

2025 BIG EAST CONFERENCE FOOTBALL SEASON  
**THEY DID IT AGAIN!**



NORTHERN NASH'S HASSAN DAVIS-MCKINNEY DARTS ON A CATCH-AND-RUN VERSUS RMHS  
(Photo Submitted by Carl Copeland)

**NN repeats as county, conference champions**

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
*Correspondent*

RED OAK -- For the fourth time in the last five seasons, Northern Nash High School is a conference champion on the football field.

"Quite an achievement," said Northern Nash head football coach Andrew Farriss, who has guided the Knights to each of those four titles, firing off an impressive 29-1 in league play over a five-year span.

Northern clinched its first conference championship as a member of the 5A/6A Big East Conference last Friday night by knocking off archrival Rocky Mount, with the regular season finale between the longtime conference foes serving as the de facto conference title



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THE FIGHTING KNIGHTS CELEBRATE WITH THE GRIT-AND-GRIND TROPHY



NORTHERN NASH'S  
ALAINA DAVIS

**Another big year at NNHS**

By CHANCE PUCKETT  
*Correspondent*

KERNERSVILLE -- Northern Nash High School's long history of success on the cross country circuit continued in 2025, with the Knights' boys squad capturing an 11th-place



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NORTHERN NASH'S  
CHRISTIAN POWELL



SOUTHERN NASH'S JADEN HARTSFIELD AND THE REST OF THE FIREBIRDS WILL ENJOY A PLAYOFF BYE WEEK

**Birds Are Taking A Break**

Southern Nash will have a first-round playoff bye

From Staff Reports

STANHOPE -- They're always hungry for football this time of year at Southern Nash High School -- but the denizens of Firebird Stadium are having to be a little more patient than usual this time around.

After closing the regular season with a bye week, the Firebirds will be off again this Friday after earning a first-round pass in the Class 5-A State Playoffs.

Next Friday, Southern Nash will finally return



to action -- after a usually unheard-of two week bye stretch, to tangle with the winner of the first-round showdown between Hillsborough Orange and Southern Alamance High School.

Southern Nash will enter the postseason as the No. 8 seed -- a number that could have been much better if not for a three-game losing streak to cap off what had been an otherwise-outstanding

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TALIEK MORRIS RIPS OFF A NICE GAIN FOR NASH CENTRAL AGAINST WAKE PREP  
(Photo Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

**Bulldogs playing well ahead of postseason**

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- Hidden beneath the tough losses, injuries and typical rebuilding processes is this fact -- the Nash Central Bulldogs are playing some of their best football of the



season heading into the Class 4-A State Playoffs.

And despite coming in with a 3-7 record as part of a reloading project, the Bulldogs will even have a first-round home game

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NORTHERN NASH'S JAH'MARZEA WILLIAMS SHEDS A TACKLE

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game for the second time in as many seasons.

"It was close and I thought it would be," said Farriss, whose Knights bested the Gryphons for a fifth-straight season by a score of 31-18.

A strong all-around performance against a quality Rocky Mount opponent, Northern rode feature running back Myles Eatmon, as it had all year, with the junior star accounting for two of the Knights' four touchdowns in addition to 174 all-purpose yards.

Eatmon first reached the end zone in the second quarter, scoring from two yards out to give Northern its first lead of the evening, a 10-6 edge after the first quarter consisted of a 30-yard Gryphon touchdown pass and a 25-yard field goal drilled by the Knights' Caleb Walston.

Rocky Mount would then immediately bounce back, once again through the air, on a 29-yard connection between quarterback Jason Battle Jr. and Ur'hynus Pierce.

Battle - the son of 14th-year Rocky Mount head coach Jason Battle Sr. - impressed in his first career start for the Gryphons, tossing a pair of touchdowns in addition to 106 passing yards and making some plays in the running game as well.

Battle was hoisted into the starting spot after senior Alex Beasley suffered an injury in Rocky Mount's October 24 loss to Hunt, with his 106 yards passing against Northern the second-most yards through the air in a game this season for the Gryphons.

After Battle connected with Kenan Barned to break the ice and Pierce to retake the lead, it was then Northern's turn to find the endzone through the air.

Northern Nash quarterback Gehrig Miller engineered a touchdown drive that ended in a ten-yard pass to tight end Chase Morgan in the waning minutes of the first half, regaining the advantage of the scoreboard at 17-12 in what would be the final lead change of the evening.

From there, Eatmon



NN'S GEHRIG MILLER AVOIDS A SACK

would boost the Knights' edge to 24-12 on a two-yard run in the fourth quarter, followed by Jamarcus Robinson joining the fun on a one-yard touchdown that extended Northern's advantage to three scores at 31-12.

The Gryphons would muster one last touchdown in the game's final minute, an eight-yard dash from C'quarhion Mitchell, but the hay was already in the barn for the Knights, closing out a 9-1 regular season, a conference title, and the team's seventh-straight win dating back to September 19.

"We needed to be able to win a close game," remarked Farriss, who in his eighth year leading the Northern Nash program has now won a conference title in half of those seasons.

"I'm proud of our guys for continuing to play and fight through adversity."

Having now posted a perfect 6-0 mark in league play, the Knights completed a gauntlet of a final few games, facing league threats Hunt, Southern Nash and Rocky Mount over three-consecutive weeks to close the regular season.

Hunt was awarded the top seed in the Class-5A East playoff bracket that was released on Sunday, while Rocky Mount was named the seventh seed and Southern came in

at No. 8. All three of the Knights' lead opponents were awarded first-round byes as a result of their regular season success.

"The last three weeks have definitely been the biggest games," remarked Farriss. "It's been very hard to stay locked in every week, but that's how the playoffs are and hopefully that helped prepare us for that mentally."

With the victory, the Fighting Knights also claimed yet another Grit and Grind Trophy as the Nash County overall team champions.

Designated as the No. 2 seed in the Class-6A Eastern Region, Northern Nash will now enjoy the fruits of its regular-season labor with a bye week of its own while their 6A counterparts compete in the first round on Friday night.

The Knights will be paired in the second round with the winner of this week's matchup between 15th-seeded Eastern Guilford and No. 18 White Oak, with Northern set to host the victory of that contest on Friday, November 14 on the campus of Northern Nash High School.

"We'll just have to see who comes out of that game and get ready for someone we haven't played before," said Farriss. "But that's the fun of the playoffs."

their early-season gauntlet through Nash County foes, which resulted in a trio of losses.

But Central bounced back in the conference, earning impressive wins over ALAJ and Roanoke Rapids while losing to Louisburg, Bunn and Wake Prep by a combined 15 points -- all games that could have gone NCHS' way with a few different bounces.

The Bulldogs have also seen their early-season offensive difficulties go away as they have scored 21 points or more in each of their last four outings.

In the finale, Central broke open a tight game with 21 unanswered points in the third frame, thanks in part to 420 rushing yards. Junior ZaQuez Britt earned 131 of those yards, including a 60-yard touchdown burst.



VETERAN TWO-WAY STANDOUT LUKE FAULKNER (LEFT) WILL LEAD SOUTHERN NASH INTO THE STATE PLAYOFFS

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campaign.

Southern, now 6-4, opened by winning six of its first seven outings before closing with setbacks to Big East Conference opponents Wilson Hunt, Rocky Mount and Northern Nash.

As a side note, the Firebirds could face a potential third-round rematch with top-seeded Hunt if both teams make it past their second-round foes.

It will be interesting to see how the Firebirds respond following the layoff.

Certainly, some players will be able to enjoy the time to get healthy and rejuvenated.

But will Southern Nash be able to maintain its game shape and rhythm following the layoff?

Will some of the problems that SN encountered during the three-game setback streak remain? Or will they be solved.

Once again, the waiting is the hardest part.

Scoring points -- as usual -- hasn't been a problem for the Firebirds, though SN veteran head coach Brian Batchelor would love to see



SOUTHERN NASH WIDE RECEIVER JEREMIAH BATTLE SAILS FOR A RECEPTION VERSUS NORTHERN

his offense cut down on some of its untimely mistakes.

But SNHS' defense has allowed a whopping 161 total points over its last four contests -- an average of over 40 points per game.

Even Southern Nash's vaunted offense will have trouble keeping up with those types of numbers from the other team

-- and that's why the Firebirds are heading into the postseason at just 6-4, as opposed to a much better worksheet.

However, all of that will be forgotten with a strong push from the Firebirds in the playoffs -- something the program has been known to pull off through the years. SN will just have to wait one more week.

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finish at the Class 6-A State Championship meet last Friday in Forsyth County.

Four of the Knights' seven male runners were amongst the event's top-100 finishers, headlined by sophomore Sage Burrison in 35th place, while on the girls side junior Alaina Davis competed as an individual and landed in 49th out of 139 competitors.

"I think Alaina had a great state meet," remarked longtime Northern Nash cross country coach Jeff Dodrill. "Her experience at that level will be valuable to the team next year, she will be the leader that gets our girls qualified as a team in 2026."

Davis was the Knights' top finisher - 11th of 103 - on the girls side at Regionals just a week prior, an event that Northern hosted on the campus of Red Oak Middle School on October 24.

Northern's girls squad ended Regionals in 10th place, while its boys squad qualified for States as a team with a third-place finish. It was a hallmark year for Dodrill's boys' team, qualifying once again for the State Championship meet while earning its 14th straight conference championship, an already-impressive streak that was proven even more remarkable after the Knights' won its first league crown as

a member of the new Class-5A/6A Big East this season.

"The 14 consecutive conference titles are the result of 14 individual teams working to accomplish their own seasonal goals," remarked Dodrill, who coached the Knights to each of those 14 championships.

"It is great to look back on and say more than three-straight groups of runners entered high school and graduated four years later and never lost a conference championship."

The Knights have now officially reached the point where runners on the team are as many years old as Northern has won consecutive conference champions -- with some of the anticipated freshmen on next year's team being born after the Knights' streak of 14-straight titles began.

"It's a huge accomplishment," stated Dorrill, "and as far as I can tell, longer than any other streak at Northern."

Wrapping up the year at 11th in the state, the Knights are expected to bring back every runner on both its boys and girls teams in 2026, paving the way for Northern to be a clear favorite both in the conference and the Eastern Region in both the boys and girls divisions.

While the girls will be in search of the first conference title since 2021 and their first state championship appear-

ance since 2017, the boys will be looking to add to their impressive streak in addition to a run of seven state championship appearances in 10 years.

Aside from Burrison, this year's state championship meet saw sophomore Miguel Guzman finish in 62nd place, freshman Christian Powell end the meet in 65th, sophomore Joey Lewis in 89th, while Landon Walker, Dillon Newbold and Daymond Sherrod wrapping things up at 109th, 110th and 112th, respectively.

Northern finished just 15 points out of 10th place, a goal that Dodrill set for his squad going into the season finale. Additionally, the Knights' entered the championship meet ranked 13th in the state, improving based on their prior results.

"This group of guys accepted the challenge put before them and became strong for it and better runners by facing the forge of the fire," stated Dodrill. "Next season, the Regional Title is the goal."

Asheville's A.C. Reynolds High School claimed the Class 6-A Boys State Cross Country Championship, finishing eight points ahead of second-place Mount Tabor while Boone's Watauga High School won the girls championship, closing out the meet at 18 points ahead of East Chapel Hill.

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-- and a definite winnable one at that.

That's not conjecture as Nash Central will host long-time league foe Roanoke Rapids in the opening round this Friday at The Dawg Pound on the NCHS campus.

One month ago, the Bulldogs had no problem with the Jackets in Quad County Conference action, winning by a comfortable 47-21 margin on the road.

That triumph was one of two victories in QCC action for the Bulldogs, who wrapped up their regular season slate last Friday with a convincing 54-31 decision over American Leadership Academy of Johnston County at home.

Despite all of the adversity the Bulldogs have been forced to overcome this fall, they fared well in QCC play after