

# NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL HYPERD KNIGHTS



NORTHERN NASH KEY GRIDIRON RETURNEE MYLES EATMON  
**Northern earns preseason accolades**



NORTHERN COACH  
ANDREW FARRISS  
From Staff Reports

NASH COUNTY -- Pre-season football has arrived with a bang -- along with a bombshell announcement concerning the Northern Nash Fighting Knights.

Northern Nash, which returns several key standouts from last year's Elite Eight club, has been ranked by

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NORTHERN NASH BACK PRESTON MCDANIEL



NASH CENTRAL STANDOUT JAYCI SEWARD  
**RELOADING TIME**  
NCHS must replace graduates

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
Correspondent

ROCKY MOUNT -- It's been an eventful offseason to say the least for the Nash Central High School volleyball team, a spike squad that's set to kick off its 2026 campaign in less than one week.



Riding the wave of six-straight winning seasons and an impressive 15-6 mark last year, the Lady Bulldogs are expected to once again maintain a top spot within the Quad County Conference standings on the court this season.

Central finished as the runner-up in the league standings a year ago, only shy of Bunn's spotless 10-0 mark in conference play.

"We just couldn't take Bunn down," said Lady Bulldog head coach Amber Inman-Perry, who emphasized

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NASH CENTRAL'S  
A'DIA CASH

## 2026 NASH COUNTY PREP VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULES

From Staff Reports

NASH COUNTY -- Difficult to believe, but high school volleyball in Nash County will kick off next Monday with Southern Nash traveling to Corinth Holders for a matchup between area spike heavyweights.

Also that day, Nash Central

will entertain Northern Nash as those clubs renew their backyard rivalry at The Dawg Pound on the NCHS campus in Rocky Mount.

Schedules for Nash Central, Northern Nash and Southern Nash are as follows, with home matches listed in CAPS:

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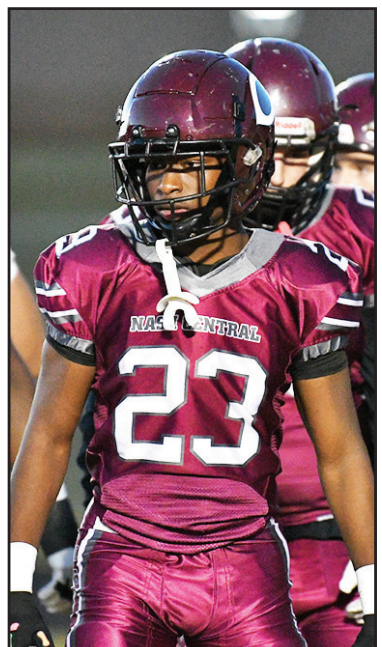
## CENTRAL'S CAUSE

Bulldogs set for new campaign

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
Correspondent

ROCKY MOUNT -- Year One of the Carter Varnell Era is right around the corner on the campus of Nash Central High School, with football practice now underway for the Bulldogs as of July 29.

While last year's Nash Central squad seemed to be frustratingly snakebitten -- running through its depth as the roster suffered injury after injury -- a new head coach looks to navigate the Bulldogs back to a winning season on the



NASH CENTRAL'S  
BRAYLON WHITLEY

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THE NASH CENTRAL BULLDOGS ARE READY FOR THE 2026 SEASON  
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)





NASH CENTRAL SPIKE COACH AMBER INMAN-PERRY

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that she wants this year’s squad – one that’s having to replace all five of last season’s starters – to be more proactive rather than reactive.

“Our mentality this year has changed,” stated Central’s skipper. “We’re focused on finding ways to score.”

This year’s Lady Bulldog roster will have already seen some stellar competition once first serve arrives on Aug. 10, with Central having faced two of the top programs in recent years during the summer.

The Lady Bulldogs scrimmaged 2022 and 2024 state champion McMichael in preparation for the regular season, and is set to face 2025 3A state champ Ayden-Grifton in an exhibition on Saturday, Aug. 8.

“We hung in there [against McMichael]” remarked Inman-Perry, who was excited about the way some of her younger players performed despite filling in some uncharted roles.

While the summer of competition has been intense, it’s also been beneficial for a Central squad looking to get a refreshed roster some crucial reps before the real thing.

“It gives us an idea of what the playoffs will look like,” Inman-Perry, a former setter for the North Carolina A&T Aggies who’s now coaching the sport she once played collegiately.

The Division I experience that Inman-Perry gained on the court with the Aggies has helped contribute to the culture that’s being formed at Nash

Central right now, with the current staff emphasizing commitment, being present, and coming to practice with a purpose.

“All this translated to real-life scenarios,” stressed Inman-Perry. “We’re trying to install all of this in our team.”

While there will certainly be some underclassmen stepping into new roles, the senior duo of Jayci Seward and Haley Frazier are both expected to be key contributors for the Lady Bulldogs this season.

Two back-line hitters, Seward is additionally expected to be the team’s starting libero in her curtain call donning maroon and grey.

As seemingly the case for many other sports at Nash Central, both Harmony Dupree and A’Dia Cash will be two young athletes to keep an eye on this fall, both expected to take on increased playing time and new roles.

“Everybody is gonna be playing and nobody is gonna be able to take reps off,” remarked Inman-Perry of her roster, pushing the importance of each player from top-to-bottom.

The highly-anticipated Lady Bulldog season opener won’t just mark the beginning of a new season, but will be an opportunity for Central to notch a third-straight win over rival Northern Nash as well.

Monday’s tilt between the Lady Bulldogs and Lady Knights is slated for 5 p.m. and will be held in the gymnasium on the campus of Nash Central High School.

SKEDS

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- NASH CENTRAL
- August 10 -- NORTH-ERN NASH
  - August 17 -- at Southern Nash
  - August 18 -- at Northern Nash
  - August 20 -- SOUTH-ERN NASH
  - August 24 -- at Rocky Mount
  - August 25 -- SW Edgecombe
  - September 8 -- AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY\*
  - September 10 -- at Louisburg\*
  - September 14 -- at SW Edgecombe
  - September 15 -- ROA-NOKE RAPIDS\*
  - September 17 -- at Bunn\*
  - September 21 -- ROCKY MOUNT
  - September 22 -- WAKE PREP\*
  - September 24 -- at American Leadership Academy\*
  - October 1 -- at Roa-noke Rapids\*
  - October 6 -- BUNN HIGH SCHOOL\*
  - October 8 -- at Wake Prep\*
  - October 13 -- LOUIS-BURG\*
- \* -- Denotes Quad County Conference Matches
- NORTHERN NASH
- August 10 -- at Nash Central
  - August 11 -- KNIGHTDALE
  - August 12 -- at East Wake
  - August 17 -- EAST WAKE
  - August 18 -- NASH



SOUTHERN'S ABIGAIL MARKS

- CENTRAL
- August 19 -- at Knightdale
  - August 27 -- WILSON FIKE\*
  - September 1 -- at CB Aycock\*
  - September 2 -- at Clayton
  - September 3 -- SOUTHERN WAYNE\*
  - September 8 -- at Wilson Hunt\*
  - September 10 -- SOUTHERN NASH\*
  - September 15 -- at Rocky Mount\*
  - September 22 -- at Wilson Fike\*
  - September 24 -- CB AYCOCK\*
  - September 28 -- CLAYTON
  - September 29 -- at

- Southern Wayne High School\*
- October 1 -- WILSON HUNT\*
  - October 6 -- at Southern Nash\*
  - October 8 -- ROCKY MOUNT\*
- \* -- Denotes Big East Conference Matches
- SOUTHERN NASH
- August 10 -- at Corinth Holders
  - August 12 -- BUNN
  - August 17 -- NASH CENTRAL
  - August 18 -- GREEN-VILLE ROSE
  - August 20 -- at Nash Central
  - August 24 -- at Bunn High School
  - August 25 -- at Southern Wayne\*
  - August 27 -- CB AYCOCK\*
  - September 1 -- at Wilson Fike\*
  - September 3 -- WILSON HUNT\*
  - September 8 -- ROCKY MOUNT\*
  - September 9 -- at Franklinton
  - September 10 -- at Northern Nash\*
  - September 14 -- at Louisburg
  - September 17 -- SOUTHERN WAYNE\*
  - September 22 -- at CB Aycock\*
  - September 24 -- WILSON FIKE\*
  - September 29 -- at Wilson Hunt\*
  - October 1 -- at Rocky Mount\*
  - October 6 -- NORTH-ERN NASH\*
- \* -- Denotes Big East Conference Matches



NASH CENTRAL RETURNING LINEMAN JONATHAN EASON

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gridiron, something the program hasn’t achieved since 2023.

Looking to improve upon last year’s injury-riddled campaign, Varnell and Nash Central will be facing off with a familiar opponent when the rubber meets the road on Aug. 21.

The Bulldogs are set to kick off Varnell’s maiden voyage and their 2026 season by facing former conference rival South-West Edgecombe – the same school that athletic director Kyle Bain hired Varnell from earlier this year.

Similar to Nash Central’s previous head coach Chris Lee, Varnell’s roots are tied to Eastern North Carolina, and specifically Nash County.

Like Lee, he spent a significant portion of his career as an assistant coach at Rocky Mount before taking a head job in a neighboring county, Lee the former head man at Louisburg while Varnell held the same position at SouthWest.

“I’m excited to see his enthusiasm, athlete development and love of the game transition into a disciplined team that contends for a conference championship and make playoff runs,” said Nash Central athletic director Kyle Bain of Varnell during an interview with *The Graphic*

in May, shortly after the announcement of Varnell’s hire.

Of course, the run to a conference title will begin for the Bulldogs on Oct. 2, with Nash Central’s league slate beginning with a road trip to Louisburg. From that point forward, the Bulldogs will host Roanoke Rapids, travel to Bunn, close its home slate with Wake Prep Academy before rounding out the regular season with American Leadership Academy - Johnston (ALAJ).

Before jumping into conference play, Central has games against rivals Northern Nash, Southern Nash and Rocky Mount sandwiched between its opener against South-West and its final nonconference contest against Warren County on Sept. 19.

While the schedule may be set in stone, there’s still much to be determined about the Bulldogs’ roster.

A swarm of injuries forced Central into playing a whopping five different quarterbacks in 2025, with now-junior Emory Bynum taking the majority of snaps under center.

Bynum tossed four touchdowns and accrued nearly 400 passing yards over the course of the season, and he was aided in the running

game largely by rising seniors Zaquez Britt and David Porter, a duo that combined for over 1,000 all-purpose yards when combining their efforts on the ground and through the air.

Aside from quarterback, along the trenches was where Nash Central experienced the majority of its injuries last year, so looking to rebuild the lines will be a priority for the Bulldogs this season as well.

Defensively, Central will return its top two tacklers from last season, junior Ayden Flowers and sophomore Braylon Whitley, who tabbed 86 and 73 tackles, respectively, in 2025.

Britt and Porter were each high-impact players on the defensive side of the ball as well, with Tristian Whitley bringing back some strong experience and numbers as well.

Perhaps no team in Nash County is a bigger question mark than Nash Central heading into 2026, with a lot of potential on the roster just needing to be properly put together.

The Bulldogs’ particularly-interesting season opener against South-West Edgecombe is slated for 7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 21, with Central hosting the Cougars at The Dawg Pound.

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[www.highschoolot.com](http://www.highschoolot.com) as the top-ranked team in the 252 area code, along with the Class 6-A overall classification.

The Knights, coached by Andrew Farriss, went 11-2 in 2025 and once again claimed the Big East Conference gridiron championship.

Northern Nash will kick off its 2026 campaign on August 21 with a test a long-time powerhouse Greenville Rose in Pitt County.

Before then, the Fighting Knights will will scrimmage this Friday at home at 6 p.m.

Also, Northern Nash will take part in the annual HSOT Jamboree on August 14 on the campus of Wake Forest High School.

At that event, Northern Nash will scrimmage Garner at 9 p.m. Other games will feature Warren County High School vs. Wilson Prep (6 p.m.), Franklinton vs. South Johnston (7 p.m.) and Wake Forest vs. Cardinal Gibbons (8 p.m.).

Advance tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at [gofan.co](http://gofan.co).

Walk-up tickets will be available for \$20.

Southern Nash will scrimmage this Friday at North Lenoir and on August 14 as part of a jamboree at Barton College.

Nash Central will also be part of the Barton showcase, along with this Friday’s annual Vance County Jamboree in Henderson.

The preseason 252 area code rankings are as follows:

- 1) Northern Nash
  - 2) Tarboro
  - 3) Wilson Hunt
  - 4) Greenville Rose
  - 5) Havelock
  - 6) Elizabeth City Northeastern
  - 7) Croatan
  - 8) Wilson Prep
  - 9) Southern Nash
  - 10) SW Edgecombe
  - 11) Warren Couny
  - 12) West Craven
  - 13) Edenton Holmes
  - 14) Northside
  - 15) Martin County
- The Class 6-A overall state rankings are as follows:
- 1) Northern Nash
  - 2) Gastonia Ashbrook
  - 3) TC Roberson
  - 4) Greensboro Dudley
  - 5) Middle Creek
  - 6) Asheville
  - 7) Jacksonville
  - 8) Greenville Rose
  - 9) Scotland County
  - 10) Watauga Boone