

NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL
A TRUE LEGEND



FORMER NORTHERN NASH FOOTBALL COACH DALE STEELE
(Photos Courtesy Campbell University Sports Information)

Former NN coach Dale Steele passes away

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

LONGS, S.C. - Former Northern Nash High School Football coach and athletic director Dale Steele, who spent the majority of near 50-year career on the collegiate circuit, passed away last week at the age of 70 following a six-year battle with cancer.

Steele was the head coach of the Knights' program for four seasons from 1995-98, a stint that was bookended by a six-year run as an assistant coach at East Carolina University in Greenville and a four-season campaign at Baylor University in Waco, Texas as the receivers coach.

A native of York, Ala., Steele was a lineman on the football team at the University of South



DALE STEELE ENJOYED A SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS A FOOTBALL COACH

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NASH CENTRAL WILL LOOK FOR A BOUNCEBACK SEASON WHEN THE 2026 HIGH SCHOOL BOYS SOCCER CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF

Soccer Season Looming
Nash County clubs should be strong in leagues

From Staff Reports

NASH COUNTY -- Don't look now, but the start of the 2026 high school boys soccer season is just a few weeks away, with Southern Nash and Northern Nash looking to once again make a significant dent in the Big East Conference standings -- and Nash Central looking to make an upward turn in the Quad County Conference.

Action will begin on August 10 with Nash Central hosting Northern Nash in a backyard rivalry showdown.

One day later, Southern Nash will kick off its campaign at home with a non-conference meeting with the Sanderson Spartans out of Wake County.

Schedules for Nash Central, Southern Nash

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NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL VETERAN SPIKE STANDOUT PIPER JONES (LEFT)

KEY RETURNEES
Veterans should spark Knights

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

RED OAK -- Less than two weeks remain until the 2026 Northern Nash Volleyball team takes the court for the first time this season, with the Lady Knights set to open this year's campaign against a cross-the-bridge rival Nash Central on August 10.

Led by head coach Emily Engelking, Northern is in search of its fourth-straight playoff appearance after reaching the postseason in 2023, 2024 and 2025 -- with last season's squad closing the year at 10-10 overall, rounding out its Big East Conference slate in fourth place at a 7-5 mark.

While the Lady Knights lost key contributors in Ava Lloyd, Maylee Garner, Lilly Teets and Ramsey Harris, the team's 2025 leader in kills, aces and



NORTHERN NASH'S JAMIE SMITH

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NASH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL COACH TERRI CASH

Coach Cash will host Ice Bucket Challenge

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- Nash Central High School girls basketball coach Terri Cash will be hosting an Ice Bucket Challenge on August 28 as part of the Bulldogs' home football

contest against the Northern Nash Knights.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the North Carolina ALS Association.

It's difficult to find

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DALE STEELE HELPED BUILD THE FOOTBALL PROGRAM AT CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY IN BUIES CREEK

STEELE

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Carolina, where he earned an undergraduate degree in physical education, following that up by receiving a master’s degree in the same field from Ball State University.

At Ball State, he began his career coaching in college as a graduate assistant who worked with offensive linemen, later landing his first full-time collegiate gig at the University of Wisconsin prior to the 1978 season.

After two seasons at Wisconsin, Steele spent the next decade making stops at Tulane, Wichita State and Kansas State with an additional season in the high school ranks.

Having already built an impressive résumé, he first came to North Carolina ahead of the 1989 season by joining Bill Lewis’ staff at East Carolina in Greenville, overseeing the receivers within the Pirates’ locker room.

After Lewis led the Pirates to a remarkable 11-1 campaign in 1991, a year that included AFCA Coach of the Year honors, he left the Pirates for an opportunity to be the head coach at Georgia Tech.

However, Steele remained in Greenville where he served as an assistant under the legendary Steve Logan until 1994.

During Steele’s final season with ECU he was promoted to associate head coach under Logan, helping the Pirates reach the 1994 Liberty Bowl before relocating to Nash County and taking over as the head coach at Northern Nash High School.

After spending four seasons leading the Knights, Steele stayed in green-and-gold as he took a job with Baylor, serving as the receivers coach for four seasons under his brother, Kevin, who was the Bears’ head man from 1999-2002.

Following his few years in Texas, he spent one season as the associate head coach at East Tennessee State in 2003, then returning to North Carolina in 2004 where he spent the remainder of his coaching career.

From 2004-06, Steele coached running backs while maintaining associate head coach duties at Elon University, a

role that led him to what would then become perhaps the most notable title of his career.

On June 15, 2006, Steele was named the head football coach at Campbell University, a program that aimed to end a 56-year hiatus and revamp its dormant football program. While the Camels didn’t play their first game under Steele until 2008, he oversaw all the buildup of the program’s foundation, one that now competes in the Division I FCS Coastal Athletic Association.

Steele was the head coach of the Camels for five seasons and more than two years of ramping prior to that, with his accomplishments earning himself an induction into the Campbell Athletics Hall of Fame in 2025.

After spending seven total years in Buies Creek, Steele returned to East Carolina for a second stint, serving in an administrative role as the Director of Football Administration under ECU Hall of Famer Ruffin McNeill from 2013-15.

He rejoined the Pirates’ program under Mike Houston in 2018, where he once again served as the Director of Football Administration until his retirement in 2022.

In addition to being inducted into the Campbell Athletics Hall of Fame in 2025, Steele received the prestigious Orange Tie Award at the Camels’ annual Orange Tie Gala on Nov. 14.

The highest honor bestowed by the Campbell athletic department, the award came not only as a recognition of his work as the architect and of the rebirth of the school’s football program, but additionally his family’s philanthropic efforts to endow dedicated football scholarships.

“Coach Steele’s generosity once again reminds us how fortunate we are to have him and his wonderful family’s support,” said Campbell Director of Athletics Hannah Bazemore. “Thank you, not only for this substantial gift that will continue to provide opportunities for student-athletes for years to come, but for everything you’ve already poured into this program over the years.”

CASH

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someone who hasn’t lost a friend of loved one to ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease, which is currently incurable.

That list would include Coach Cash, whose mother passed away from the disease.

As part of the challenge, Coach Cash will purchase some blue flags to display the names of people who have passed or have been currently diagnosed with ALS.

Donations will be accepted both in advance and on the day of the football game at The Dawg Pound on the NCHS campus in Rocky Mount.

For more information or to make a donation, to the cause contact NCHS girls basketball coach Terri Cash at (252) 451-2860 or by email at tlcash@ncpsschools.net.



NORTHERN NASH JUNIOR STAR HARPER WILSON

NN SPIKE

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digs who also ranked second in assists is set to return, and is primed for a massive senior season.

Piper Jones, who is beginning to draw attention from coaches around the collegiate ranks, was perhaps Northern’s most impactful player one year ago.

Having registered 243 digs, 160 assists, 158 kills and 64 aces last season, Jones is certainly going to be the straw that stirs the drink for the Lady Knights in 2026.

Jones is expected to be joined by a quartet of classmates, with Gray Jenkins, Amaya Lassiter, Jamie Smith and Joelle Drake – the daughter of the school’s boys basketball coach Henry Drake – expected to return to the court as well.

Both Smith and Drake were key on the offensive end for Northern last year, combining for 144 kills that were largely aided by those assist numbers from Jones.

Drake was additionally tied for first on the team with 30 total blocks, sharing that title with rising junior Harper Wilson, who is expected to be a crucial piece of the puzzle as well.

Similarly to Jones, Wilson is an impressive multi-facet player who can kill, serve, block and dig at a high level. One of the top underclassmen in the Big East last year, Wilson, especially when paired with Jones, could emerge as a recipe for success this year for the Lady Knights.

The season will get moving quickly after Northern’s opener at Nash Central, hitting the court three times in three days with the first home contest slated for Aug. 11 against Knightdale sandwiched between another roadie at East Wake on Aug. 17.

Once again, it’ll be three matches in three days for the Lady Knights from Aug. 17-19, host-

ing East Wake and Nash Central in the back leg of their respective home-and-homes followed by a return trip to Knightdale in the team’s final tuneup before conference play.

Northern will host Fike to kick off its Big East slate on Aug. 27, followed by traveling to C.B. Aycock on Sept. 1, hosting Southern Wayne on Sept. 3, hitting the road for Hunt on Sept. 8 and rounding out the first half of its league schedule by facing Southern Nash on Sept. 10 and traveling to Rocky Mount High School on Sept. 15.

The remainder of the Lady Knights’ Big East sked will take place in the same order at inverse locations from Sept. 24 through Oct. 8, with one remaining nonconference home-and-home against Clayton slated for a road trip on Sept. 2 followed by the Comets’ return trip to the confines of Northern’s gymnasium on Sept. 28.

SOCCER

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and Northern Nash are as follows, with home matches listed in CAPS:

NASH CENTRAL

- August 10 -- NORTHERN NASH
- August 13 -- at Wilson Fike
- August 18 -- at Northern Nash
- August 20 -- SOUTHERN NASH
- August 25 -- SW EDGEcombe
- August 27 -- at Southern Nash
- September 8 -- ROCKY MOUNT
- September 14 -- at SW Edgecombe
- September 17 -- at Rocky Mount
- September 28 -- ROANOKE RAPIDS*
- September 30 -- at Bunn*
- October 5 -- WAKE PREP*
- October 7 -- at American Leadership Academy*
- October 12 -- LOUISBURG*
- October 14 -- at Roanoke Rapids*
- October 19 -- BUNN*
- October 21 -- at Wake Prep*
- October 26 -- AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY*
- * -- Denotes Quad County Conference Matches

NORTHERN NASH

- August 10 -- at Nash Central
- August 12 -- at Vance County
- August 14 -- at Pendleton County
- August 17 -- at Greenville Rose
- August 18 -- NASH CENTRAL
- August 22 -- at Jacksonville
- August 31 -- TARBORO
- September 8 -- at Tarboro
- September 16 -- WILSON FIKE*
- September 21 -- at CB Aycock*
- September 23 -- SOUTHERN WAYNE*

- September 28 -- at Wilson Hunt*
- September 30 -- SOUTHERN NASH*
- October 5 -- at Rocky Mount*
- October 12 -- at Wilson Fike*
- October 14 -- CB AYCOCK*
- October 19 -- at Southern Wayne*
- October 21 -- WILSON HUNT*
- October 26 -- at Southern Nash*
- October 28 -- ROCKY MOUNT*
- * -- Denotes Big East Conference Matches

SOUTHERN NASH

- August 11 -- SANDERSON
- August 13 -- at Millbrook
- August 17 -- MILLBROOK
- August 25 -- at Corinth Holders
- August 27 -- NASH CENTRAL
- August 31 -- ROANOKE RAPIDS
- September 1 -- at Bunn
- September 3 -- LOUISBURG
- September 8 -- BUNN
- September 12 -- at Wilmington Hoggard
- September 14 -- at Southern Wayne*
- September 16 -- CB AYCOCK HIGH SCHOOL*
- September 21 -- at Wilson Fike High School*
- September 23 -- WILSON HUNT*
- September 28 -- ROCKY MOUNT*
- September 30 -- at Northern Nash*
- October 7 -- SOUTHERN WAYNE*
- October 12 -- at CB Aycock*
- October 14 -- WILSON FIKE*
- October 19 -- at Wilson Hunt*
- October 21 -- at Rocky Mount*
- October 26 -- NORTHERN NASH*
- * -- Denotes Big East Conference Matches