

2025 SOUTHERN NASH HS FOOTBALL OFFENSE GALORE



SOUTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL RUNNING BACK JADEN HARTSFIELD Firebirds rally for a clutch victory

From Staff Reports

STANHOPE -- Two of Eastern North Carolina's most traditional offensive juggernauts met last Friday at Firebird Stadium, so a defensive stand-off certainly wasn't expected.

And that's exactly what happened as homestanding Southern Nash and Warsaw James Kenan combined for 86 points, but the Firebirds delivered two more as part of a 44-42 comeback conquest.

Southern Nash is now 2-1 on the campaign and was able to rebound nicely from a previous-week loss at Clayton.



But it wasn't easy as James Kenan led 28-14 going into what would be a wild, entertaining fourth quarter of action.

Junior standout Jaden Hartsfield came through with touchdown runs of 1 and 44 yards to help the Firebirds even the score at 28-28 four minutes into the decisive final frame.

After the Tigers retook the lead, Hartsfield struck again, this time from five yards out, but James Kenan needed just 13 seconds to respond courtesy of a 78-yard kickoff return for yet another score.

Down 42-36 but undaunted, Southern Nash drove down the field and was rewarded with Hartsfield's fourth score of the quarter -- a 1-yard plunge that tied the score at 42-42 with just over one minute remaining.

Still, SN needed to convert the 2-pointer, and fullback Luke Faulkner got the job done as the Firebirds took the lead for good.

Warsaw James Kenan had one final opportunity and almost made the most of it, moving into field-goal position in the closing seconds, only to see the potential game-winner be unsuccessful.

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NORTHERN NASH FOOTBALL COACH ANDREW FARRISS
(Photo Submitted by Carl Copeland)

NN Falls At Cleveland Knights suffer rare regular season setback

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

CLAYTON -- The Northern Nash football program dropped only its second regular season game since the start of the 2022 season last Friday evening, suffering its first loss of the 2025 campaign at Cleveland, 52-28.

The Knights were outscored 35-14 in the



second half and were shut out 14-0 in the fourth quarter, seeing their deficit grow from 10 points to 24 points over the contest's final 12 minutes.

"I didn't think we executed well at all," stated eighth-year Northern Nash head coach Andrew Farriss. "They did what really good teams do, which

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NASH CENTRAL'S JAYDEN WHITAKER
CELEBRATES A DEFENSIVE STAND
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

POINTS NEEDED 'Dogs struggling offensively

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- This isn't the start the Nash Central Bulldogs hoped for to kick off the 2025 prep football season -- but there is still plenty of hope.

The Bulldogs, noted for their high-powered offensive fireworks dating back to the Travis Griffin Era, have only delivered 18 total points through a trio of contests to begin the campaign.

NCHS lost all three games on the field, though the Bulldogs were later awarded a forfeit decision over SouthWest Edgecombe.

Still, the Bulldogs' lack of offensive heroics is definitely a concern, and the trend continued last Friday when NCHS was defeated by a 42-6 margin



See RM-NC, Page 2B NC COACH CHRIS LEE



NASH CENTRAL VETERAN STAR GRACYN KING NC Sweeps Spike Foes

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

ROCKY MOUNT -- The Nash Central Lady Bulldog Volleyball program kicked off conference play the only way you'd want to on Tuesday evening, dropping American

Leadership Academy -- Johnston in straight sets by a 3-0 margin.

The Lady Bulldogs' decisive victory marked Central's fifth three-set sweep of the year just nine games into the season,

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NC'S JAYDEN BAGGETT SECURES A SET ATTEMPT

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improving to 7-2 overall by defeating the Patriots 25-13, 25-15 and 25-22, respectively.

Perhaps what's most impressive is that three of those five sweeps have come away from home, with three of those three-setters coming at ALAJ on Tuesday as well as previous matchups against Hunt and Rocky Mount.

It's been a more than impressive start to the season for head coach Amber Inman-Perry's squad - a skipper in her third year leading the Lady Bulldog program - having already picked up two-match sweeps of county foes Rocky Mount and Northern Nash as well as back-to-back wins over Hunt on September 3 and September 8.

Tuesday's conference-opening tilt was highlighted by an 11-kill, six-ace performance from senior captain Gracyn King, with King's offensive effort aided by Jayden Baggett passing out a game-high 19 assists of her own.

The three-set victory over the Patriots marked the Lady Bulldogs' fourth-straight win

dating back to August 26, losing just one set over those four games.

With league play now Central's main focus, the Lady Bulldogs are the early favorites in the Class-2A/3A/4A Quad County Conference having kicked off their league slate with a 1-0 mark.

Nine of the Lady Bulldogs' remaining 11 games are conference matchups, with a two-game set against former conference foe SouthWest Edgecombe on September 17 and 22 the lone exception.

Its first year in a new league, Central has a seemingly clear path to the playoffs, which would be the school's fifth-straight trip to the postseason, as outside of American Leadership Academy - Johnston, the Lady Bulldogs are now paired with Bunn, Louisburg, Roanoke Rapids and Wake Prep Academy in conference play.

Nash Central and Wake Prep are the only schools to have earned conference wins thus far, with the 9-1 Guardians having knocked off Louisburg on September 4.

While league record is the most crucial indicator for the postseason and its seeding process, Central and Bunn have each won seven overall games thus far with Bunn sporting a 7-2 record, whereas Louisburg also has a winning record at 6-3.

The Lady Bulldogs' most recent opponent, American Leadership Academy - Johnston sits at 4-5 overall having played just one league game, while Roanoke Rapids had only played six games total, sitting at 3-3.

Destined to be a tight-knit league, the Lady Bulldogs have already raised eyebrows around the area and amongst its opponents, with six of their seven victories coming against teams at least one classification above where they sit.

Central's first conference tilt at home is today against Louisburg, the third game this week for the Lady Bulldogs.

First serve for the showdown between Nash Central and Louisburg is slated for 5 p.m. in the gymnasium on the campus of Nash Central High School.



RM'S TYLIK HARRELL BREAKS INTO THE OPEN FIELD



NC'S TYLIEK MORRIS TRIES TO ESCAPE THE RM DEFENSE

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at home against former Big East Conference opponent Rocky Mount.

The Gryphons had no problem lighting up the scoreboard as they secured at least one touchdown in every stanza of action.

Central, playing without injured starting quarterback Winston Lee, was able to score in the opening frame courtesy of a touchdown burst from junior Kamarian Spell.

But RM led 21-6 at intermission and continued to build its lead with a trio of unanswered touchdowns in the second half of the Nash County rivalry showdown.

Tylik Harrell (90 yards) and Tavoris Parker (77 yards) combined for 167 yards and four touchdowns to pace the Gryphons offensively.

Nash Central mustered just 131 total yards of offense, with Taliek Morris rushing for 55 yards on just seven carries.

The Bulldogs will hope to bounce back this week, but it won't be easy as

Southern Nash will invade The Dawg Pound this Friday for a 7 p.m. non-conference event.

Nash Central has played the Firebirds tough in recent years, but NCHS' current offensive struggles have to be a concern coming in, especially considering the fact that Southern Nash usually has no difficulty putting points on the board.

However, the most important games are yet to come as Nash Central's true fate to the 2025 season will be determined by its final five games -- all of which will come against foes in the new Quad County Conference.

Central will begin its Quad County journey on October 3 with a home matchup against the Louisburg Warriors -- the program current NCHS skipper Chris Lee coached at from 2009-2015 before heading to The Dawg Pound.

If NCHS proves to be successful in QCC action, all of these early setbacks will be long forgotten.

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was take advantage of our mistakes and capitalize on that."

The Knights of course had a subpar outing on both sides of the ball, finding themselves trailing 17-0 in the first half after the Rams totaled two touchdowns and a field goal in the second quarter, all three scores coming in roughly a five-minute span.

Despite its slow start, Northern countered Cleveland's spurt with a one of its own, adding 14 points in the final two minutes of the opening half.

Zephaniah Queen opened the scoring for the Knights on a 23-yard touchdown run, his only carry of the evening and the team's second longest of the night, only short of a 59-yard scamper by star back Myles Eatmon.

Northern's second touchdown of the first half came in a more untraditional way, blocking a last-second field goal attempt by the Rams and returning it 85 yards for a touchdown, Jah'Marzea Williams the perpetrator.

"We definitely got some help on those non-offensive touchdowns," remarked Farriss, referencing both Williams' "kick six" and a third-quarter Ram fumble that was picked up and returned for a touchdown from 65 yards out by Joshua Ricks.

Ricks' improbable score tightened the margin to 24-20 in the second half, responding to Cleveland's early rushing touchdown in the third period.

Trailing by four would be the closest that the Knights would come from that point forward, though, with the Rams following that up with one of their four touchdowns through the air just seconds afterwards. Noah Williamson then intercepted a pass from Northern Nash backup quarterback Gehrig Miller - who replaced Hylan Wheeler midgame - a turnover that resulted in seven more points for the Rams a few plays later.

In less than three minutes of game-time, the Knights saw their four-point

deficit grow to an 18-point gap, one that proved to be too much to overcome despite a touchdown still to come on a 34-yard pass from Miller to Freeman.

"We really need to find our identity on offense right now," said Farriss, who played two different quarterbacks and four different running backs in Friday's loss to the Rams. "We need to block and run the ball better and make the plays in the passing game when they are there to make."

As for Cleveland, the win marked the program's staggering 55th consecutive regular season victory, a streak that dates back to September 2019. The 24-point decision was their smallest margin of victory this year, opening the season on August 22 with a 60-19 rout of Pinecrest followed by a 52-13 drubbing of Corinth Holders a week later. The Rams will travel to New Bern next week in a matchup of two of the state's top programs in recent years.

While Northern Nash embarks upon its bye week, Farriss and his staff have the perfect opportunity to clean up some mistakes before heading into league play - a five-game slate that begins on September 26 at Fike.

"We are going to spend our time on fundamentals and trying to get ourselves doing the little things better," said Farriss. "We have practiced those things but somehow we are not translating them to the field at times."

After this week's pause the Knights have one more nonconference game on the schedule before kicking off league play, a September 19 contest at South Central in Winterville. The South Central Falcons will travel to E.A. Laney on Friday evening hoping to continue their unbeaten streak, currently sitting at 3-0 with wins over Kinston, Farmville Central and North Pitt already checked off.

Next week's matchup between Northern Nash and South Central is slated for a 7 p.m. start on the campus of South Central High School.

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Cam Lyons paced the Firebirds on the ground with 152 rushing yards, while Hartsfield pitched in with 146 to go with his quartet of scores.

Tight end Cooper Wheaton, who has proven to be quite the weapon early in the year for SNHS, caught two passes from Isaiah Battle for a total of 56 yards.

Following the tough victory, Southern Nash will look to make it two in a row this Friday when the Firebirds travel to The Dawg Pound to tangle with former Big East Conference rival Nash Central.

The Firebirds and Bulldogs have played some tough contests over the past few years, but South-

ern Nash will be the prohibitive favorite this time around against the winless Bulldogs under veteran head coach Chris Lee.

Kickoff is slated for 7 p.m., and this will be SN's final non-league contest before the Firebirds open Big East play next Friday at home against the Southern Wayne Saints.

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