

2025 NORTHERN NASH HS FOOTBALL RUBBER MATCH



NORTHERN NASH'S ZEPHANIAH QUEEN SHEDS A TACKLE VERSUS 71ST
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

Fighting Knights top playoff rival 71st



JAH'MARZEA WILLIAMS
By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

RED OAK -- The Northern Nash High Football Team won its highly-anticipated rubber match against Seventy-First last Friday night, shutting out the Falcons in the second half en route to a 19-14 victory in the third round of the Class

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JAQUAYE ARRINGTON WITH THE QB PRESSURE

SN WRAPS IT UP

Birds defeated by Wilson Hunt



SN QB ISAIAH BATTLE

By CHANCE PUCKETT
Correspondent

WILSON -- The Southern Nash Firebirds saw their 2025 football season come to a close in the third round of the Class 5-A State Playoffs last Friday night, falling to conference foe Hunt, 42-21, in the second meeting between the two longtime rivals this season.

The two teams first met on October 10, when Hunt used 14 points in the game's final two minutes to secure a 51-34



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SOUTHERN NASH'S JADEN HARTSFIELD FOLLOWS HIS BLOCKERS
(Photos Submitted by Carl Copeland)



NASH CENTRAL STANDOUT GRACYN KING
(Photos Submitted by Meryn Johnson)

SPIKE SUCCESS

NCHS was strong in the QCC

From Staff Reports

ROCKY MOUNT -- Consistency is a key to building a successful prep volleyball program -- and the Nash Central Lady Bulldogs have displayed that trait over the past five years.



Central has made the playoffs in each of those campaigns despite competing in different leagues -- including a switch this fall to the new Quad County Conference.

The Lady Bulldogs picked up right where they left off from their time in the Big East, going 15-6 overall to go with a 7-3 worksheet in the QCC, which was good enough for second place behind Bunn.

Central also made the post-season once again before



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NC'S JAYDEN BAGGETT



2025 NASH CENTRAL LADY BULLDOGS



NORTHERN NASH'S ELIJAH WOOD IS IN THE CLEAR

NNHS FB

6-A State Playoffs. Northern and Seventy-First met twice in previous years during the postseason, both in the Class 3-A Eastern Regional Final, with the Knights emerging the winner in 2022 and the Falcons getting some revenge in 2023.

"I can't say enough about how talented and tough they are and how big it was for us to be able to win that game," said eighth-year Northern Nash head football coach Andrew Farriss of their familiar opponent. "We really showed a lot of heart and toughness to pull out that win as a team."

Not only did Northern advance to the fourth round, they also did so largely in the absence of star running back Myles Eatmon.

Eatmon accounted for just four carries after being sidelined early in the evening with an injury, resulting in junior Preston McDaniel carrying the brunt of the workload in the Knights' running game.

Just one game removed from a 126-yard, two-touchdown performance in Northern's second-round outing against White Oak, McDaniel helped push the Knights to round four by recording 143 all-purpose yards and breaking the ice with a first-quarter touchdown.

McDaniel found the end zone from two yards out to put Northern ahead 7-0 early, a score that was soon followed by a trip to the end zone by Seventy-First.

The Falcons got on the board in the opening frame courtesy of a 30-yard run by Jayson Franklin, the first of two scores for the team's premier back.

Franklin later leveled the scoreboard at 14-14, exploding for a 78-yard scamper in the second period, a touchdown that would be Seventy-First's final points of the contest.

The Falcons' second touchdown wasn't long after the Knights also made their final trip of the evening to the end zone, this one coming on a 63-yard air strike from quarterback Gehrig



NORTHERN NASH'S MYLES EATMON

Miller to Jah'Marzea Williams.

"Gehrig really played well tonight and we needed him to," remarked Farriss. "He's really gotten better each week."

Miller played one of the best games of his 2025 campaign on Friday, matching his season-high of 13 completed passes in addition to 169 passing yards and his connection with Williams.

The 169 number was Miller's third-highest passing yard total of the year and his most since the Knights' October 10 beatdown of Southern Wayne, spreading the wealth amongst six different green-and-gold passcatchers.

It was the defense that really sealed the deal for Northern, though, not only pitching a second-half shutout but adding some points of their own as well.

The Knights broke a 14-14 halftime tie by driving deep into Falcon territory and leaving with a field goal, Caleb Walston hitting from 20 yards out to put Northern ahead 17-14.

From that point on, the only remaining score would come from Northern's defense -- a fourth-quarter safety, one that came on a sack from Holton Westbrook, which led to a 19-14 edge for the Knights -- the inevitable final score.

The 14 total was the

fewest points that Northern had allowed since October 17, the team's 49-14 victory over Hunt, the top-seeded team in the Eastern Region's 5A classification.

"I was very proud of the defense overall, we knew it would be hard to stop them completely but we had a couple big stops," said Farriss.

With a first-round bye and two playoff wins now under its belt, Northern Nash is set for a week of practice leading into a Friday night matchup against Middle Creek as a side to today's turkey and stuffing, with the Mustangs coming off a 31-30 thriller over Eastern Alamance to advance to the fourth round.

Middle Creek comes to Death Valley riding a 9-2 record, the team's two losses coming at the hands of a pair of Wake County opponents that are facing off in the quarterfinals of this week's 7A playoffs, No. 1 Cardinal Gibbons and No. 4 Garner.

The Mustangs are the third seed in the 6A East, receiving a first round bye followed by a 32-point victory over West Brunswick before their third-round win against Southern Alamance.

Kickoff between the first-ever matchup on the gridiron between Northern Nash and Middle Creek is set for 7 p.m. on Friday.



SOUTHERN'S LUKE FAULKNER STRETCHES FOR YARDAGE

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victory over the Firebirds, the program's first win against Southern Nash since 2014.

This time around, the top-seeded Warriors scored twice in the first and second quarters while finding the end zone once in the third and fourth periods as well, using big plays both through its running game and through the air to advance to the fourth round for the first time since 2013.

Southern found its consistent success in the ground game, as it seemingly always does, largely on the back of junior Jaden Hartsfield. The Firebirds totaled 332 rushing yards as a team, with 200 of those in addition to a pair of touchdowns coming from Hartsfield.

Senior all-around athlete Luke Faulkner accounted for Southern's additional touchdown, contributing 64 yards on 11 carries while junior Camron Lyons posted 73 yards on the ground as well.

Outside of the rushing attack, Faulkner hauled in a team-high 20 receiving yards on Friday while finishing the season as the team's leading tackler by a wide margin. A team captain and a four-year starter, Faulkner wrapped up an illustrious career in Southern Nash red-and-blue against the Warriors with an impressive, but of course not surprising showing.

Despite a valiant effort, Faulkner and the rest of his team's performance weren't enough to overcome Hunt, a serious contender to claim the 5A East Championship.

Warrior running back Doryan Jones scored two of his three touchdowns in the first quarter, giving Hunt a 14-7 lead at the end of the first period.

The Firebirds were able to retie the score at 14-14 on a second-period rushing touchdown, but then momentum seriously began to swing in Hunt's favor.

Warrior quarterback Mez Harris connected with senior wideout Jake Harris

on a go-ahead, 45-yard touchdown pass to put Hunt ahead 21-14, followed shortly by what would likely be the most important play of the game.

As Southern drove deep into Warrior territory, Faulkner fumbled just shy of the goal line, resulting in Hunt's Cameron Pittman scooping and scoring from 99 yards out, doubling the Warriors' lead from seven points to 14.

Taking place just before halftime, the 99-yard fumble return resulted in Hunt taking a 28-14 lead into the locker room for intermission, a lead that would prove too much for the Firebirds to overcome in the second half.

Once again, it was Jones who led off the third period with a rushing touchdown that was later followed by a two-yard run by Harris in the fourth quarter, boosting Hunt's lead up to a game-high 28 points.

Hartsfield would find the end zone for the Firebirds in the game's waning minutes, but it proved to be too little, too late.

The fifth season of the Brian Batchelor era at Southern Nash High School has now concluded with a record of 7-5, the Firebirds continuing their trend of both qualifying for the postseason and winning at least one playoff game in each of those five seasons.

Despite that, 2025 proved to be a bit of a setback season for the Firebirds, with 7-5 being the program's worst record since its 3-4 mark during the altered Spring 2021 season during the COVID-19 pandemic. Outside of that, you have to stretch all the way back to the program's 7-4 campaign in 2011 to find a season with fewer than eight wins.

While 2025 may not have been what Batchelor and his staff had hoped for, Southern is set to return its top two running backs, Hartsfield and Lyons, as well as quarterback Isaiah Battle in 2026, meaning that the Firebirds will be an early frontrunner to contend for the Big East crown next year.

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coming up with a tough draw in the first round -- and losing to a tradition-rich Carrboro squad.

Still, it was a solid year for the Lady Bulldogs, thanks in part to the work of a quality senior class led by All-Quad County Conference Team selections Bryleigh Posey, Jayden Baggett and Gracyn King.

Posey was a reliable libero, while Baggett was a setter for Central's hitting specialists, including King -- who had the ability to excel just about anywhere on the court.

Bunn swept the QCC's top honors, led by Laney Mullen (Player of the Year), Kherington Bryant (Defensive Player of the Year) and Morgan LaRoque (Coach of the Year).

Central will have to find a way to reload after the graduation of its star-studded senior class, but the Lady Bulldogs also boasted some strong underclassmen -- and even some freshmen contributed on the varsity level.

The complete 2025 All-QCC Volleyball Team is as follows:

- 2025 All-QCC Volleyball Team**
- Shelby Brooks, Bunn High School
 - Brooke Harrah, Bunn High School
 - Maycey Buchanan, Bunn High School
 - Payton Wood, Bunn High School
 - Gracyn King, Nash Central
 - Bryleigh Posey, Nash Central
 - Jayden Baggett, Nash Central
 - Josie Osbourne, Wake Prep
 - Harper Maxwell, Wake Prep
 - Kendall Gleason, Louisville
 - Megan Fosnes, Louisville
 - Tessa Porter, American Leadership Academy of Johnston County
 - Josanna Porter, American Leadership Academy of Johnston County



NASH CENTRAL'S BRYLEIGH POSEY

- Emilee Campbell, Roanoke Rapids High School
- Zoey Thomas, Roanoke Rapids
- Honorable Mention**
- Claire Roberson, Louisville
- Noelle Moore, Roanoke Rapids
- Top Honors**
- Player of the Year -- Laney Mullen, Bunn High School
- Defensive Player of the Year -- Kherington Bryant, Bunn High School
- Coach of the Year -- Morgan LaRoque, Bunn High School



NN COACH ANDREW FARRISS CELEBRATES WITH HIS TEAM