

2025 NASH COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SEASON

KNIGHTS TAKE THE BRIDGE



NASH CENTRAL'S DAVID PORTER  
**NNHS rolls to a victory over 'Dogs**

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
*Correspondent*

RED OAK -- It didn't take long for the Northern Nash Knights to get the scoring started last Thursday evening against rival Nash Central, in fact it only took the opening kickoff.

Kamren Freeman set the tone early for the Knights in Thursday's 40-7 victory over Central -- striking quickly with a 92-yard kick return that gave the Knights a 7-0 lead less than ten seconds into the game.

"We talked about starting fast all week," said eighth-year Northern Nash head football coach Andrew Farriss. "That definitely helped us do that, it really got us going in the first half."

That wasn't the only scoring the Knights did in the first half though - as 33 of Northern's 40 points on Thursday came before the halftime intermission.

"We ran the ball better and more consistently," said Farriss -- whose offense averaged more than nine yards per carry while totaling 154 yards on the ground on 16 attempts throughout the contest.

The Knights of course were led by feature back Myles Eatmon, who accounted for 110 of those 154 yards as well as two touchdowns, whereas Preston McDaniel more yards and a score of his own.



NASH CENTRAL'S KAMERON TUCKER IS TACKLED BY A PAIR OF NORTHERN NASH DEFENDERS  
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

Northern was also able to move the ball through its air attack -- adding 149 yards and one touchdown in the passing game, the score coming via a 39-yard reception hauled in by Freeman from starting quarterback Hylan Wheeler.

Last Thursday also marked the first time that Gehrig Miller -- transfer quarterback from Rocky Mount Academy who competed with Wheeler for the starting job this offseason -- saw the field. Miller completed all three of his pass attempts, accumulating 26 yards through the air.

"Gehrig did well after he settled in," remarked Farriss, whose staff was faced with a difficult decision throughout the summer of who to start under center, a decision

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NORTHERN NASH'S MYLES EATMON RACES TOWARD THE END ZONE  
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)



ROCKY MOUNT'S TAVORIS PARKER BREAKS AWAY FOR A BIG GAIN  
**Gryphons Get The Win**  
Rocky Mount picks up first victory of the season

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
*Correspondent*

ROCKY MOUNT -- After a week-one heartbreaker left the Rocky Mount High School Gryphons just shy of an upset victory over defending Class 1-A State Champion Tarboro, head coach Jason Battle's squad bounced back last Thurs-



day night with a 20-14 victory over East Wake, seeing Rocky Mount improve to 1-1 on the young season.

Despite the Warriors outscoring the Gryphons 14-0 in the final frame, the 13 points scored by Rocky Mount in the second quarter plus the seven

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SOUTHERN NASH QB ISAIAH BATTLE  
**Clayton pulls away from Firebirds in second half**

From Staff Reports

CLAYTON -- For one half, the Southern Nash Firebirds hung tough with the Clayton Comets -- one of Eastern North Carolina's most tradition-rich football programs.

But the Comets were able to pull away in the second half to

register a 49-14 decision over the Firebirds last Friday in non-conference gridiron action on the CHS campus in Johnston County.

Southern Nash, which boasts a lofty tradition of its own, fell to 1-1 on the campaign

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NORTHERN NASH'S CAPTAINS AWAIT THE COIN TOSS BEFORE THE KNIGHTS' CONTEST AGAINST NASH CENTRAL



THE NASH CENTRAL BULLDOGS TAKE THE FIELD



NORTHERN NASH'S JAH'MARZEA WILLIAMS TAKES FLIGHT INTO THE NASH CENTRAL SECONDARY LAST THURSDAY

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that wasn't finalized until mere hours before the team's first game on August 22. "He settled in and made some good throws and led some good drives."

Northern's special teams unit even found its way onto the scoreboard on Thursday night -- blocking a punt in the first half that Caleb Mayfield proceeded to recover and turn into a touchdown.

"It was good to play well in all three phases," remarked Farriss, who saw last week's outing get late early for the Bulldogs.

As for Nash Central, head coach Chris Lee's squad found their lone points of the evening on a fourth-quarter touchdown pass from quarterback Emory Bynum to wideout Aiden Smalls.

Not only was it Central's first touchdown of the evening, it was the Bulldogs' first trip to the endzone this season after dropping a 13-5 loss to SouthWest Edgecombe in the team's season opener.

Injuries have been the early story for the Bulldogs, who saw Winston Lee, the quarterback that has started every Nash Central game going back to the team's 2023 season opener, go down with an injury that left him sidelined against Northern Nash.

Additionally, backup quarterback David Porter has been dealing with injuries of his own, leaving the job to Bynum, the team's sophomore third-stringer.

"We need to try and get healthy fast and survive the next two weeks," said Lee, who is in his 11th year leading the Nash Central program and has reached the playoffs in four-straight seasons.

Unfortunately for the Bulldogs, the next few weeks aren't getting much easier. Central hosts Rocky Mount this week, a school they've played every year but have only beaten twice since 2012, followed by a matchup against

Southern Nash on September 12, a team that Central has knocked off just once over the same timeframe.

"With our numbers being so low this year it's taking a toll on us," said Lee, who pointed out that Nash Central was the only high school in the county that lost students after the recent school district merger and realignment. "Right now we are just trying to tread water to get to conference play where we will be more evenly matched numbers wise."

After the school's games against Rocky Mount and Southern, the Bulldogs will have just one more non-conference tilt before league play begins -- a September 19 matchup against Warren County.

Nash Central's first matchup in the Class-2A/3A/4A Quad County Conference will come on October 3 against Louisburg, the school where Lee was hired from in 2015 and a game that will also serve as the final leg of four straight home games for the Bulldogs.

"If we can get to Warren County in decent shape health wise we would have a lot of opportunities to win some games," stated Lee, optimistic about the forecast of the season despite the team's recent injury woes.

"Again, there are no trophies in non-conference games. What matters most is our last five."

This week's Nash Central home opener is slated for a 7 p.m. start time on the campus of Nash Central High School against county foe Rocky Mount, while Northern takes its first road trip of the year to 2-0 Cleveland, a recent powerhouse that has outscored opponents 112-32 thus far.

Friday's much-anticipated matchup between Northern Nash and Cleveland is slated for a 7:30 p.m. kickoff on the campus of Cleveland High School in Clayton.



ROCKY MOUNT QUARTERBACK ALEX BEASLEY SENDS A PASS ATTEMPT PAST AN EAST WAKE DEFENDER

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more added in the third period, resulting in a 20-0 Gryphon lead proved to be too much for East Wake High School to overcome.

Senior quarterback Alex Beasley got the scoring started for Rocky Mount in the second quarter, lunging forward on a goal-line keeper from one yard out that established a 7-0 Gryphon advantage.

Not long after that, Rocky Mount rounded out the second period by Tavoris Parker returning a punt for a touchdown from 52 yards out, just one act of a dazzling performance by Parker in Thursday's contest.

In addition to his 52-yard punt return touchdown, Parker later added a 31-yard rush that resulted in a touchdown and pushed the Gryphon lead to 20-0 in the third quarter.

In total, Parker -- a senior who added three tackles on the defensive side as well -- ended his evening with 154 rushing yards, the heavy majority of the 193 total yards that Rocky Mount accrued on the ground.

Defensively, a strong performance from the Gryphons was highlighted by a pair of interceptions, with both Amariion Dance and Ryan Jones picking off

East Wake quarterback Maurice Maloy.

The Warriors didn't go down without a fourth-quarter fight, though. Maloy connected with freshman receiver Kamearen Vaughn-Joyner with 7:31 left in the contest, trimming the Gryphons' lead to 20-7.

After regaining possession, Maloy helped march East Wake down the field, converting on multiple fourth downs -- one as long as 4th and 14 -- resulting in a drive that ended with finding Tzion Stone in the endzone for an eight-yard score with less than a minute remaining, bringing the score within on possession at 20-14.

Stone, a senior star for the Warriors, was a focal point of the East Wake offense all night and the favorite target of Maloy, accumulating nine receptions that went for 105 yards over the course of the evening.

Despite a valiant fourth-quarter effort from the Warriors, East Wake inevitably saw its onside kick attempt sail out of bounds before part of the hands team could retrieve it, resulting in Rocky Mount being able to run out the clock from that point forward, picking the Gryphons' first win of 2025.

Now in his 14th season

as Rocky Mount's head coach, Battle, a Nashville native and Rocky Mount High graduate, looks to continue his winning ways with a rivalry matchup against Nash Central on deck.

The Rocky Mount Gryphons have won six of their last seven outings against the Bulldogs, pitching two shutouts over that timeframe and limiting Nash Central to eight or fewer points in all of their victories since 2018.

Friday's tilt between Rocky Mount and county for Nash Central will be the first leg of back-to-back away games for the Gryphons, with Rocky Mount wrapping up its nonconference slate on September 12 at Vance County.

Battle's squad will kick off its inaugural league game as part of the Class-5A/6A Big East Conference a week later on September 19 against Fike, then taking a bye week before facing the remaining five games of its league slate.

This week's contest between Rocky Mount and Nash Central is slated for a 7 p.m. start at The Dawg Pound on the campus of Nash Central High School and will serve as the Bulldogs' first home game of the 2025 season.

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under the direction of veteran head coach Brian Batchelor.

After spotting the Comets two touchdowns, Southern roared back to within 14-7 at the break when Jaden Hartsfield reeled in a 9-yard touchdown pass from Isaiah Battle in the closing seconds before halftime.

Clayton, however, retook command of the showdown with three unanswered touchdown runs in the third frame to claim a 34-4 advantage in the once-tight matchup.

Southern drew closer on Hartsfield's 26-yard gallop with eight minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, but Clayton closed things out with two more scores to wrap up the decision.

Hartsfield, a junior standout, was solid for the Firebirds as he delivered 140 yards on 21 carries to go with his touchdown reception.

At 2-0, Clayton High School is off to an effective start to its grid campaign, having outscored its foes by a combined

101-26.

Southern Nash, which topped Knightdale in Week One, will look to return to its usual winning form this Friday with a home game against Warsaw James Kenan -- one of the state's perennial top small-school powerhouses.

The Tigers, who went 12-2 in 2024, are 1-0 following a season-opening rout of Southern Wayne -- a future opponent of Southern Nash's in the newly-formed Big East Conference.



HERE'S OUR PITCH....CATCH  
YOUR TEAM'S SCORE IN  
the *Nashville*  
GRAPHIC SPORTS

