

2021 FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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2021 FOOTBALL SCHEDULES

Auburn High School Eagles

Aug. 27, Narrows;
Sept. 3, at Craig;
Sept. 10, Floyd;
Sept. 17, Eastern Montgomery;
Oct. 1, at Ft. Chiswell;
Oct. 8, Grayson County;
Oct. 15, at Bland;
Oct. 22, at Galax;
Oct. 29, at Giles;
Nov. 5, George Wythe.

Blacksburg High School Bruins

Aug. 27, at Giles;
Sept. 2, Lord Botetourt;
Sept. 10, Amherst;
Sept. 24, Salem;
Oct. 1, at Patrick Henry;
Oct. 8, at Christiansburg;
Oct. 15, Pulaski;
Oct. 22, Hidden Valley;
Oct. 29, at Graham;
Nov. 5, Cave Spring.

Christiansburg High School Blue Demons

Aug. 27, at Floyd;
Sept. 3, at Abingdon;
Sept. 17, William Byrd;
Sept. 24, Radford;
Oct. 1, at Salem;
Oct. 8, Blacksburg;
Oct. 15, at Hidden Valley;
Oct. 22, Patrick Henry;
Oct. 29, Cave Spring;
Nov. 5, at Pulaski.

Eastern Montgomery High School Mustangs

Aug. 27, at Holston;
Sept. 3, Rural Retreat;
Sept. 10, North Cross;
Sept. 17, at Auburn;
Sept. 24, Bland;
Oct. 8, at Craig;
Oct. 15, Bath County;
Oct. 22, at Narrows;
Oct. 29, at Covington;
Nov. 5, Parry McCluer.

Radford High School Bobcats

Aug. 27, George Wythe;
Sept. 4, at Gate City;
Sept. 10, at Ft. Chiswell;
Sept. 17, Galax;
Sept. 24, at Christiansburg;
Oct. 1, Alleghany;
Oct. 8, Carroll County;
Oct. 22, Floyd;
Oct. 29, at Glenvar;
Nov. 5, at James River.

Auburn Varsity Football Roster

No.	Name	Grade	Height	Weight	Position
#1	Landen Marrs	9	6'1"	160	QB/DB
#3	Jackson Bain	12	5'10"	165	WR/DB
#5	Talan Mower	9	5'7"	155	WR/DB
#7	Ayden White	9	5'5"	115	WR/DB
#8	Brady Hale	10	5'8"	150	WR/DB
#9	Isaiah Keith	10	5'7"	140	WR//LB
#10	Matthew Wheeler	10	5'8"	170	RB/LB
#11	John Keith	12	5'8"	170	RB/LB
#17	Isaac McGuire	10	6'1"	165	WR/DB
#22	Kaleb Duff	10	5'10"	140	WR/DB
#50	Jackson Brockman	12	6'0"	175	OL/DL
#52	Austin Stump	12	6'1"	215	OL/DL
#54	Sage Palmer	9	5'9"	195	OL/DL
#62	Jaden Dadras	12	6'0"	265	OL/DL
#74	Isaac Wayne	9	5'9"	170	OL/DL
#80	Dylan Fizer	10	5'9"	150	WR/DB

New coach, new offensive scheme at Auburn this season

Marty Gordon
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The Auburn High School Eagles will look to a new face to lead

them to the promised land this season. David Seabaugh takes over a program that finished 3-4 this past spring. He replaces Cam Akers,

who left to become an assistant at Pulaski.

Seabaugh comes to the area after serving as the quarterback coach and passing game coordinator at Kemper County High School in Dekalb, Miss. Last year, the team finished 8-3.

He started his coaching career right out of high school at his alma mater, Litchfield High School, in Illinois and then attended college at Mississippi State University where he was able to work for the football team in recruiting.

When Mississippi State had away games, he drove back to Illinois on Friday morning to make the game that night. His senior year at MSU, he also worked with the football team at Starkville High School.

Originally from Walshville, Ill., a tiny town of 45 people, he became aware of the Auburn opening this past month.

Seabaugh's first goal at Auburn is to bring some excitement back to the football team. "I'm not going to come in

promising to make deep runs in the playoffs in my first season," he said, "but I will say we will have a product on the field that the people in this community can be excited about."

This past year, the lack of numbers affected the Riner program. No junior varsity team was fielded.

"My philosophy is something I stole from Bill Walsh. As he says: 'if you do all of the little things, the score will take care of itself.' Everything we do, we will be trying to do it perfectly. If we focus on being precise and being as perfect as we possibly can, the score will take care of itself," Seabaugh said.

Auburn will again, however, not field a junior varsity team. Twelve underclassmen will receive plenty of attention this season as they will be the nucleus of Auburn's football season that has only four seniors.

But the former Illinois high school football standout is optimistic, mainly thanks to what the Riner school has been able to accomplish across the board in every sport except football.

"The championships speak for themselves. You have 30 in eight

years," Seabaugh said. "Now, it's my job to translate that to football."

Seabaugh said he is excited to take over a program like Auburn. "I feel I bring just a complete change of pace. Not that my way of doing things is the best and only way to do things, but it's different from what has been at Auburn in the past," he said.

According to the new coach, Kemper County High School is about the same size as Auburn, but had some 45 to 50 kids on the football team.

"At Kemper, you had practically every athlete at the school playing multiple sports. Here there are a lot of kids playing only one," the new head coach said. "I'm a big believer in playing every sport you can in high school because it's the only time that you can. At both Kemper and Auburn, the community support is absolutely amazing."

Without giving too much away, Seabaugh said the offense is going to be a very different brand of football than the people of Auburn are used to seeing. Defensively the team is going to be aggressive. "I want to put pressure on the opponent's offense

and make them make mistakes," he said.

Freshman Landon Marrs could be given the keys to run the offense as he is the only quarterback listed on the roster.

When Seabaugh looks across the field, he said Jackson Brockman, Jaden Dadras, and John Keith are the first guys who come to mind. They are all seniors who are excited to try and change the culture around football at Auburn. Brady Hale and Isaiah Keith are a couple of other guys who are going to be making a lot of plays this year.

"I'm not going to say I expect this team to make a deep playoff run, but I still have high expectations for them," Seabaugh said. "They are challenged with the task of reviving this football program. It's not a big secret the position the program is in right now. Early success will bring excitement to the program and attract more kids in the school to come be a part of what we are doing."

Auburn opens the season on August 27 at home versus Narrows. Out-of-district opponents include Craig and Eastern Montgomery (September 17 for the Golden Helmet Game).

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2021 AUBURN HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY AKERS

The cheerleaders for the 2021 Auburn High School Eagles are (front row, left to right) Danna Reyes-Almanza, Ashley Parsons, Kayla Poff, (middle row, left to right) Chloe Rorrer, Jordan Coutant, Awbre Sirk, Megan Grimes, (back row, left to right) Ashlyn Bibb-Johnson, Juniper Zander, Lauren Bittering, Makayla Whittaker, and Caitlin Gambling. Not pictured Haley Greenhalgh.

2021 AUBURN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM



The 2021 Auburn High School football team with the cheerleaders. The team opens its season Aug. 27 at home against Narrows.

2021 AUBURN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACHES



The 2021 Auburn High School football coaching staff is (left to right) Justin Bittering, Zach McClellan, head coach David Seabaugh, Scott Grantham, Drew French and Chris Connelly.



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2021 Blacksburg Football Roster

No.	Player	Year	Height	Weight	Defensive Position	Offensive Position
1	Walker, Ethan	11	6'0	155	DB	WR
2	Terry, Daquan	10	5'11 1/2	220	LB	RB
3	Poff, Luke	10	5'10 1/2	135	DB	QB
4	Ajayi, David	11	5'8	187	LB	RB
5	Bass, Addison	10	6'1	157	DB	WR
6	Roberts, Traye	12	5'11	201	LB	RB
7	Bradley, Jared	9	5'8 1/2	187	LB	RB
8	Oliver, David	10	5'11	155	DB	QB
9	Karpa, Ethan	10	6'0	152	DB	WR
10	Gomez, Hector	11	5'8 1/2	162	LB	WR
11	Metrey, Eric	10	6'2	152	DB	WR
12	Epperley, Parker	12	6'0	194	LB	QB
14	Campbell, Spencer	11	6'3	164	DB	QB
15	Eldridge, Aydian	10	6'0 1/2	141	DB	WR
17	Maier, Paul	11	6'2 1/2	167	DB	QB
18	Waldron, Javier	10	5'11 1/2	132	DB	WR
21	Riddle, Conner	11	5'10	141	LB	EB
24	Ackerman, Carter	11	5'11 1/2	160	LB	TE
25	Turman, Lucas	11	6'0	175		K
27	Johnson, Daniel	11	5'7	136	LB	RB
31	Mena, Liam	10	5'9 1/2	137	P	K
33	Holland, Marcus	9	5'4	150	LB	RB
42	Ferguson, Bryce	12	5'10 1/2	217	LB	RB
52	Means, Liam	10	6'1	163	DL	OL
54	Johnson, David	10	5'8	203	DL	OL
55	Hairston, Jmare	12	6'0	273	DL	OL
56	Hale, Ryan	12	6'1	177	DL	OL
58	Surface, Johnathon	12	5'10	279	DL	OL
60	Duncan, Brayden	10	5'9 1/2	206	DL	OL
61	Boyd, Thomas	9	5'7 1/2	199	DL	OL
62	Jones, Riley	11	6'0	179	DL	OL
64	Demasi, Brayden	11	6'5	277	DL	OL
65	Grisham-Vaden, Gordan	11	5'9	150	DL	OL
66	Wiatt, Brady	12	6'3	179	DL	OL
68	Niemiera, Bennett	9	6'0	214	DL	OL
70	Smith, Noah	12	6' 1 1/2	201	DL	OL
72	Nicholson, Tariyon	12	5'9 1/2	151	DL	OL
77	Monk, Crony	9	5'11	190	DL	OL
78	McEuen, Kaleb	10	5'9	215	DL	OL

Blacksburg looks to forget short spring football season

Marty Gordon
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Some schools in Southwest Virginia are looking for a quick turnaround just six months after a short spring football season. Blacksburg is one of those after finishing 0-6 and being outscored 275-7, leaving fans scratching their heads about a program that played for a state title just four years ago.

The Bruins' youngsters took it on the chin last spring, but Coach Eddie Sloss is optimistic they gained a lot of experience.

"We're returning some young talented players from last year's team," the head coach said. "We're hoping to utilize their strengths to move the ball and score points. The biggest thing we need to do is to eliminate our mistakes and turnovers."

One of the bright spots could

be the return of quarterback Parker Epperley (6-0, 190) who missed most of the spring after suffering a knee injury. After surgery, the senior has undergone some heavy rehab meaning he could be ready by the fourth week of the fall season. The mark is a scheduled date with perennial River Ridge power Salem.

Until the moment Epperley was injured he had shown some flashes the Bruins had hoped for. He might have been missed more on defense where as a sophomore, he was second on the team in tackles with an emphasis on tackles for loss.

In his absence, Blacksburg turned to several underclassman including freshman David Oliver (5-9, 175) who had to grow up quickly. Sophomore Spencer Campbell (6-0, 190) also saw considerable time under center. Both

will be counted on early until Epperley makes his return.

Malcolm Sherman-Collins (5-10, 175) will be one of the running backs who will need to produce on the ground.

Blacksburg has seen an increase in the participation numbers and will field a junior varsity team this season after not suiting one up in the spring.

Sloss expects this team to be well-conditioned and to use its speed and quickness to its advantage.

One of the biggest problems Sloss will have is finding a replacement for kicker James Pollard, one of the top players in Southwest Virginia for the past three years.

Like the other schools in the area, Blacksburg has had to worry about masks and other COVID-19-related problems. Sloss admits shifting the fall season to a shorter

one in the spring was tough mentally and physically for everyone involved. But he is also excited at the prospect of having fans back in the stands with a sense of normalcy.

Blacksburg will play the first full season on the new turf at Bill Brown Stadium. For the past few years, the school has had to deal with poor field conditions and even played several "home" playoff games on the road at Christiansburg's new turf field. But not anymore.

A year ago, county officials and athletic boosters broke ground on the project, and less than a year later, soccer and lacrosse teams played on the turf. The football team was able to play three contests this past spring.

The Blacksburg field will stretch from fence to fence (120' X 265') at the current Bill Brown Stadium.

The school already has a synthetic track on an alternate site, so no work will be done to the current paved track at the football stadium. The project was therefore cheaper than the improvements at Christiansburg High, which included a track.

Blacksburg could face one of the toughest schedules in Southwest Virginia with out-of-district games with Giles, Lord Botetourt, Amherst, and Graham. Three of the four were state playoff participants this past season. Botetourt continues to be the top dog in Region C and has made it to the state semis in back-to-back seasons. In addition, Salem has made two consecutive appearances in the state title game.

Blacksburg's opener will be Aug. 27 at Giles. Botetourt's Sept. 2 contest will be in Blacksburg, the first game on the new turf.

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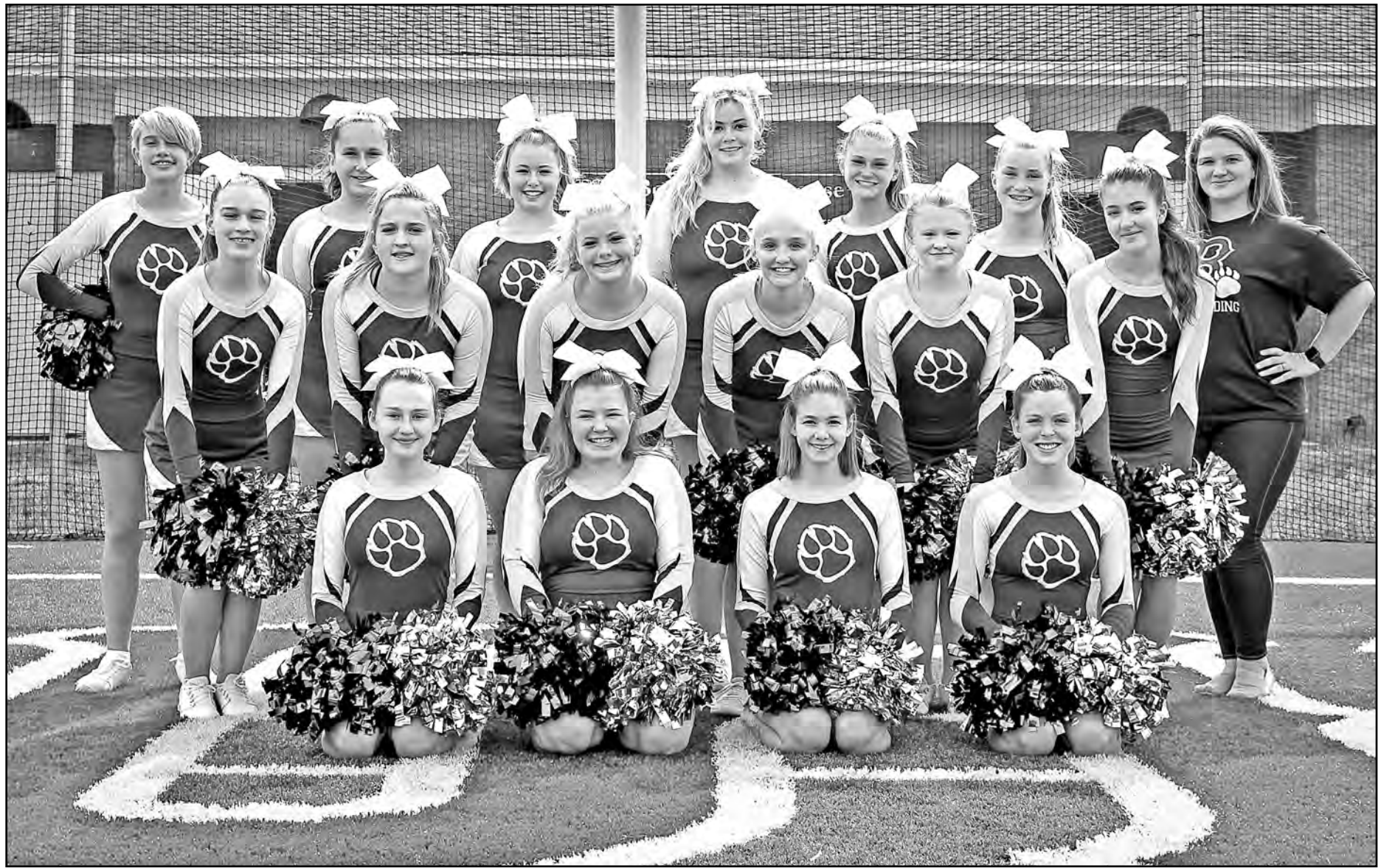
2021 BLACKSBURG FOOTBALL COACHES



PHOTOS BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

The 2021 Blacksburg High School football coaching staff is (front row, left to right) Terry Mitchell, Jim Monk, Ronnie Eakin, head coach Eddie Sloss, Richard Lage, Jay Mathis, and Wayne Surface. Not pictured are Adam Taraschke and Derrell Beaty.

2021 BLACKSBURG FOOTBALL CHEERLEADERS



The 2021 Blacksburg Bruin football cheerleaders are (front row, left to right) Olivia McMaster, Amelia Webster, Abygail Black, and Jordyn Shibest (middle row, left to right) Samantha Haak, Aaliyah Reese, Trinidad Ferreira, Cora Krause, Katelyn Martens, and Audra Kowalik (back row, left to right) Monica Hitzelberger, Ellen Riegger, Star Dotson, Hattie Eubanks, Elly Anderson, Reagan Edwards, and Coach Heather Riganti.

2021 BLACKSBURG FOOTBALL TEAM




The Blacksburg High School 2021 football team, pictured above, takes the field for the first time this season on Aug. 27 at Giles.

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Christiansburg Football Varsity Roster

Name	Grade	Position	Jersey #	Height	Weight
Garrison, Dishon	11	TE/DL	1	6'1	180
Altizer, Travis	12	WR/DB	2	5'9	170
Thompson, Jayron	11	WR/RB/DB	3	5'7	140
Evans, Tanner	10	QB/RB/DB	4	5'7	170
Clarke, Jaxson	12	WR/RB/DB	5	6'2	180
Allen, Reid	12	QB/LB	6	5'8	165
Bremner, Jonah	12	WR/DB	7	5'8	160
Graham, Casey	12	QB/DB	8	5'11	170
Lloyd, Drew	12	RB/LB	9	6'1	215
Altizer, Curtis	11	TE/LB	10	5'9	222
Thompson, Jeremiah	10	QB/DB	11	5'10	170
Henley, Thaxton	11	INJ	12	5'11	180
Blount, Brody	10	RB/LB	15	5'8	160
Conner, Spencer	10	WR/DB	16	5'9	150
Altizer, Kavon	11	WR/DB	17	5'8	150
Dow, Gavin	9	QB/DB	19	5'3	150
Taylor, Tyrique	12	TE/DL	20	6'2	225
Fernandez, Max	10	RB/DB	22	5'10	160
Myrthil, Stephan	12	RB/LB	31	5'9	200
Davis, Noah	10	TE/LB	32	5'7	160
Gordon, Brady	12	TE/DL	33	6'1	205
Long, Kendric	11	RB/LB	34	5'11	175
Johnson-Buchannon, Kenyon	12	RB/LB	42	6'0	210
Shippee, Nathan	11	OL/LB	54	5'10	186
Pence, Harrison	11	OL/DL	56	5'8	230
Poole, Jackson	11	OL/DL	62	6'0	270
Ballard, Carsen	11	OL/DL	63	5'9	240
Vazquez-Ayala Jr., Antonio	12	OL/DL	68	5'4	175
Conley, Ayden	11	OL/DL	72	6'4	295
Brubaker, Elijah	12	OL/DL	75	6'0	235
Dixon, Jonathan	12	OL/DL	6	5'11	240
Filipiak, Nathan	12	OL/DL	77	5'9	215
Stallard, Carter	9	OL/DL	79	6'7	285

Christiansburg Blue Demons optimistic about the fall

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Christiansburg returns 20 starters to its team this fall, which is making for a positive outlook for the 2021 season. This spring, Alex Wilkens finished his fifth season at the school with a 3-3 record before a loss to Lord Botetourt in the state's Class 3 first round. He has compiled a 10-26 mark after coming from Glenvar where he served as defensive coordinator.

He is optimistic as the Blue Demons approach the upcoming season.

"We have great numbers overall, roughly 75 kids on the high school roster," Wilkens said earlier this week. "Our program is in a pretty good place. We have small sophomore and eighth-grade classes, but overall, we are in good shape."

The school will again field a junior varsity squad this year.

"We expect to compete at a

high level. We have the ability to win any game we play. We just have to prepare with maturity and character in order to do so," the head Blue Demon said.

The team's key losses from last year include MJ Hunter, who graduated, defensive tackle Aiden Lacombe, who is dedicating his senior year to wrestling, and Thaxton Henley, who is not returning after a knee injury in the spring.

But for the most part the entire offensive line is back along with most of the team's playmakers.

Senior Drew Lloyd (6-1, 215) on both sides of the ball, Tyrique Taylor (6-2, 225) on both sides of the ball and Travis Altizer (5-9, 170) on both sides of the ball all have big impacts on every play no matter what side of the ball they're on.

Senior Casey Graham returns at quarterback after a solid junior campaign and will compete with Tanner Evans, who is moving up at that position from the JV team.

"Both of them are great ball players and bring something unique to the offense," Wilkens said.

Graham combined for close to 1,500 yards on the ground and through the air in the spring.

Ayden Conley (5-4, 295) returns on the offensive line after a great offseason and should stand out on defense as well this year.

"We are multiple on offense and have very capable players in the backfield, at tight end, at quarterback and at receiver," Wilkens said. "The key will be getting the ball to guys in areas of strength this year. We have an experienced offensive line as well that will determine how good we actually are on offense."

The team has 13 players pushing the scales at over 200 pounds including Elijah Brubaker (6-0, 235) and Nathan Filipiak (5-9, 215).

The size should help open holes for Kenyon Johnson-Buchannon, who had almost

500 yards rushing in the spring.

Graham will have some experienced receivers returning in Travis Altizer (5-9, 170) and Jaxson Clarke (6-2, 180).

On the defensive side of the ball, the team is making a shift to more of a 4-2-5 look. "This will allow us to fit our personnel and highlight a few strengths of some of our standout players," Wilkens said.

Tyrique Taylor (6-2, 225) leads a defense that showed the ability to make stops in games against Cave Spring and Blacksburg. He had 43 tackles this past spring.

Lloyd and Johnson-Buchannon add to those results. A key could be linebacker Curtis Altizer (5-9, 222) who moves up from a very good junior varsity team.

Like others, Christiansburg has had to deal with concerns over COVID-19 and the absence of fans in the stands this past spring.

"I think our kids handled the offseason as good as pos-

sibly expected. It was not an easy offseason, and playing two football seasons in one year is tough," Wilkens said.

When it comes to cheering crowds, Wilkins thinks it will mean a lot to the kids. "Having someone there to cheer you on is a big draw to the Thursday and Friday night experience and our kids missed that last year."

Of course, River Ridge District powers Salem and Pulaski could provide some test for a program that saw its junior varsity squad lose only two games over the past two seasons.

Christiansburg opens Aug. 27 at Floyd and then travels to Abingdon before its home opener on Sept. 17 against William Byrd. Other out-of-district opponents include Radford. The biggest change in the school's schedule is the game against Blacksburg on Oct. 8 instead of its usual spot as the final game of the year. Pulaski will fill that slot as the season finale this season.

2021 CHRISTIANSBURG FOOTBALL COACHES



PHOTOS BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

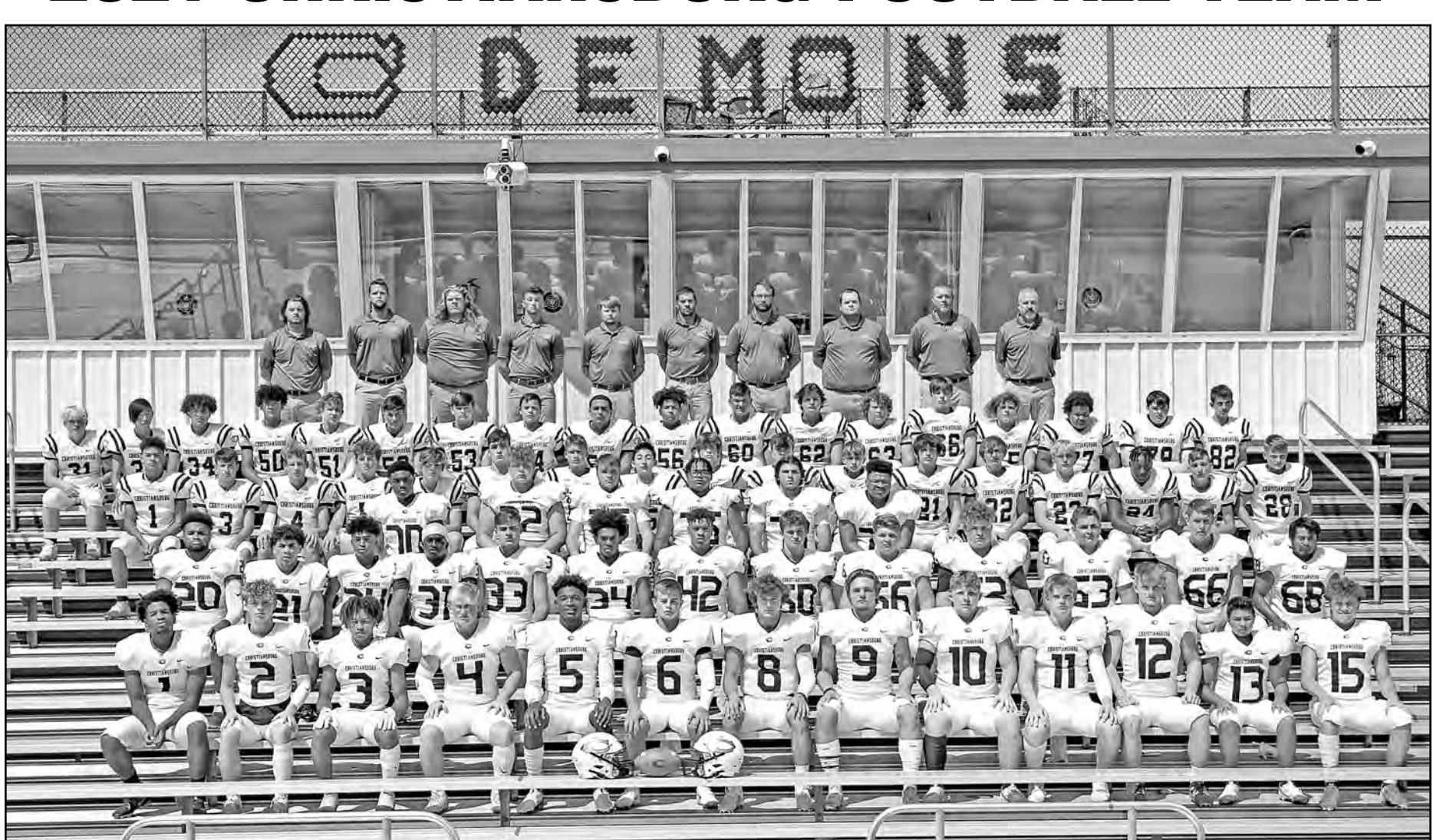
The 2021 Christiansburg football team coaching staff is (left to right) Christian Fore, Matthew Herron, Sam Inge, Zach Leonard, Head Coach Alex Wilkens, Tim Cramer, Mark Boyd, Liam O'Reilly, Jared Whitten, and Seth Brown, Not pictured: Rally Williams.

2021 CHRISTIANSBURG FOOTBALL CHEERLEADERS



The Blue Demon football cheerleaders for 2021 are (front row, left to right) Lillian Rentch, Sofia Caldwell, Hailey Graves, Maya Inman, Emerson Padgett, Alanah Barnes, Isabel Pendleton, and Cadence Willis, (second row, left to right) Mary Sarver, Ruby Bolling, Alexandra Smith, Cynthia Melki, Mackenzie Linkous, Elizabeth Tice, Faith Sarver, and NaKeisha Harman, (third row, left to right) Lakota Kennedy, Morgan Phipps, Jamyson Kemp, Jailynn Coleman, Jazmyn White, Jaiden Kelly and Jordan Jarmon, (back row, left to right) Aubrey Shanks, Makayla Toler, Amara Okoronkwo, and Alexis Robinson. Not pictured: Autumn Marshall, Analiesia Truelove, Deacon Webb, Bella Smith, and Lilia Vaughn.

2021 CHRISTIANSBURG FOOTBALL TEAM



The 2021 Christiansburg High School Blue Demon football team. The team opens the season on Aug. 27 at Floyd.

Eastern Montgomery Varsity Football Roster

No.	Name	Grade	Position
2	Luis Martinez	12	RB/DB
3	Lilly Underwood	11	K
4	Ethan Holloway	10	WR/DB
6	Vincent Alessi	10	WR/LB
7	Wyatt Stallard	12	TE/LB
8	Bradley Poff	9	WR/DB
9	Will Winfield	11	TE/DL
10	CJ Rakes	11	WR/DB
11	Lance Elkins	12	WR/DB
12	Gage Akers	10	QB/DB
13	Ben Via	12	RB/DB
19	Hunter Davis	11	WR/DB
20	Grayson Caldwell	9	RB/LB
26	Seth Burlson	12	RB/LB
30	Austin Tate	9	TE/LB
32	Corey Lynch	10	WR/DB
34	Eli Brown	12	RB/LB
44	Christian Stiltner	9	QB/LB
50	Xavier Brown	10	OL/DL
52	Gunner Lawson	10	OL/DL
53	Joe Kittinger	11	OL/LB
54	Davon Williams	9	OL/DL
55	CJ Smith	11	OL/DL
56	Nate Oliver	9	OL/DL
57	Wyatt Stallard	12	OL/LB
58	Landon Lephew	10	OL/DL
60	Everett Jennings	10	OL/LB
64	Eder Mateo	10	OL/DL
66	Brantley Patrick	10	OL/DL
70	Brandon Kingery	11	OL/DL
72	Kobe Phonenix	11	RB/LB
73	Michael Cramer	9	OL/DL
77	Issac Stiltner	9	OL/DL
80	Shane Huffman	11	WR/DB
84	Angel Ramos-Mendoza	11	TE/LB

Eastern Montgomery Mustangs won't field JV team this fall

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Programs throughout Southwest Virginia are facing the numbers game before they even take the field later this month. Some are even cancelling their season while others do not plan to field a junior varsity team. Eastern Montgomery is one of those schools.

Coach Jordan Stewart

has 35 players out at Eastern Montgomery but the numbers are too low for a JV squad. He remains optimistic with what dots his roster.

"We are in a great situation for a school our size," Stewart said. "I feel the program is in a great situation right now with our numbers; a lot of competition going on at practice that is only making us better."

Stewart is 15-53 in seven seasons at his alma mater. This past spring, the Mustangs finished 3-3.

The biggest loss for the 2021 team could be quarterback Adam Bahnken, who provided 80 percent of the offensive production last year.

But there are a few key returners who made a difference in so many areas last season.

Ben Via (5-8, 159 lbs.) is a versatile offensive and defensive player who was voted first-team All-Pioneer District.

Offensive linemen Brandon Kingery (5-7, 279 lbs.) and Wyatt Stallard (6-0, 200 lbs.) both are multi-year starters on both sides of the football and look to lead the team's running game up front.

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Eagle Xpress

BREAKFAST BISCUITS **PIZZAS** **SHELL FUEL**

4330 Riner Rd, Riner
382-2988

Radford Varsity Football Roster

No.	Name	Position	Grade	Height	Weight
1	Elliot Grayson	WR/DB	12	6'3	153
2	John Dobbins	RB/LB	12	5'11	207
3	Couper Doyle	WR/DB	10	6'1	136
4	Xavier Joplin	RB/OLB	9	5'5	124
5	Darius Wesley-Brubeck	RB/OLB	12	6'1	191
6	Sincere Taylor	QB/DB	9	5'9	146
7	Landon Clarke	QB/DB	10	6'	158
8	Marcell Baylor	QB/DB	11	6'3	192
9	Atticus Henderson	WR/DB	12	6'3	171
10	T.J. Aursby	WR/OLB	11	6'2	184
11	Brayden Sumner	WR/DB	12	6'1	172
12	Nate Wesley	QB/LB	12	6'1	198
13	Brice Wall	WR/DB	10	5'8	139
14	Allen Hamblin	WR/DB	12	6'2	164
15	Ethan Brown	WR/DB	11	5'8	157
18	Max Kanipe	QB/OLB	10	6'	174
19	Javier Wade	WR/DB	9	5'10	141
21	David Woodward	RB/OLB	11	6'	172
22	Tyrel Dobson	RB/LB	12	6'	206
24	Draysin Hargro	WR/DB	11	5'11	135
27	Vance Steele	WR/DB/PK	11	5'10	142
28	Bryant Weaver	WR/DB	9	5'5	119
31	Keith Tabor	WR/OLB	11	5'10	157
33	Jacob Lewis	WR/DB	10	5'11	138
36	Hutson Walsh	WR/DB	9	5'9	131
40	Sam Khandan-Barani	RB/DB	9	5'10	130
45	Liam Cherry	PK/P	10	5'10	130
50	Zeb Martin	OL/DL	2	6'3	211
52	Charlie Davis	OL/DL	10	5'11	203
54	Brad Marion	OL/DL	12	6'	325
55	Brandon Thompson	OL/DL	10	6'3	195
56	J.D. Garner-Rollins	OL/LB	9	5'10	231
57	Jordan Moore	OL/DL	11	5'11	240
58	Jack Woodard	OL/DL	12	6'4	261
59	Dawson Martin	OL/DL	10	6'	198
60	Andrew Moore	OL/DL	11	6'3	256
62	Lance Duncan	OL/DL	10	6'	197
65	Noah Austin-Pleasant	OL/DL	9	5'9	251
66	Zach Wilson	OL/DL	12	5'10	199
70	Nathan Taylor	OL/DL	10	5'11	207
72	Zakk Matthews	OL/DL	10	6'1	267
74	Jackson Wade	OL/DL	9	5'10	204
75	Josh Hale-Coe	OL/DL	10	6'	302
76	Jonathan Clay	OL/DL	9	5'9	174
77	Ricky Bailey	OL/DL	10	6'1	228
78	Brady Stewart	OL/DL	9	5'7	178
79	Daniel Nealey	OL/DL	10	6'	184
80	Taylor Stammersky	WR/DB	9	5'9	137
82	Luke Woodard	WR/DB	9	6'	130
88	K.J. Robinson	WR/DB	11	6'1	172

Crist takes sidelines as third coach in Radford's history

Marty Gordon
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Radford High School will begin the 2021 football season with a new person on the sidelines who has a name familiar to area sports fans as Michael Crist moves over from Virginia High. He is the son of longtime, retired Blacksburg High School head coach Dave Crist.

Crist has grown up in the world of high school football in the New River Valley, even becoming friends with

Radford legend coach Norm Lineburg. He replaces Coach Matthew Saunders, who stepped down at the end of the shortened spring season.

Crist is only the third coach in Radford's history, following Lineburg and Saunders. The Blacksburg native admitted last month that he turned to Lineburg to discuss the job and whether he should apply.

"My dad very rarely gets involved, but he kind of gave me a little nudge and said I think you should look into this, and I think this will be

a great opportunity," Crist said.

Once the opening was posted, he reached out to Lineburg who spent 37 years leading the Bobcats.

"He spoke about the pride in the program, the great respect that he had for my dad, and it was mutual with my dad's respect for him," Crist said.

Lineburg won a pair of state titles while the elder (Dave) Crist coached Blacksburg for 40 seasons and also won two state titles.

"Radford is a special place and program. What makes it so special is that the community and former Bobcat football players care so much about the program," Crist said.

According to Crist, Coach Lineburg established one of the premier programs and did it the right way with many important traditions. "Coach Saunders additionally built on that foundation and had success. My job is to continue those traditions and implement program philosophies

and football philosophies that I believe in to further build on the rich traditions that Coach Lineburg built," the new head coach said.

Crist coached Virginia High to a 33-49 overall mark, which included five state playoff appearances. He is a 1997 graduate of Blacksburg High and served as an assistant at Blacksburg, Brookville, Warren and Amherst, making this a "homecoming" of sorts.

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Backs Eli Brown (5-9, 236 lbs.) and Seth Burlson (6-0, 237 lbs.) had over 40 carries in the spring season and had lots of success. "We look forward to feeding them the rock," said Stewart. "We will once again be running split-back veer, and we will slow the pace of the game down while on offense and look for three yards a carry."

Defensively, the Mustangs will mix it up a lot on that side of the ball, trying not to show the same alignment and coverage from play to play.

Junior soccer player Lilly Underwood will handle the kicking game for the program.

Like others in southwest Virginia, Eastern Montgomery is facing only a short time period between the seven-game spring season and this summer all thanks to the ad-

justments made because of COVID-19. Stewart called the adjustments because of COVID-19 that resulted in the short season between the spring and the fall "a struggle from not being able to compete in the off-season 7-on-7 games. However, we have continued to get stronger and work together as a team. I think we are in a great position."

A welcome change will be the presence of fans back in the stands.

"I think games all over the state will have stands packed with people, and the kids will feed off the energy," Stewart said.

Eastern Montgomery opens the season Aug. 27 at Holston with a schedule that includes out-of-district opponents North Cross, Rural Retreat, and Auburn.

Stewart thinks all of his opponents are very strong and play with lots of aggression. "If we have to pick one it would be Narrows who has won our district the past couple of seasons. Until you knock the top man off, they are on top," he said. "We expect to compete in every football game and continue our regular season success into the postseason."

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"I'm home," he told onlookers during an introductory press conference shortly after his hiring.

This spring, Radford finished 4-2 before losing to Appomattox 42-12 in a regional playoff game.

Radford lost its top two scorers in Zane Rupe and P.J. Prioleau but has 49 returning players dressing out on Friday night, including 12 seniors.

"Radford is a program that has had tons of success. My goal is to bring in things I believe in and implement them into the program," Crist said.

Tyrel Dobson, Darius Wesley-Brubeck, Marcel Baylor, and Andrew Moore all are returning starters.

The 6-1, 191 lbs. Wesley-Brubeck rushed 47 times last season for 262 yards with a 5.57 yards-per-carry average. At 6-0, 206, lbs., Dobson should also see plenty of time on the field.

Baylor, a 6-3, 192-lb.

junior, could take snaps behind center to replace the graduating Rupe, who is now at Emory and Henry. Rupe produced over 2,000 yards last season through the air and on the ground.

"Offensively we are a multiple one-back system," Crist said. "This system allows us to adapt to our talent without wholesale changes to our offense year-to-year. As with any football team, you want to have the ability to run the football, but there will always be critical times when you need to execute in the passing game."

He has been a fan of the team in the pre-season. "They have been great to coach, and I expect their effort and coachability to continue. We have some key returning skill players and must continue to develop up front."

Crist has 15 players over 200 pounds on his roster with five weighing in at over 300 pounds. Moore anchors

the trenches at 6-3, 256 lbs., and Crist expects him to make a difference on both sides of the ball.

Defensively, the Bobcats have been a tough team to run on year in and year out. Crist doesn't see that changing.

Dobson led the Bobcats this past spring with 49 tackles including 25 solos. The rest of the stops this season will have to come from a lot of new faces.

Radford opens Aug. 27 at home against former New River District opponent, George Wythe. The schedule also includes out-of-district opponents Gate City, Ft. Chiswell, Galax, and Christiansburg.

"In all seriousness our schedule is really tough, and all 10 opponents can play and are extremely well coached," Crist said.

For sure, no matter what happens, at least this fall the new coach will have some friendly faces in the stands to cheer him on.



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Best of luck this Season!

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