

NASH CENTRAL HS GIRLS BASKETBALL 'DOGS CASH IN



NASH CENTRAL FRESHMAN STANDOUT A'DIA CASH
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson and Carl Copeland)

Mom, daughter spark NCHS to crown

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- The old saying that Cash Is King (or Queen if you want to look at it literally) certainly holds true for the Nash Central High School girls basketball program.



Terri Cash has been the successful head coach at NCHS since the school's inception at 2002 -- and has shown no sign of letting up.

And this past season, Coach Cash welcomed her daughter, A'dia, into the program as a potential-rich freshman.

Of course, A'dia has been a Lady Bulldog since the day she was born -- she was just never able to officially suit



NASH CENTRAL HEAD COACH TERRI CASH

See NCHS, Page 2B



2026 NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL BOYS GOLF TEAM

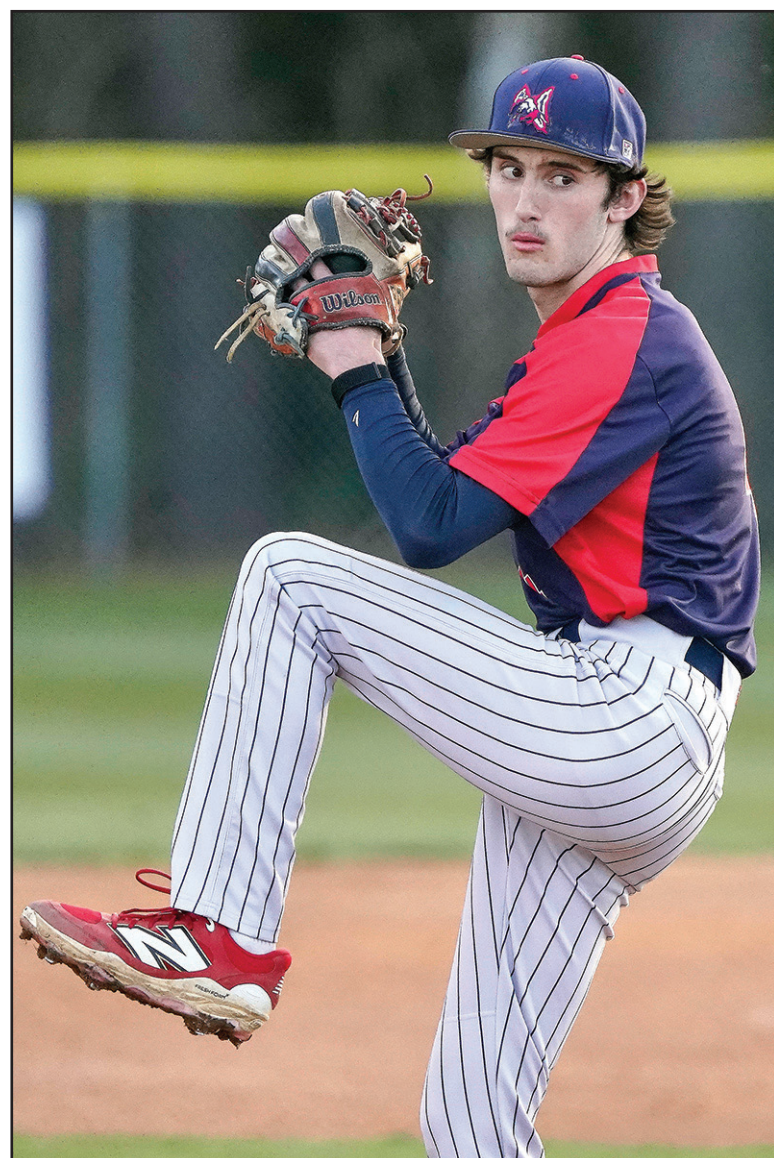
Big East Links Legends Competition fierce in tough golf conference

From Staff Reports

BUNN -- The addition of some tradition-rich programs promised to add to the already-strong competition level in the Big East Conference boys golf standings -- and the Southern Nash Firebirds have accepted that lofty challenge.

Southern Nash has been strong early in the campaign and came away with a victory during the fourth Big East match of the spring, which was held March 25 at The River Golf Course, located in Franklin County.

See GOLF, Page 2B



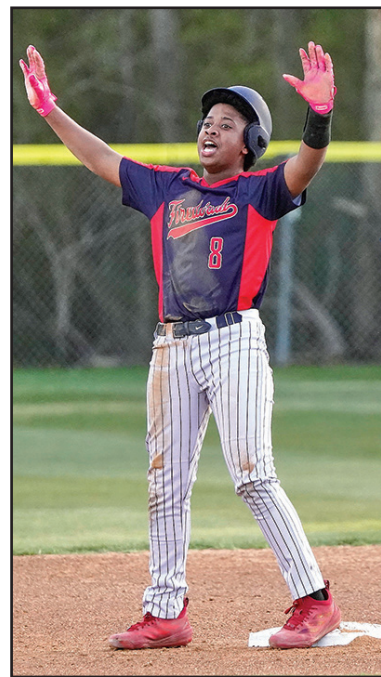
SOUTHERN NASH PITCHER GRAYDEN MURRAY
(Photos Submitted by Carl Copeland)

BATTLE BALL!! SNHS off to exceptional start

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

STANHOPE -- Seven wins in its last nine outings have emphatically announced the arrival of this year's Southern Nash High School baseball club, a squad that improved to an impressive 9-3 on the year after a 10-0 shut-out of East Wake on Tuesday evening.

Each of the Firebirds' nine victories have come over a different opponent, with Southern Nash currently sitting at 5-1 in Class 5-A/6A Big East Conference diamond play.



SOUTHERN NASH'S
JOSHUA BATTLE

See BIRDS, Page 2B



Nash Central's Whitaker signs with Norfolk State

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

ROCKY MOUNT -- The cliché "it takes one to know one" can apply to a lot of different subjects --athletes included.

While it may not have taken Vince Lombardi to determine that Nash Central's Jayden Whitaker was a shoo-in to compete at the collegiate level,

one particularly spectacular former athlete believed in what he saw along with his star-studded coaching staff, and now, Whitaker has his future home.

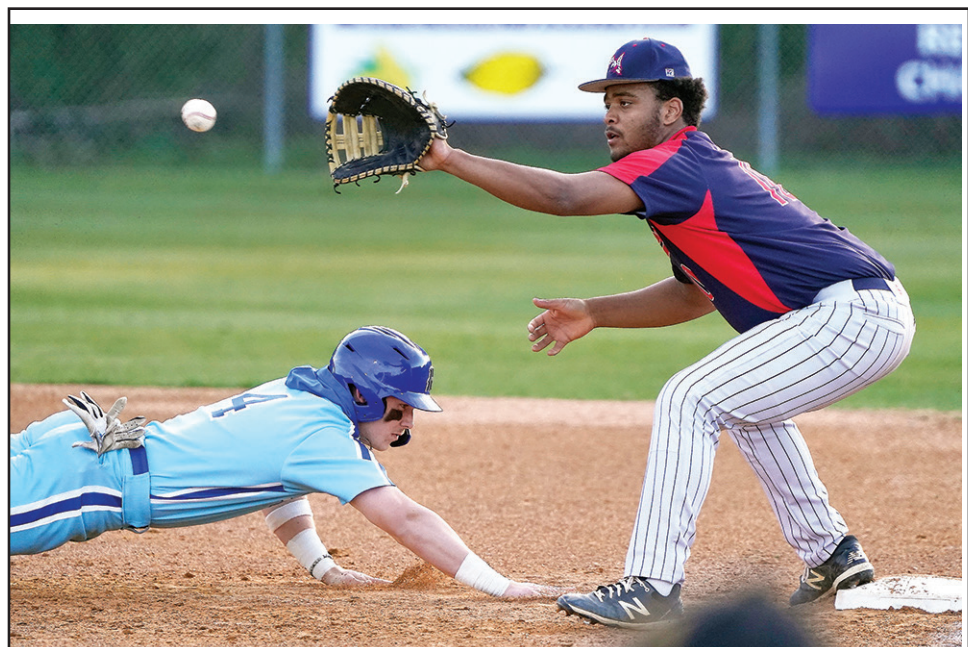
The 2025 East-West All-Star Game qualifier solidified his collegiate commitment recently, opting to spend the next four years at Norfolk

See JAYDEN, Page 2B





SOUTHERN NASH INFIELDER BRAYDEN PARKER



SOUTHERN NASH FIRST SACKER JADEN FRAZIER

BIRDS

continued from page 1B

Head coach Kwamaine Battle's team started the year with back-to-back decisive victories over SouthWest Edgecombe (11-0) and Washington (11-3), followed by dropping their first game of the year to Clayton (5-4). Since then, the Firebirds have racked up league wins over Southern Wayne (17-1), C.B. Aycock (7-6) and Fike (13-3) in addition to sweeping a pair of Nash County rivals in Rocky Mount (15-1) and Northern Nash (10-0) last week. On top of Tuesday's win over East Wake, the Firebirds' also thumped Raleigh's Sanderson High School back on March 13. With eight games still left on its regular season schedule, Southern has easily solidified itself as a contender in the Big East Conference race for the first time in a long time, thanks to a wealth of experience brought back from last year's roster. What was likely to be a breakout year on the diamond for the Firebirds, Southern entered the season returning seven of its nine starters from last year's team, headlined by Kwamaine 'Isaiah' Battle -- the third-year

Firebird, not his skipper father -- Luke Faulkner and Maddox Deans, all who wrapped their 2025 campaigns hitting above .300. On the mound, Southern brought back more than 140 innings of work from a season ago, highlighted by Grayden Murray, who led the Firebirds this year with 49 innings pitched and a 2.29 earned run average (ERA) in 2025. Murray has been a key piece of Southern Nash's success so far this season, with the Firebirds limiting opponents to a maximum of seven runs in a game thus far. Offensively, Southern has outscored its opponents by a staggering 112-39 margin on the year, having yet to be shut out while its issued three shutouts on the mound already. Now having officially hit the halfway point in league play, the Firebirds will face Southern Wayne as the second leg of Big East competition begins. Southern will face the Saints on the road today followed by a nonconference matchup against Richmond on Monday. The Firebirds will then take a brief intermis-

sion as Nash County Public Schools observe its annual spring break, coming back from a week-long hiatus with a key matchup against Aycock on Tuesday, April 14. From there, Southern will make return trips to both Fike and Rocky Mount, while hosting Hunt and Rocky Mount on April 21 and 23. The Firebirds' April 21 tilt against Hunt could largely determine the Big East Conference crown, with the Warriors the lone league opponent to clip Southern thus far. Southern will close the regular season on April 30 against county foe Nash Central, with a potential run in the Class 5-A playoffs imminent for the Firebirds. Last season resulted in one of Southern's first playoff wins in too-many-years to count, and this year looks to be a serious chance to build and sustain the momentum from a season ago. Today's road matchup at Southern Wayne is set for a 6 p.m. first pitch, whereas the Firebirds' next home game against C.B. Aycock is slated for a 6:30 p.m. start on April 14.

GOLF

continued from page 1B

The Firebirds posted 336 strokes to edge runner-up CB Aycock by just one shot. Wilson Hunt was third at 353 in the bunched standings, followed by Wilson Fike (368), Northern Nash (373) and Southern Wayne (427). Northern Nash's Britt Crumley, the reigning Big East Player of the Year, tied Aycock's Caden Paugh for medalist honors with a 76. Hunt's Nathan Skinner was third at 81, but the next three positions all went to Firebirds as their depth helped propel them to the team crown. And all of those SN standouts are juniors -- Noah Craft (82), Samuel Finn (83) and Joshua Barnes (84). Southern Nash also received an 11th-place performance from Seth Davis, who fired an 87 on the difficult River layout. Davis is the lone senior for the Firebirds among their Top-Five finishers on March 25. Rocky Mount didn't have enough competitors to qualify for the team standings, but the Gryphons did receive strong showings from Benjamin Parks (86) and Kaleb Wells (87). Beyond the talented Crumley, Northern Nash's next score posters were

Chase Lancaster (24th at 97) and Jefferson Hux (26th at 98). The Big East is using a unique scoring system to determine the overall team champion for the year, with seven points being given to each day's winner -- and down the line (six for second, five for third, etc). Under this system, three schools are currently tied atop the standings with 22 points each -- Southern Nash, CB Aycock and Wilson Fike. And Hunt is certainly still in the crown mix with 20 points. This mean's the Big East Conference Team Champion race will probably not be determined until the final event. Crumley is in a strong position to defend his individual title as he currently holds the lead with 217 total strokes -- 11 tallies ahead of runner-up Charlie Thurston at 228. Rounding out the Top Five in the Big East Conference individual standings to date are Rocky Mount's Wells (233), CB Aycock's Paugh (235) and Southern Nash's Barnes (237). The Big East has three 18-hole events remaining, and action will continue to be tight the rest of the way as little has been determined in crowning team and individual champs.



CENTRAL'S JAYDEN WHITAKER SIGNS WITH NORFOLK STATE

JAYDEN

continued from page 1B

State University, a member of the Division I Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC).

The Spartans, who kick off their 2026 campaign on Saturday, Aug. 29 against Division II Winston-Salem State, are led by four-time NFL Pro Bowler and College Football Hall of Famer Michael Vick, who took over the program prior to the 2025 campaign.

A former Atlanta Falcon, Philadelphia Eagle, New York Jet and Pittsburgh Steeler, Vick is a native of Newport News, Va., and was the first overall pick in the 2001 NFL Draft as a quarterback out of Virginia Tech.

"He's just a person like I am," said Whitaker of his new head coach, complimenting and acknowledging his accolades but understanding that couldn't be the biggest factor in his decision. "He's a motivational person, he gives a lot of advice and he's a cool guy to be around."

Whitaker, who was a star on the offensive line for Nash Central also wrestled and participated in indoor track and field during his high school career, reaching state championship qualifications in both of his secondary sports as a Bulldog.

His gridiron prowess was enough to earn him a spot on the East-West All-Star Game roster back in December, competing alongside fellow Nash County standouts Luke Faulkner of Southern Nash and the Rocky Mount duo Micahis Jones and Tavoris Parker.

"It was amazing," said Whitaker of his East-West Game experience, one that officially capped his high school career.

Whitaker played under Rocky Mount head coach Jason Battle during the exhibition, who he enjoyed familiarizing himself with as one of the area's top football minds.

"It was the first time I had been away from home for that long," the future Spartan said. "Being able to pick people's brains and be around the team and the culture was amazing."

While the offensive side of the ball is

where Whitaker spent the majority of his Bulldog tenure, the defensive line is where he made a switch to late in his high school career and where he's expected to grow into a role while at Norfolk State.

Whitaker credited Nash Central assistant coach Alton Nobles as the brains behind his change in position, something that mostly came about during the fall of 2025 - his first year as a starter on the defensive side of the ball.

"We knew we were going to be short on the defensive line after the [2023] season," recalled Whitaker, which is when he really began to change his position.

After spending some time learning that side of the ball, he jumped in fully in 2025 and is now headed to a Division I program because of it.

Whitaker credited his mother for all her support over the years, as well as his teammates and coaches who he feels he couldn't have reached this point without.

The soon-to-be Nash Central graduate was especially gracious toward Bulldog assistant gridiron coach and junior varsity head coach Ricardo Jerome, who he has a longstanding special bond with.

"He doesn't sleep until he gets his kids in contact with college coaches," remarked Whitaker of Jermone, who also coaches track at Central.

Hoping to make the most of his undergraduate degree, Whitaker hopes to attend law school once done with his four years at Norfolk State with dreams of becoming a criminal defense attorney.

The Spartans are looking for a bounceback year after an 1-11 mark in Vick's first season as head coach in 2025, with Norfolk State scheduled to face FBS programs Old Dominion and Virginia on the road after opening the year during College Football's Week Zero.

The school's first MEAC contest will take place on Oct. 24 at South Carolina State.



NASH CENTRAL SENIOR STAR JAKAYLA GAY

NCHS

continued from page 1B

up -- though she rarely missed a game while growing up.

A'dia made her presence known immediately in 2025-26 as she led the Lady Bulldogs in scoring with 18.2 points per game to go with six rebounds, eight assists and six steals.

A'dia's work played a massive role in the Lady Bulldogs posted a 19-6 overall record to go with a second-round berth in the state playoffs.

Nash Central also claimed the Quad County Conference championship with an undefeated mark in league play.

That success led to Terri Cash being tabbed as the QCC Coach of the Year -- the third time she has received a COY honor during her prolific tenure at The Dawg Pound.

Joining A'Dia Cash on the All-QCC Squad were NCHS teammates Jakayla Gay, Jayden Baggett and Harmony Dupree.

Gay, a senior, will go down as one of the best-ever Lady Bulldogs after topping 1,000 points for her career. She will play collegiately at Averett University in Virginia -- the same school that Coach Cash's son,

Montre', starred for. Baggett, an all-around 'glue' performer, will also be missed as she was exceptional on both sides of the court, along with being a scrappy team leader who led by example every night.

But here's the best part of the All-QCC list -- both A'dia Cash and Dupree are freshmen, along with honorable mention pick Jaleesa Perry.

Certainly, the Cashes have a strong nucleus to build around for the next three years as they hope to continue to be the queens of the Quad County Conference.