

The Gryphons have been known through the years for their gridiron excellence, including back-to-back state finals appearances in the best decade -- and a coveted state crown.

And before then, the great BW Holt guided the Gryphons through numerous deep playoff runs -- and established Rocky Mount as one of the top football powerhouses in Eastern North Carolina.

But Rocky Mount has slipped a bit recently,

See GRYPHONS, Page 9

### ROCKY MOUNT GRYPHONS

#### JASON BATTLE

Years at School: 13  
Last Season: 3-7  
Record at School: 94-49  
Starters Returning: 0-5, D-5



#### OUTLOOK

Losing seasons aren't expected at Rocky Mount, but it was hard to avoid in 2023 as the Gryphons fielded a young lineup loaded with underclassmen. With those players now blessed with an added year of experience, look for RM to once again be a factor in the Big East.

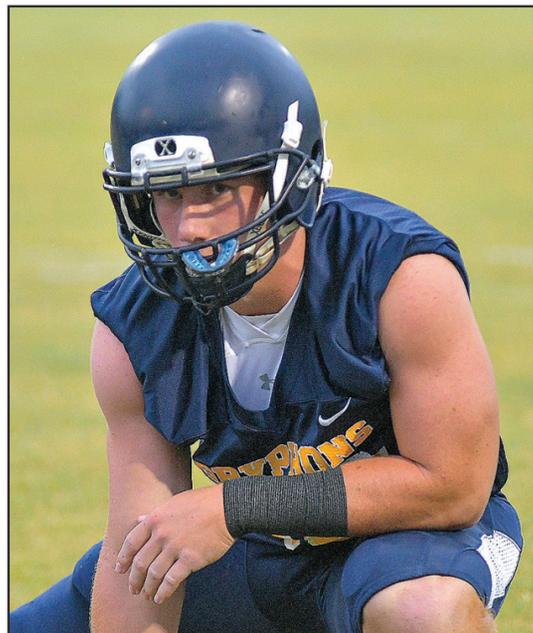
#### 2024 SCHEDULE

Aug. 23.....at Tarboro  
Aug. 30.....VANCE COUNTY  
Sept. 6.....at Edenton Holmes  
Sept. 13.....NORTHEASTERN  
Sept. 20.....at Bunn)\*  
October 4.....NASH CENTRAL\*  
Oct. 11.....at Roanoke Rapids\*  
Oct. 18.....at Southern Nash\*  
Oct. 25.....FRANKLINTON\*  
Nov. 1.....NORTHERN NASH\*

\* Denotes Big East Games



LEGENDARY ROCKY MOUNT PLACEKICKER CHRISTIAN BUCK



RM LINEBACKER JACK MCKELLAR

### Hometown Service You Can Count On!



Quality Tires  
Automotive  
Repairs  
& Maintenance



### Murray's Automotive & Tire Center

906 Eastern Ave. Nashville  
459-7545

### We care about your health

We are committed to providing extraordinary healthcare to you and your family.

Locations to serve you in Rocky Mount, Spring Hope, and Nashville  
(252) 937-0200  
www.boice-willis.com



**Boice-Willis**  
Coordinated, Compassionate, Comprehensive Medical Care



Stewart Griffin

### J.A. LEONARD & CO. INC.

Office: 252-459-2313  
Cell: 252-903-3363  
Fax: 252-459-1774

Post Office Box 9  
Nashville, NC 27858

jaleonardinc@embarqmail.com



## We are your HOME Team!

Winter, spring, summer or fall, we are here to handle your home repair needs quickly and professionally at the best possible price.



Heating & Air Conditioning • Plumbing  
Electrical • General Repairs

### METRO MAINTENANCE

COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING • PLUMBING  
ELECTRICAL • GENERAL REPAIRS

252-977-2730 • metro-maintenance.com



## piggly wiggly®

### DOWN HOME DOWN THE STREET

Cutting Fresh Beef & Pork Every Day  
Fresh Produce • Fresh Fruit • Full Service Deli  
Fresh Salad Bar • Freshly Baked Cakes

Your Full Service Grocery Store is Here For You!

COME SEE US!  
Great Prices  
You Can Count On!



731 E. Washington St.  
Nashville  
252-220-6515





**SANTREVOR SILVER AND THE NORTHERN NASH KNIGHTS CAN BE SEEN THIS FALL ON WHIG-TV**

# WHIG-TV To Air Prep Matchups

By GEOFF NEVILLE  
Graphic Sportswriter

**NASH COUNTY** -- WHIG-TV will once again provide broadcast coverage of the top high school football games in Nash, Edgecombe and Wilson Counties every week.

Action began on August 23 with the contest between Rocky Mount and Tarboro and will conclude on November 1 with the annual rivalry grudge matchup between Wilson Fike and Wilson Hunt.

Northern Nash will be televised three times, as will cross-highway rival Nash Central.

Southern Nash's contests are slated to be broadcast four times, while Rocky Mount will be featured on a trio of occasions.

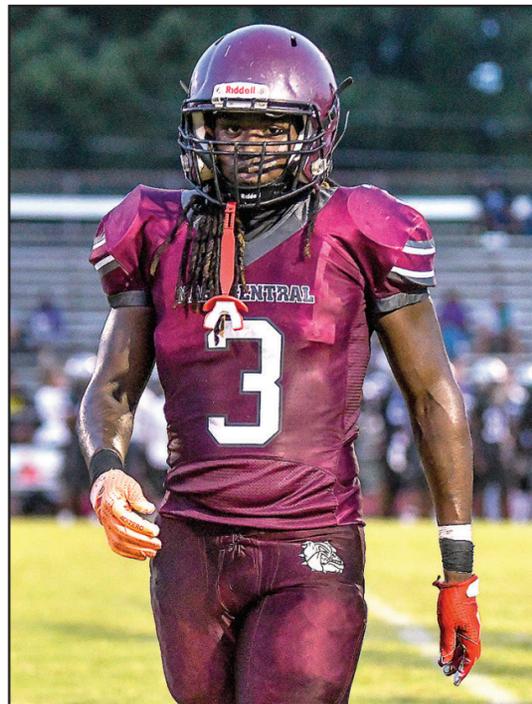
For more information and viewing options, visit [www.whigtv.com](http://www.whigtv.com).

The complete 2024 WHIG-TV high school football schedule is as follows:

- August 23 -- Rocky Mount vs. Tarboro
- August 29 -- Northern Nash vs. Wilson Fike
- August 30 -- SouthWest Edgecombe vs. Nash Central
- September 6 -- Wilson Fike vs. Southern Nash
- September 13 -- SouthWest Edgecombe vs. Tarboro
- September 20 -- Nash Central vs. Southern Nash
- September 27 -- No Game
- October 4 -- Nash Central vs. Rocky Mount
- October 11 -- Northern Nash vs. Nash Central
- October 18 -- Rocky Mount vs. Southern Nash OR Faith Christian School vs. Rocky Mount Academy
- October 25 -- Southern Nash vs. Northern Nash
- November 1 -- Wilson Fike vs. Wilson Hunt



**SOUTHERN NASH CORNERBACK ZURIEL CURTIS**



**NASH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL'S MALIEK PITTMAN**



**SOUTHERN NASH'S QUINTON COOLEY NOW A RUNNING BACK FOR LIBERTY**

## COLLEGE GRID SKEDS

From Staff Reports

**NASH COUNTY** -- Here are area schedules for the 2024 college football season:

- APPALACHIAN ST.**  
Coach: Shawn Clark
- August 31 -- EAST TENNESSEE STATE
  - September 7 -- at Clemson
  - September 14 -- at East Carolina
  - September 19 -- SOUTH ALABAMA\*
  - September 28 -- LIBERTY
  - October 5 -- at Marshall\*
  - October 12 -- at Louisiana\*
  - October 26 -- GEORGIA STATE
  - November 2 -- OLD DOMINION\*
  - November 7 -- at Coastal Carolina\*
  - November 23 -- JAMES MADISON\*
  - November 30 -- at Georgia Southern\*

\* -- Denotes Sun Belt Conference Games

**BARTON**  
Coach: Chip Hester

- September 5 -- WEST VIRGINIA STATE
- September 14 -- at Chowan
- September 21 -- at Emory and Henry\*
- September 28 -- ANDERSON\*
- October 5 -- at Carson-Newman\*
- October 12 -- at Wingate\*
- October 19 -- LENOIR-RHYNE\*
- October 26 -- at Newberry\*
- November 2 -- CATAWBA\*
- November 9 -- at Limestone\*
- November 16 -- UVA-WISE\*

\* -- Denotes South Atlantic Conference Games

**CAMPBELL**  
Coach: Braxton Harris

- August 31 -- at Liberty
- September 7 -- at Western Carolina
- September 14 -- at Rhode Island\*
- September 21 -- STONY BROOK\*
- September 28 -- DELAWARE STATE
- October 5 -- NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
- October 19 -- at William and Mary\*
- October 26 -- NORTH CAROLINA A&T\*
- November 2 -- at Elon\*
- November 9 -- RICHMOND\*
- November 16 -- at Delaware\*
- November 23 -- TOWSON\*

\* -- Denotes Coastal Athletic Association Games

**DUKE**  
Coach: Manny Diaz

- August 30 -- ELON
- September 6 -- at Northwestern
- September 14 -- at UCONN
- September 21 -- at Middle Tennessee
- September 28 --



**SOUTHERN NASH'S JACKSON VICK NOW A DB AT NC STATE**



**SOUTHERN'S DAE'ONE WILKINS NOW A KENTUCKY ASSISTANT**

- August 30 -- ELON
- September 6 -- at Northwestern
- September 14 -- at UCONN
- September 21 -- at Middle Tennessee
- September 28 --
- October 5 -- at Georgia Tech\*
- October 18 -- FLORIDA STATE\*
- October 26 --
- See SKEDS, Page 8



**NEW FRANKLINTON FOOTBALL HEAD COACH MIKE JUSTICE**



**SOUTHERN NASH IS A DOMINANT AREA FORCE ON THE GRIDIRON**

# The Good Old Days

**Nash County football squads currently rolling**

By GEOFF NEVILLE  
Graphic Sportswriter

**NASH COUNTY --** To paraphrase the Carly Simon epic 'Anticipation' -- stay right here, cause these are the good old days.

Certainly, Nash County has seen its share of epic gridiron glory, but it would be hard to go back through history and top the current collective efforts of the county's high school football programs.

Yes, the county's clubs have played for state championships five times this century -- and Rocky Mount even brought one home to Nash County one decade ago.

But look at the current

See DAYS, Page 8



**TOUCHDOWNS ARE PLENTIFUL THESE DAYS FOR THE NORTHERN NASH KNIGHTS**



**BUNN GRID COACH ANDRE' DAVIS**

## Nash County clubs favored in Big East

By GEOFF NEVILLE  
Graphic Sportswriter

**NASH COUNTY --** Barring an upset, it's looking like another Nash County kind of season this fall in the Big East Conference football standings.

The county ruled the Big East last fall, with Southern Nash (Class 3-A and overall) and Nash Central (Class 2-A) claiming the crowns in their respective classifications.

The only other expected contender was Northern Nash, but the Knights fell to Southern in the regular season -- only to avenge that setback in the first round of the Class 3-A State Playoffs en route to making the Regional Championship Game.

Unless rebuilding plans arrive ahead of fruition at other schools, look for more of the same this fall as Southern Nash and Northern Nash are expected to duke it out for overall and Class 3-A supremacy.

But clubs return several key standouts from last season's respective groups, while some newcomers are also expected to play key roles as those programs continue to rev at a high-octane level.

The other Class 3-A squads in the Big East are Rocky Mount and Franklinton -- and both are looking to be improved from 2023.

Rocky Mount dressed an unprecedented number of sophomores on its varsity roster last fall -- and those players are now potential-rich



**NN'S TAMARIUS MOORE**

juniors as the Gryphons look to bounce back from a rare sub-.500 campaign under the direction of veteran head coach Jason Battle.

RM's rebuild might still be a year away, but the Gryphons always have the talent to secure a victory on a given night.

Franklinton also has

See BIG EAST, Page 8



**NASH CENTRAL COACH CHRIS LEE**



Auto Accident • Headaches  
Neck Pain • Low Back Pain

**443-7400**  
3123 Sunset Ave • Rocky Mount, NC



**Dr. Allen R. Bolin**  
Chiropractic Physician



## RONALD SYKES

**Four Wheel Alignment**  
*from*  
**Mini to Duallies**

**283 W. Raleigh Blvd.**  
**Rocky Mount, NC**

**252-442-4457**



**NASH CENTRAL'S JAQUAN MORRIS**

**Wishing a great season to ALL NASH COUNTY FOOTBALL TEAMS!**



PROUD SUPPLIER OF NASH COUNTY'S SWEET POTATOES



We are honored to be a part of the community's past, present, and future history.

[www.NashProduce.com](http://www.NashProduce.com)



## HEDGEPEETH-HUTSON INSURANCE

Carolina's Choice for Insurance

**Brian Hutson**  
Agent



221 S. Barnes St • PO Box 40 • Nashville, NC  
Office: 252-459-2613 Fax: 252-459-3208 Email: brian@hhins4u.com



**FORMER BUNN WILDCAT TY HOWLE NOW AN ASSISTANT COACH AT PENN STATE**

**SKEDS**

continued from page 6

**SOUTHERN METHODIST\***

- November 2 -- at Miami\*
- November 9 -- at North Carolina State\*

**NOVEMBER 23 -- VIRGINIA TECH\***

- November 30 -- at Wake Forest\*

**EAST CAROLINA**

Coach: Mike Houston

- August 31 -- NORFOLK STATE
- September 7 -- at Old Dominion
- September 14 -- APPALACHIAN STATE
- September 21 -- at Liberty
- September 28 -- UTSA\*
- October 5 -- at Charlotte\*
- October 19 -- at Army\*
- October 26 -- TEMPLE\*
- November 7 -- FLORIDA ATLANTIC\*

**LOUISBURG**

Coach: Quinderra Spellman

- August 31 -- GEORGIA WAR-HAWKS
- September 7 -- vs. Lackawanna College (at Potomac High School, Virginia)
- September 14 -- HOCKING COLLEGE
- September 21 -- SUSSEX COUNTY CC
- September 28 -- at Newport News Apprentice School
- October 5 -- vs. Georgia Military College (at Brookland-Cayce High School, South Carolina)
- October 12 -- at Myrtle Beach Collegiate
- October 19 -- PALMETTO COLLEGIATE
- October 27 -- at Brevard College

**JV**

- \* November 2 -- vs. Nassau CC (at Alexandria City High School, Virginia)

Note: Home Games Will Be Played At Louisburg High School

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Coach: Mack Brown

- August 29 -- at Minnesota
- September 7 -- CHARLOTTE
- September 14 -- NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
- September 21 -- JAMES MADISON
- September 28 -- at Duke\*
- October 5 -- PITTSBURGH\*
- October 12 -- GEORGIA TECH\*
- October 26 -- at Virginia\*
- November 2 -- at Florida State\*
- November 16 -- WAKE FOREST\*

- November 23 -- at Boston College\*
- November 30 -- NC STATE\*

\* -- Denotes Atlantic Coast Conference Games

**NORTH CAROLINA A&T**

Coach: Vincent Brown

- August 29 -- at Wake Forest
- September 7 -- WINSTON-SALEM STATE
- September 14 -- DELAWARE\*
- September 21 -- at North Carolina Central
- September 28 -- at South Carolina State
- October 5 -- at Richmond\*
- October 19 -- HAMPTON\*
- October 26 -- at Campbell\*
- November 2 -- WILLIAM AND MARY\*
- November 9 -- at Villanova\*
- November 16 -- at Towson University\*

\* -- Denotes Coastal Athletic Association Games

**NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL**

Coach: Trei Oliver

- September 1 -- vs. Alabama State (at Miami Gardens, Florida)
- September 7 -- ELON
- September 14 -- at North Carolina
- September 21 -- NORTH CAROLINA A&T
- September 28 -- vs. Norfolk State (at Indianapolis, Indiana)\*
- October 5 -- at Campbell
- October 12 -- VIRGINIA-LYNCHBURG
- October 26 -- MORGAN STATE\*
- October 31 -- at South Carolina State\*
- November 1 -- HOWARD\*
- November 23 -- at Delaware State\*

\* -- Denotes MEAC Games

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE**

Coach: Dave Doeren

- August 29 -- WESTERN CAROLINA
- September 7 -- vs. Tennessee (at Charlotte, NC)
- September 14 -- LOUISIANA TECH
- September 21 -- at Clemson\*
- September 28 -- NORTHERN ILLINOIS
- October 5 -- WAKE FOREST\*
- October 12 -- SYRACUSE\*
- October 19 -- at California\*
- November 2 -- STANFORD\*
- November 9 -- DUKE\*
- November 21 -- at Georgia Tech\*
- November 30 -- at North Carolina



**NORTHERN NASH FIGHTING KNIGHT AMIR RUSSELL**

**DAYS**

continued from page 7

combined states of the programs at Nash Central, Southern Nash and Northern Nash -- and the youthful potential that Rocky Mount currently possesses -- and it's easy to say that living in the moment might be the best of all thought processes for area fans.

Start with Northern Nash, where the Fighting Knights have built a strong foundation under the direction of head coach Andrew Farriss.

That hard work and commitment brought a state finals appearance to Red Oak two years ago, along with a Final Four berth in 2023.

And with a total program now in place -- and feeder systems overrun with talent -- there's no reason to believe that Northern Nash's excellence will stop in the near future.

The same can be said across US 64 at Nash Central, where the Bulldogs are a program living under the radar if there ever was one.

Imagine this -- Central has made the third round of the Class 2-A State Playoffs in each of the past three campaigns -- and made the Elite Eight last season.

Yet Central doesn't seem to receive the same statewide accolades that neighbors Southern Nash and Northern Nash do -- not that veteran skipper Chris Lee seems to mind.

Lee has taken his knowledge of the wing-T offense and turned it into an

unstoppable force at Nash Central.

Just look to last year's NBA-style victory over Hertford County to see a reinforcement of that assessment.

Lee is a master at putting the right pieces in the right places -- and the result is that the Bulldogs have rebounded from the COVID Era in resounding fashion.

Then there's Southern Nash, which continues to excel at former coach Brian Foster's blueprint of great feeder systems, loyal alums now coaching, off-season commitment and unrivaled community support.

The Firebirds have become the long-term envy of programs across the state as they continue to produce double-digit victory seasons to go with Big East Conference Championships.

And just as important to the people at Southern Nash as the 2019 state finals appearance is the fact that the Firebirds have churned out a myriad of collegiate players -- something Foster said all performers were capable of if they stayed the course within the program.

Foster is now retired, but current head coach -- and former player and assistant -- Brian Batchelor is keeping the blueprint alive.

Yep, these are truly the good old days of football in Nash County -- the times residents will be talking about for years to come.



**SOUTHERN NASH FIREBIRD ISRAEL WHITAKER**

**Bishops picked fifth in league**

From Staff Reports

**ROME, GA.** -- The North Carolina Wesleyan University Battling Bishops' football program has been picked fifth in the 2024 USA South Conference Football Coaches' Poll.

North Carolina Wesleyan received 35 votes in the poll, coming off a 4-6 campaign in 2023.

The Battling Bishops return four all-conference selections from a year ago, including USA South Specialist of the Year Braxtyn Green who kicked the longest field goal in NCWU history, nailing a 51-yarder against Southern

Virginia University as a freshman.

Anthony Byrd will lead an explosive backfield into 2024, as the all-conference back returns to the Bishops after having an outstanding 751 yard campaign last season.

Wesleyan opens the 2024 regular season on September 7 on the road against Averett University.

Kickoff is scheduled for 6 p.m. on the AU campus, which is located in picturesque Danville, Virginia.

The following week, Ferrum comes to Rocky Mount on September 14 for the Battling Bishops' home opener, also slated to begin at 6 p.m.

**BIG EAST**

continued from page 7

its share of solid returns, but the Red Rams have a new coach in former assistant skipper Michael Justice.

Like Rocky Mount, FHS will be extremely young with only 12 seniors -- and plenty of sophomores and juniors are expected to make extensive contributions.

If those players continue to develop, the Red Rams could play a spoiler role down the stretch in the Big East -- just like

two years ago when they stunned Rocky Mount.

On the Class 2-A level, Nash Central is the clear favorite, with foes Bunn and Roanoke Rapids currently in rebuilding phases -- though both clubs appear to be making progress.

Still, the Bulldogs will be hard to beat as they seek their fourth consecutive title in the Class 2-A portion of the Big East.

Central has reached at least the third round of the state playoffs in each of the last three seasons -- and made the fourth round in 2023 before being outlasted in the second half at perennial powerhouse Clinton High School.

And with so much talent, Central will once again look to knock off some of its 3-A opponents in the Big East -- and maybe even make a run at a possible overall conference championship.



**NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL QUARTERBACKS (L TO R) JC LEWIS AND TRISTON SIGERS**

**KNIGHTS**

continued from page 3

working hard on defense in the off-season because that game showed us some of the deficiencies we had."

With so many changes around Northern's program, one would expect an almost immediate falloff. Despite that, the Knights are heading into their third week of the season with a pair of comfortable wins over former conference foes Hunt and Fike.

Northern opened the season with a 35-14 victory over Hunt on Aug. 23, following that up by doubling its win total in week two by way of a 31-13 defeat of Fike in the teams first road contest of the year.

The Knights' running game has been stellar through two weeks of action, firing off 754 rushing yards led by Myles Eatmon with three touchdowns and 384 yards on the ground.

Barian "BJ" Strickland tabbed 133 rushing yards and three scores in the team's season opener as well.

The Knights have two more nonconference bouts before attempting to win its third conference championship in the last four seasons during its league slate, with Northern taking on a pair of Greenville opponents in J.H. Rose and D.H. Conley.

The Knights will travel to Rose on Sept. 6 before closing out its four-game nonconference schedule at home against the Conley Vikings on Sept. 13. Northern faced both Pitt County powerhouses last season, delivering a pair of big wins, each coming by at least two scores.

Northern, who dropped last year's conference crown to Southern Nash, will begin its journey towards trying to regain the league title on Sept. 27 at Bunn, the first of three conference games on the road. The Knights will travel to Nash Central on Oct. 11 and Rocky Mount on Nov. 1, with its annual rivalry game against the Gryphons serving as the season finale.

The league slate at home includes dates against Roanoke Rapids (Oct. 4) and Franklinton (Oct. 18), while what will likely be the conference's premier game taking place on Oct. 25 as Northern hosts Southern Nash in its final home game of the year.

While summer on the high school sports circuit is typically reserved for workouts, practices and camps, Northern Nash and its football program have been in the news for some bigger reasons this offseason.

Former Northern Nash Knight Kameron "Jay" Johnson '20 became the second player in school history to make an NFL roster this year. Johnson was selected out of Barton College as an undrafted free agent by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers not long ago, was then pegged for the organization's minicamp roster and made its 53-man opening week roster on Aug. 28.

The Bucs will open its 2024 season on Sept. 8 against the Washington Commanders, with Johnson due for a homecoming on Dec. 1 when Tampa Bay visits the Carolina Panthers at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte.

**GRYPHONS**

continued from page 5

including posting losing seasons in two of its past three campaigns -- albeit with an extremely young club in 2023.

RM has also fallen behind some of its Nash County neighbors in the Big East Conference -- a trend Coach Jason Battle and Company would love to see conclude this fall, if not in the very near future.

Battle just might have the group available to swing the county's power pendulum back toward its Eastern end.

Rocky Mount is blessed with a strong junior class, meaning the Gryphons, though maybe one year away, should once again be a Big East Conference challenger.

RM has only eight seniors on its roster this year, and the Gryphons are dominated by a junior class that goes a whopping 20 deep on the varsity level.

That list is especially evident at the skill positions, where Rocky Mount is paced by a quartet of juniors -- quarterback Alex Beasley, running backs Tavoris Parker and Ty'lik Harrell and wide receiver Jaden Haney.

Look for Isaiah Chavis, another 11th-grader, to also make contributions from the wide receiver position.

Christian Buck, one of the few seniors on the Rocky Mount roster, has already placed himself among the great place-kickers in Gryphons' history, most notably the legendary Nick Hahula.

Buck was a day-one starter at the kicking position as a freshman -- and has been dominant for the Gryphons ever since.



**ROCKY MOUNT HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVER KENAN BARNES**

RM has some size up front on both sides of the ball, but the Gryphons are still working out filling depth at those positions.

BJ Williams, a senior veteran, will start up front on both sides of the ball for Rocky Mount.

Another junior force for Rocky Mount will be highly regarded Jack McKellar, who will lead the Gryphons' defense from his linebacker position.

Once again, RM will

have to endure a brutal schedule -- and not just in the always-competitive Big East Conference.

The Gryphons have quite a daunting non-league worksheet, including the likes of Tarboro, Vance County, Edenton, Holmes and Elizabeth City Northeast ahead of their Big East opener on September 20 at Bunn -- which upset RM two years ago in a turnover-plagued contest at the BHS Football Field.



**SOUTHERN NASH DEFENSIVE LINEMEN (L TO R) ZAHMIR ASHFORD AND CHRIS HARRIS**

**BIRDS**

continued from page 4

With a strong arm, solid arc and nifty touch, Battle has the ability to add yet another wrinkle to Southern Nash's double-wing offense -- and the threat of the forward pass is an intangible that is destined to give opponents fits this season -- and for the next three years of Battle's career.

"Overall, we are still very young," said Batchelor, who is especially upbeat about his potential-rich sophomore class. "But we also have some good players and experience in spots. I feel like we have a pretty nice mix right now."

Southern Nash will return home this Friday night to tangle with long-time rival Wilson Fike at 7 p.m. at historic Firebird Stadium.



**ASSISTANT BRIAN RICE TALKS STRATEGY WITH STAR TYLIK MITCHELL**



**NASH CENTRAL FOOTBALL CAPTAINS (L TO R) JAAZIAH JONES, JAMES RODGERS, AIDEN SCOTT AND OLIVER BELHOMME**

**DOGS**

continued from page 2

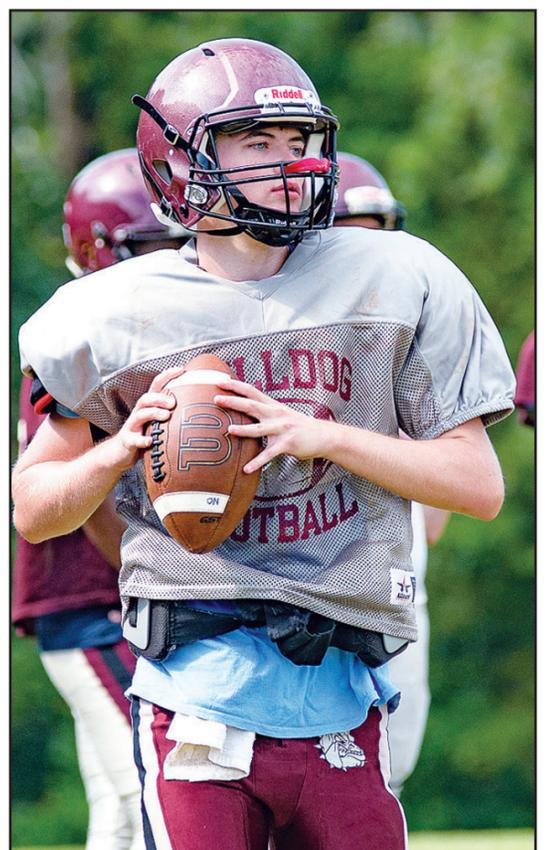
process on the defensive side of the ball was tested last week as the Bulldogs were defeated 34-28 at home against the South-West Edgecombe Cougars.

As always, Lee prefers to split the regular season into three parts -- the non-conference, the Big East slate against Class 3-A foes and the Big East schedule versus 2-A opponents.

Lee's preference is to go at least 2-2 against the Big East 3-A clubs -- and that is certainly a possibility once again for the Bulldogs.

Then come the two biggest outings of the campaign -- at least from a non-rivalry standpoint -- as outcomes against Class 2-A squads Roanoke Rapids and Bunn will determine the Big East 2-A champion, along with an automatic berth and favorite seeding for the state football playoffs.

Nash Central is looking for a four-peat in the 2-A Big East as the Bulldogs have not lost to either BHS or RR in each of the last three years.



**NASH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL RETURNING QUARTERBACK WINSTON LEE**

*A Cut Above the Rest*



**BAKER'S PROFESSIONAL LAWN, INC.**  
SERVING EASTERN NC SINCE 1980

DAN BAKER / OWNER  
danbakerpro@gmail.com

**252-314-3639**  
www.BakerProLawn.com

Your Source For:  
Residential or Commercial • Complete Lawn Maintenance  
Irrigation Installation & Repair • Landscape Design & Installation  
Weed/Insect/Disease Control • Fertilization & Sod Lighting  
Land Clearing & More!



**FIREBIRDS - ALL IN!**



August 23 August 29 September 6 September 13 September 20	EAST WAKE at South Granville FIKE at Southern Alamance NASH CENTRAL	September 27 October 11 October 18 October 25 November 1	at Roanoke Rapids BUNN ROCKY MOUNT at Northern Nash at Franklinton
---	---	--	--

**Cooking What America Loves Best!**



**GREAT FOOD!**  
Fantastic Prices • Limited Time

USDA CHOICE FRESH CUT DAILY! | GIFT CARDS AVAILABLE!

Hwy. 301 North, Rocky Mount • 446-3262

**NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL 2024 SCHEDULE**

August 29	at Fike
Sept. 6	at J.H. Rose
Sept. 13	D.H. Conley
Sept. 27	at Bunn
Oct. 4	Roanoke Rapids
Oct. 11	at Nash Central
Oct. 18	Franklinton
Oct. 25	Southern Nash
Nov. 1	at Rocky Mount

**SUNDAY - #1**

Sirloin Reg. \$11.99  
**\$10.49**

**MONDAY - #1**

Sirloin Reg. \$11.99  
**\$10.49**

**TUESDAY - #3**

Sirloin Tips Reg. \$9.99  
**\$8.49**

**WEDNESDAY - #14**

Chopped Sirloin Reg. \$9.99  
**\$8.49**

**THURSDAY - #3**

Sirloin Tips Reg. \$9.99  
**\$8.49**

**FRIDAY - #5**

Super Top Sirloin Reg. \$12.99  
**\$11.99**

**SATURDAY - #9**

Large Super Top Sirloin Reg. \$14.99  
**\$13.59**

Meals include the biggest baked potato in town or french fries. And when you dine in...complimentary Bakery Bar and Dessert Bar.



**OWN THE BEST ON THE BLOCK**



**Toro 75750 TimeCutter 5000 50" Zero Turn Mower**

23HP Kawasaki engine  
IronForged deck – Foot lift assist  
Smart Speed technology  
Step-through front end  
Storage cubby and cup holder  
Toolless belt cover  
Handcrafted seat with arm rests  
3 year / unlimited hour residential warranty

**SALES & SERVICE YOU CAN COUNT ON!**  
We stock and service consumer and commercial mowers.  
Visit us today for the best service & parts inventory in the area!



309 South Barnes Street • Nashville • 252-459-2713 • www.stricklandequip.com

**BULLDOG Strong!**

**NASH CENTRAL 2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

AUGUST 23 AUGUST 30 SEPTEMBER 6 SEPTEMBER 13 SEPTEMBER 20	SOUTHEAST HALIFAX SW EDGEcombe at Goldsboro at Beddingfield at Southern Nash	SEPTEMBER 27 OCTOBER 4 OCTOBER 11 OCTOBER 18 NOVEMBER 1	FRANKLINTON at Rocky Mount NORTHERN NASH at Bunn at Roanoke Rapids
---	--	---	--

**KICK OFF THE SEASON WITH DUNKIN'!**





**Rocky Mount Academy EAGLES**

**2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

DATE	OPPONENT
August 29	Berean Baptist Academy
September 6	Halifax Academy
September 13	at Arendell Parrot Academy
September 20	at Liberty Christian Academy
September 27	St. David's School
October 4	at Cary Christian School
October 11	at Father Vincent Capodanno National Athletic Park
October 18	Faith Christian School

3646 Sunset Ave., Ste. 130  
Rocky Mount, NC  
(Across the Street from Harris Teeter)

West Nashville Plaza  
102-A W. Nashville Dr.  
Nashville, NC





**NORTH CAROLINA TARHEELS**

**2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

Date	Opponent
Saturday, September 7	Charlotte
Saturday, September 14	NC Central
Saturday, September 21	James Madison
Saturday, September 28	at Duke
Saturday, October 5	Pittsburgh
Saturday, October 12	Georgia Tech
Saturday, October 26	at Virginia
Saturday, November 2	at Florida State
Saturday, November 16	Wake Forest
Saturday, November 23	at Boston College
Saturday, November 30	NC State



**SUPER FLAME GAS COMPANY, INC**  
"Your Hometown Propane Company for 72 Years"

• Residential • Commercial • Cylinder filling

**252-446-6188**

315 W. Ridge St., Rocky Mount

• Gas Grills • Gas logs • Heaters

www.superflamegas.com

*Saluting the Gryphons of Rocky Mount High School.*



**Rocky Mount Gryphon Football Schedule**

Date	Opponent
August 30	VANCE COUNTY
September 6	at Holmes
September 13	NORTHEASTERN
September 20	at Bunn
October 4	NASH CENTRAL
October 11	at Roanoke Rapids
October 18	at Southern Nash
October 25	FRANKLINTON
November 1	NORTHERN NASH



**Allegiance LLC**  
Overhead Door and Dock

- Quality Work In A Timely Manner
- Residential & Commercial Doors
- Rolling Slat Doors - Dock Levelers
- Gate Access - Walk-Through Doors

**1038 EASTERN AVENUE - NASHVILLE, NC**  
JAMIE 252-450-5914 • ADAM 252-903-7805