

Northern In Control Of Big East



NORTHERN NASH STANDOUT RUNNING BACK MYLES EATMON
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

Knights surge past Warriors in showdown

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

WILSON -- What was billed as the potential Game of the Year in the Big East Conference got out of hand in a hurry last Friday night – much to the satisfaction of the visiting Northern Nash Knights.

The highly-anticipated heavyweight bout between Northern and previously-undefeated Hunt resulted in a 45-0 shellacking in favor of the Knights, with the green-and-gold separating themselves from the pack as the lone unbeaten team in conference play.

Quite frankly, Northern

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NASH CENTRAL QB EMORY BYNUM



NASH CENTRAL'S ELI PROCTOR

Another conquest for NCHS

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

NASH COUNTY -- Both Nash Central and Southern Nash are currently riding streaks on the gridiron as the regular season winds down – but fortunately for Nash Central at least, it's the good kind.

The Bulldogs won their second game in as many weeks during a rare midweek matchup last Thursday night, upsetting last season's Quad County Conference champion Bunn 14-13.



Not only was Thursday Bunn's first league loss of the season, but the team's first since joining the conference prior to the 2025 campaign. The Wildcats posted a spotless 5-0 mark within the league last year and were 2-0 in conference play heading into last

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2026 NASH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS TENNIS BACK-TO-BACK TITLES



NASH CENTRAL SENIOR STARS HANNAH BULLUCK AND CAMBRIA HARPER
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

Bulldogs repeat as conference tennis champs

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

ROCKY MOUNT -- Winning a conference championship is quite the achievement for any high school athletic program – but winning back-to-back league titles is truly a special experience and accomplishment.

For the Girls Tennis team at Nash Central High School, two-straight conference titles became a reality this

spring, as the Lady Bulldogs posted a flawless 6-0 mark in Quad County Conference competition en route to the team's second championship in as many seasons.



Central ended its regular season campaign with back-to-back thrilling 5-4 victories over league foe Roanoke Rapids, in large part due to the rearrival of Ava Holloman onto the court, who suffered an injury during the summer that plagued most of the sophomore's season.

Holloman, who was cleared to play earlier in the season but then reinjured herself, took the court in the team's final match of the regular season alongside top-seeded Hannah Bulluck – in a match that had already begun in the doubles portion of the afternoon.

When fellow sophomore Ashlynn Gardner broke her ankle during the match, Holloman stepped in and helped turn a doubles bout that was tied at 4-4 into

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NCWC drops close contest

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- The North Carolina Wesleyan football team battled through cold, rainy and windy conditions

last Saturday afternoon at Stallings Field at Vernon T. Bradley Jr. Stadium, but the Battling

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DEMONS SWEEP Fike rolls to conference crown

From Staff Reports

SPRING HOPE -- Mystery wasn't a part of the equation this fall in the Big East Conference girls golf standings.

Wilson Fike claimed first place in each of the league's 10 events in 2026, the last of which came last Monday at Peachtree Hills Country Club.

Fike wrapped up its dominant campaign by finalizing its Big East Championship in clean sweep fashion by taking

the finale with 244 strokes to far outdistance runner-up CB Aycock's 316 total.

Northern Nash, which got better and better as the campaign progressed under the direction of veteran head coach Brian Taylor, tied for third place overall with Wilson Hunt at 317 shots.

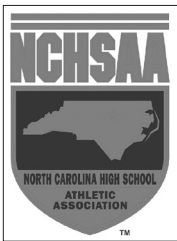
Southern Nash was fifth at 336, followed by Southern Wayne at 348.

In the finale, which was

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2026 ALL-BIG EAST CONFERENCE GIRLS TENNIS HONOREES
(Photos Submitted by Brian Taylor)



NCHS

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week, now resting at 4-4 overall with two games remaining prior to the playoffs.

While Central only sits at 2-6 on the season, Carter Varnell's Bulldogs are now part of a three-team logjam at second place in the league, knotted up with Bunn and Wake Prep Academy at 2-1 in conference play.

A huge road game against Wake Prep awaits Central on Friday evening, a game that could perhaps make or break the Bulldogs' season and their playoff chances, as well as potentially maintain an outside shot at a conference title as well.

As for Southern Nash, the Firebirds – who rallied for a dramatic come-from-behind 28-27 victory over the Bulldogs back on Sept. 11 – are heading in the opposite direction.

The Firebirds dropped a 28-14 decision to rival Rocky Mount last Friday, with Southern falling to a disappointing 4-5 on the season.

That mark, especially this deep into the season, is relatively uncharted waters for the Firebirds – who are threatening to finish the season below .500 for the first time since in the Brian Batchelor Era, the first time since the 2021 COVID-shortened spring season, and the first time in a standard regular season since 2008.

Now the defeated in three games in a row, a 43-35 loss to Hunt on Oct. 9 and a 29-19 loss to Fike on Oct. 2 prior to Friday's game against Rocky Mount, Southern will look to flip the script against longtime rival Northern Nash in its final game of the regular season on Friday, Oct. 23.

Of course, the Firebirds will need to get rid of the



NASH CENTRAL'S AMAURIUS COBB

mistakes which have burdened the team throughout the regular season if they want to upset the first-place Fighting Knights.

A young and inexperienced Southern Nash squad committed four turnovers and ten penalties in last Friday's loss to Rocky Mount, revealing issues that disappeared the week prior against Hunt but have plagued the team throughout the rest of the season.

The Firebirds fell behind 21-0 before two touchdown runs via D.J. Baker, with a 192-yard collective effort on the ground from Southern, not enough to overcome its early mistakes.

Now fighting for a spot in the playoffs, Southern will travel to Northern Nash in hopes of spoiling the Knights' senior night festivities and their solo first-place spot in the race for a conference title.

Kickoff between the Firebirds and Knights is slated for 7 p.m. at historic Death Valley on the campus of Northern Nash High School, while at the same time

Nash Central will be kicking off against Wake Prep Academy at 7 p.m. in Wake Forest.

NCWC

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Bishops came up short in a 17-3 setback against visiting Huntingdon.

Wesleyan held the Hawks scoreless in the opening quarter and carried a lead deep into the first half while its defense delivered a strong performance throughout the difficult weather conditions.

North Carolina Wesleyan made an impact almost immediately on special teams. Mathias Winston blocked Huntingdon's opening punt, setting the Bishops up at the Hawks' 33-yard line. Wesleyan capitalized on the field position as Braxtyn Green connected on a 28-yard field goal with 12:06 remaining in the opening quarter to put the Bishops ahead 3-0.

The Bishops' defense kept Huntingdon off the scoreboard throughout the remainder of the first quarter. Aaron Randolph came up with an 11-yard sack to halt one Huntingdon possession, while the Wesleyan defense later stopped the Hawks on fourth down to give the offense possession near midfield.

Wesleyan responded with one of its strongest drives of the afternoon, moving 48 yards on nine plays and reaching the Huntingdon 19-yard line. The drive included a 20-yard completion from Braden Salvage to Tyson Resper and a 14-yard connection with Jimmie West III before a field goal attempt was blocked in the closing seconds of the first quarter.

The defense continued to create opportunities in the second quarter. Cedric Somme intercepted Huntingdon quarterback Knox Roberts at

the Wesleyan eight-yard line, ending a promising Hawks possession. Later in the quarter, Zeon Ware forced a fumble after an 18-yard completion, with Daviaus Johnson recovering the football at the Wesleyan 11-yard line.

North Carolina Wesleyan carried its 3-0 advantage until late in the second quarter, when Huntingdon recorded a safety to make it a one-point game.

The Bishops still entered halftime holding a 3-2 lead after a defensive battle through the opening 30 minutes.

Huntingdon moved ahead early in the third quarter following an interception return for a touchdown, giving the Hawks a 10-3 advantage. Wesleyan's defense continued to keep the game within reach, forcing a punt later in the quarter and holding Huntingdon without an offensive touchdown through the first three periods.

The Hawks eventually added their lone offensive touchdown with 7:52 remaining in the fourth quarter to extend the margin to 17-3.

Wesleyan continued searching for a response, with Jack Pearson connecting with West III for a 25-yard completion on the following possession before Huntingdon ended the drive with an interception.

West III led the Wesleyan receiving corps with seven catches for 116 yards, accounting for the majority of the Bishops' 155 passing yards. Resper added three receptions for 27 yards, while Damarion Lee recorded a 12-yard catch. Karlen McEntyre led the rushing attack with 34 yards.



2026 NORTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SQUAD

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outplayed Hunt in all three aspects of the game – offense, defense and special teams – en route to its fifth-straight victory, doing so while pitching its fourth shutout of the season and its third in as many games.

"I didn't have that on my bingo card," said ninth-year Northern Nash head coach Andrew Farriss, who spent a hefty chunk of his career as an assistant at Hunt.

"I knew we could play well, but I didn't have any idea that it would be like that."

The Knights' offense tallied 360 yards while three different ball-carriers reached the endzone and two receivers hauled in touchdown passes from quarterback Jaice Johnson, and on the flipside Northern's defense allowed just five – yes, five – yards over four quarters of play.

"We've gotten better in our coverage and that's helped us up front," Farriss said of his lights-out defense – one that swallowed up a Hunt offense which hadn't scored fewer than 33 points this season prior to last Friday.

The Knights broke the ice in the first quarter on an eight-yard touchdown run from JaMarcus Robinson, which was followed by an impressive 46-yard field goal drilled by Caleb Walston on the ensuing drive.

Leading 10-0 after the opening stanza, Northern broke away in dominant fashion during the

second quarter – adding 28 more points before the halftime intermission.

What looked to be momentum swinging in Hunt's favor after a third-down stop on the final play of the first frame turned into the Warriors muffing a punt on the first play of the second period, with Northern recovering in the red zone.

Star running back Myles Eatmon then added his name to the stat sheet, scoring from one yard out and extending the Knights' advantage to 17-0.

After Northern's defense forced yet another three-and-out, it was Johnson's turn for a trip to the endzone, this one coming on a 51-yard keeper. Johnson, who accounted for four total touchdowns split evenly through the air and on the ground, rushed for a game-high 90 yards while adding 130 yards passing – making an impact from start-to-finish in the biggest game of the Knights' season thus far.

Up 24-0, Johnson found Omare Porter for his first passing touchdown on a 17-yard connection with 1:06 left in the half – one of two passing touchdowns.

Northern found the end zone once again before the halftime break, Johnson calling his own number on a three-yard keeper at the :11 mark in the second quarter, resulting in a 38-0 lead for the Knights at the halfway mark.

A shortened second half due to

a score-induced running clock left time for just one more score, this one coming on a 36-yard touchdown pass from Johnson to Zykeal Richardson in the fourth quarter.

The 45-0 final bumped Northern to 6-2 overall on the season while Hunt fell to 7-1, with the Knights gaining sole possession of first place in the Big East championship race at a spotless 4-0 in conference play.

In those four games, Northern has outscored its opponents by a whopping 202-20 margin, surrendering all 20 of those points to Fike – a game that was the Golden Demons' only loss of the season and the lowest point total of the year for a squad averaging over 47 points per game.

Now officially in the driver's seat, the Knights have two games left in the regular season and in the race for a conference title, with a matchup against a longtime foe on the docket for this week.

Southern Nash, with a 4-5 ledger, will pay Northern a visit on Friday night in a tilt between the two county rivals, one looking to boost its resumé in hopes of earning a playoff berth and the other looking to continue to build towards a conference championship.

Friday's senior night kickoff between the Knights and Firebirds is slated for a 7 p.m. kickoff and will be held at Death Valley on the campus of Northern Nash High School.

TENNIS

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an 8-4 victory for herself and Bulluck – thus clinching the outright conference title for the second season in a row.

"We had to adjust doubles on the fly," said Nash Central Girls Tennis coach Wayne Holloman – who is also Ava's father. "I'm just really proud of them all."

Holloman started the year by having to replace three of his top six players from last season, having lost two key contributors from last year's squad to graduation and another to a different fall activity on the school's campus.

Knowing that, Holloman worked to prepare a trio of freshmen – Ellie Hart, Hadley Hester and Kenzie Richardson – to face some unexpected challenges as the season drew closer.

"It was genuinely a collective effort for this team," Holloman remarked of his entire roster, stating that those three, as well as Gardner and Emilee Proctor were each dealt unexpected and difficult cards at some point during the duration of the season.

"But opportunity pres-

ents itself in those situations," Holloman stated. "They knew they had to step up."

Another key piece of the roster this year was senior Cambria Harper, who elected not to play during her junior year but Holloman was able to talk back into rejoining the team ahead of her final fall on campus.

"I knew I needed to find another solid player," Holloman said when analyzing the departures from last year's squad as well as his daughter's looming injury.

"And there's no way we would've won the conference without her."

The Lady Bulldogs not only won their league, but also their first round playoff matchup as well. Central knocked off Uwharrie Charter Academy 5-4 on Oct. 12 before falling to West Stanly in the second round, meaning that the Lady Bulldogs have advanced beyond the first round of the postseason for a fifth straight season, a strong stretch for any school.

While the dual season may now be wrapped up for Nash Central, Bulluck is still in the individuals.



NASH CENTRAL'S HANNAH BULLUCK HELPED THE BULLDOGS WIN THE CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP

GOLF

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the only meet of the season with 18 holes, Fike's Kensley Hill was the medalist with a 10-over-par 80.

Fike's Loulie Harris claimed the runner-up spot just one stroke behind Hill at 81.

The third position went to Payton Durham, also of Wilson Fike, at 83. Rounding out the Top Five were Fike's Addison Brinkley (86) and Fike's Addison Barnes (91).

Northern Nash's Emma Matthews, only a freshman, was effective as she earned seventh place overall with a 100. Also at 100 was Southern Nash's Jenna Antill, a senior.

The Fighting Knights also received a Top-10 performance from junior Hayley Moss, who tied

for ninth place with a 104.

Hill, a junior, was tabbed as the Big East Conference Player of the Year after finishing with a season total of 276 -- 11 strokes clear of teammate Harrison.

Wilson Fike boasted the Top-Five performers statewide this season in the Big East -- Hill, Harrison, Durham, Barnes and Brinkley.

Only two of those standouts are seniors -- Durham and Barnes.

Northern's Matthews and Moss also broke into the Top 10, along with Antill.

The Top-10 players claimed All-Big East Conference honors. A list of those league stars is as follows:

**2026
All-Big East
Conference**

Girls Golf Team

- Kensley Hill, Wilson Fike
- Loulie Harrison, Wilson Fike
- Payton Durham, Wilson Fike
- Addison Barnes, Wilson Fike
- Addison Brinkley, Wilson Fike
- Emma Matthews, Northern Nash

- Mikyla Cosgriff, CB Aycock
- Courtney Barfield, Wilson Hunt

- Katherine Horton, CB Aycock
- Hayley Moss, Northern Nash
- Jenna Antill, Southern Nash

Top Honors

- Big East Conference Girls Golf Player of the Year -- Kensley Hill, Wilson Fike
- Big East Conference Girls Golf Coach of the Year -- Clint Carter, Wilson Fike