

2025 BIG EAST CONFERENCE FOOTBALL SEASON
NNHS' KNIGHT FEVER



MYLES EATMON IS IN THE CLEAR FOR THE NORTHERN NASH KNIGHTS VERSUS SO. NASH
(Photos Submitted by Carl Copeland)

Northern moves into top position in conference

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

STANHOPE -- The Northern Nash High School football team used a dominant second half en route to a victory for the second time in as many weeks last Friday night, scoring 20 straight points across the third and fourth quarters in its 34-21 win at Southern Nash in a key Big East Conference showdown.

"It's always tough when you play these guys," said Northern Nash head coach Andrew Farriss - who earned the third win of his tenure at Firebird Stadium in his sixth road trip to Southern Nash.

The contest was the Knights' third straight victory in the series and their seventh win in the last eight meetings between



CAMRON LYONS TRACKS A RECEPTION FOR SOUTHERN NASH



SOUTHERN NASH'S MACY STRICKLAND

Southern spikers sparkled

From Staff Reports

STANHOPE -- One of the greatest encores in Southern Nash volleyball history resulted in one of the greatest seasons in the program's history -- and the best may yet be to come for the Ladybirds.

Certainly, the Ladybirds

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SN'S ABIGAIL MARKS



JAYDEN BAGGETT SETS THE TONE FOR THE NASH CENTRAL SPIKERS
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

Solid Season For Central Bulldogs won 15 matches and reached the playoffs

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

ROCKY MOUNT -- The 2025 season may have marked a new beginning for the Nash Central High School Volleyball team, with the Lady Bulldogs competing in the Class-2A/3A/4A Quad County Conference for the first time, but the program's consistent and impressive results



stayed the same.

Head coach Amber Inman-Perry's squad qualified for the state playoffs for the fifth-straight season this year, building on its school record after reaching the postseason for the first time in school history in 2021.

The Lady Bulldogs posted a 15-5

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2026 ALL-QUAD COUNTY CONFERENCE GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY SQUAD

NCHS runners excel in conference XC action

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- Three Nash Central High School standouts earned all-league selections following the inaugural Quad County Conference Cross Country Meet on October 8.

On the girls side, Central was represented by A'dia Cash and Harmony Dupree, while Cooper Parks was honored as part of the boys squad.

Parks was eighth overall in the boys event with a time of 19:17.

Cash, a freshman, was sixth in the girls event at 24:03, while Dupree took 10th place overall



NC'S COOPER PARKS

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THE SOUTHERN NASH LADYBIRDS HAD PLENTY OF REASONS TO CELEBRATE DURING THE 2025 SEASON

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weren't going to top what they accomplished in 2024 by sweeping the Big East Conference regular season and tournament championships before winning a playoff match.

That couldn't happen, especially with SN losing such a deep, talented class to graduation.

Or could it? The Ladybirds probably exceeded their own expectations in 2025 as some of the returnees became true leaders -- and a handful of newcomers stepped up to display that the program should continue to be ultra-competitive over the coming campaigns.

Under the direction of legendary coach Melanie Hicks, Southern Nash went 20-2 overall, with its lone regular season loss coming to backyard

rival Bunn in non-conference action.

Other than that blip, Southern Nash was dominant, sweeping the Big East's regular season and tournament championships for the second consecutive year. SN then added another playoff triumph as the Ladybirds secured a three-set sweep over Dixon last Tuesday in the opening round of the Class 5-A event at the SNHS Gymnasium.

Scores were 25-19, 25-14 and 25-16 in favor of the Ladybirds.

Two days later, Southern Nash was back at home, but the Ladybirds saw their season come to a close with a four-set loss to a solid Hillsborough Orange club in the second round.

SN dropped the first two sets before showing

some grit to take a tight third set.

Orange, however, bounced back in the fourth and final set to advance.

Still, it was a great year for the Ladybirds, and here's the best news -- SNHS only had four seniors on its roster.

Setter Abigail Marks will be back next year, as will top hitter Peyton Cooke.

And three key freshmen will also be back, including Brooklyn Rice, who was third on the club in kills this fall as a ninth-grader.

Defensive specialist Jayda Leonard and hitter Cassie Sanders also saw considerable playing time as freshmen and will be counted up to help the Ladybirds continue their recent program uprising under Hicks.



NORTHERN NASH'S JAMARCUS ROBINSON AND GEHRIG MILLER PLAY THE READ-OPTION GAME LAST FRIDAY

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the two longtime foes, turning the tides from the 11-game losing streak that Northern previously suffered against Southern from 2011-2019.

Northern Nash star running back Myles Eatmon was the main driver in Friday's result, accounting for a whopping 234 of the Knights' 259 rushing yards while scoring all four of the team's touchdowns.

Eatmon, who has now accrued more than 1,300 rushing yards combined with 21 total trips to the endzone, scored first-half touchdowns 11 yards and one yard out, resulting in a 14-14 tie at intermission after the Firebirds answered his efforts with a 31-yard touchdown run by Jaden Hartsfield and 13-yard connection through the air between quarterback Isaiah Battle and Camron Lyons.

Hartsfield, a junior with over 1,200 all-purpose yards this season, served as Southern Nash's leading rusher with 75 yards on 11 attempts, but was sidelined early in the evening after suffering an injury, leaving the majority of the workload for Lyons and DJ Baker.

Despite his early exit, Hartsfield tabbed the Firebirds' only rushing touchdown of the evening, with Southern Nash's second-half score coming with just five seconds remaining in the game on a 28-yard pass once again from Battle to Lyons.

It was too little, too late for head coach Brian Batchelor's squad though, with Southern having dug themselves into a 20-point deficit in the second half.

Northern began the third quarter by registering a Caleb Walston field goal, immediately following that up by forcing a Firebird punt.

On the first play of the ensuing drive, Eatmon raced through the Southern Nash defense for a 66-yard score, his longest run of the season and one that extended the Knights' advantage to 24-14.

"We really needed that from him," said Farriss of his marquee back. "I felt like that was definitely the tipping point."

Eatmon capped off his impressive

performance with a six-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter, pushing Northern ahead 31-14 before another Walston field goal - this one from a career-best 37 yards out - built out a 20-point edge before Southern's final-minute score.

The victory bumped Northern Nash to an impressive 8-1 on the year and 5-0 in league play, while Southern Nash fell to 6-4 with its regular season schedule now complete.

The Firebirds will observe their bye week on Friday, October 31, allowing a week for the team to get healthy as they head into the Class-5A State Playoffs.

Additionally, it will provide an opportunity for the team to work out some of its recent kinks, with Southern's last three outings resulting in losses to Hunt, Rocky Mount and Northern Nash. 2025 marks the first time since 2008 that the Firebirds have lost three games in a row, with the team's six wins also the fewest since their four-win campaign in 2008 aside from the COVID-altered season in the spring of 2021.

While Southern Nash will be off on Friday, Northern will be looking to win its fourth conference championship in five seasons the same night, hosting archrival Rocky Mount in a de facto conference championship game to close the regular season.

The 7-2 Gryphons dropped its first conference game of the season last week, a 30-9 loss to Hunt, but will certainly be looking to spook Northern on Halloween night.

"They've played a great season," said Farriss of Rocky Mount, who was quick to bring up last year's 41-40 overtime thriller against the Gryphons, a win that secured just the second undefeated regular season in Northern Nash history.

"They always give us a fit, they're going to play well, they always do."

Friday night's important Halloween gridiron showdown between Northern Nash and Rocky Mount is slated for a 7 p.m. kickoff at historic Death Valley on the campus of Northern Nash High School.



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record in the regular season, an effort that resulted in the right to host a playoff game for the fourth time in school history and also matched the team's second-highest win total in program history.

Central's season came to a close in the first round of the Class-4A playoffs at the hands of Carrboro, but not before the team registered an impressive 7-3 record in league play that resulted in a second-place finish in the conference.

The Lady Bulldogs' success wasn't just limited to Quad County play though, as Central kicked off the front half of its 2025 campaign by picking up two-match sweeps over county foes Northern Nash and Rocky Mount, as well as Class-5A Hunt.

"Playing that many local rivals back-to-back is never easy, especially with the emotional stakes that come with it," said Inman-Perry earlier this season, referencing how Nash Central opened the season by playing six-straight games against county opponents, two each amongst Northern Nash, Southern Nash and Rocky Mount.

Central additionally swept three of its league opponents, winning both matchups against Wake Prep Academy, Roanoke Rapids and American Leader-

ship Academy - Johnston (ALAJ), while also sweeping up a two-match nonconference series over SouthWest Edgecombe.

The Lady Bulldogs' season was highlighted not just by its impressive six sweeps, but also the seven-game win streak that took place from August 26 - September 17, with Central knocking off Northern, Hunt, ALAJ, Louisburg, Roanoke Rapids and SouthWest Edgecombe over that seven-match spurt.

While this was certainly a successful year for Nash Central, the Lady Bulldogs won't be looking to halt their momentum as a program anytime soon.

Central will graduate five seniors this spring, including star upperclassman Gracyn King, who led the Lady Bulldogs with 170 kills and 69 aces on the service line this season. King additionally contributed a team-best 114 blocks on the defensive end while registering 107 assists, the second most on the team behind fellow senior Jayden Baggett.

Bryleigh Posey and Rylee Brewer have also played their final volleyball contests in maroon, in addition to Jakayla Gay.

Despite all that, the Lady Bulldogs are set to return some major contributors in 2026.



2025 NCHS BOYS AND GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS

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at 24:59. Dupree is also a ninth-grader for the Lady Bulldogs.

Also in boys action, Central featured solid showings from Chason Jenkins (16th place at 21:10) and Evan Johnson (38th place at 28:52).

Wake Prep's Johnathon Barnett was the boys winner at 17:58, while the girls champion was Vivienne Burto (also from Wake Prep) at 21:52.

Wake Prep swept both the boys and girls team championships in the

inaugural season for the Quad County Conference.

Roanoke Rapids was second in the girls standings, while Louisburg High School was the runner-up in the boys competition.