

Bluejackets face a host of new teams

By **William Hall** and **Josh Shepherd**
The Carlisle Mercury Staff Writers

The Nicholas County Bluejackets face a host of new teams this season, including an almost entirely new roster of district opponents since the Bluejackets were restricted last year.

The Nicholas County Bluejackets will face six teams in its new district. Besides Nicholas, there will be traditional rivals Bath County Wildcats and the Paris Greyhounds. New additions to Nicholas' district are Raceland, Paintsville, and Fairview.

Changes in the playoffs are handled will allow the top four teams in a district to continue into post-season play, which means that a team can possibly defeat only two teams in its district to make it to post season play.

Nicholas County Head Coach Greg Letcher said. However, Nicholas will also face two new teams outside of their district.

Powell County, Superintendent Robert Gilbert's old haunt, will kick off the new Nicholas County season on August 30. Late in the season the Bluejackets will travel "halfway across the world," according to Letcher, to face Knott County Central.

"Knott County will likely be a one season shot," Letcher said. "Redistricting threw out scheduling off kilter and, fortunately, Knott had the spot open, so we agreed to take them on and even offered to play them there, Letcher continued.

A big advantage for the Jackets is its home games, but with new teams to face, Letcher had little to say about many.

However, the following is an account of what each team head coach had to say about their own team.

Powell County - **Bruce Reynolds**
The August 30 Nicholas County season opener will also mark the first varsity game ever for the Powell County Pirates.

Pirates' Head Football Coach Bruce Reynolds said his team is anxious about its first varsity season, but it is up to the challenge.

"Though we haven't had a varsity team until now, we have been working with team members since the eighth grade. That's how we started. We've had an eighth grade, freshman, and junior varsity team before finally throwing our lot in with a varsity squad," Reynolds said.

The Pirates are young, he said. They have only one senior in their roster, but they have worked very hard and hope to come out with a good showing this year.

"If we can start off well early on

in the season, we should be able to pull out a good season. At least that is what we hope," Reynolds said.

Raceland - **Abby Johnson**
Harrodsburg Head Football coach Abby Johnson was very disappointed and critical of his Pioneer team in which five of his top players graduated with scholarships to college.

However, it is fair to assume that a team with a 7-2 record in 1990 may have kept a bit of their fire to carry over to the 1991 season.

"We are a very inexperienced team and I don't see us with as much a competitive edge as we had last year," Johnson said.

In a scrimmage with a team Johnson refused to disclose, the weaknesses of the Pioneers were apparently many, if one were to take heed of Johnson's analysis of the Pioneer's performance.

Basically, the team did not perform to expectations, he said. "I certainly hope by September 6, we will play a competitive game with Nicholas, but we have many things to work out first," Johnson said.

Fairview - **Ken Cooksey**
The Fairview Eagles come expecting big things this season, Ken Cooksey, Fairview Football Head Coach, said.

The Eagles will play with much more experience and confidence than last year although the team is still, basically, a young team, Cooksey said.

"We have six seniors this year with only one making up our offensive line. But we have two linemen, junior Benji Jenkins and senior Roger Stewart, who average about 220 pounds and enjoy good head up, squared-shoulders football," Cooksey said.

But the experience factor, which has improved over their 2-5 season last year, is still seen by the coach as perhaps the Eagle's biggest weakness.

"The team has worked very hard over the year getting into shape and I can say they are in good physical shape. They are capable of having a good team with expectations of making the playoffs," Cooksey said.

Paintsville - **Walter Brugh**
With 41 years of coaching and recognition for most wins by an active coach in the state of Kentucky, Paintsville Panthers Football Head Coach Walter Brugh is preparing to add another season with the Panthers under his belt.

1991 will mark the first time Paintsville has been into the third district, with Nicholas County among others and he said the dis-

trict will probably prove one of the toughest in the state.

As for the Panthers, Brugh feels his team has not yet performed to its potential, but it is a problem he expects his athletes to work through.

"We're trying to locate ourselves right now. We are an inexperienced ball club and we haven't found the proper niche in which we can play," Brugh said.

Last year the Panthers made a respectable 6-5 showing, but in the interim, Paintsville saw 13 of its players leave. However there are still eleven seniors with which members of the district will have to contend.

"I believe football to be the greatest game on earth. My goal is not to carry the state trophy home every year, but to teach kids to play this sport and learn how to dedicate themselves to something and treat people in a sportsmanlike manner. I look forward to our game with Nicholas County," Brugh said.

Raceland - **Bill Tom Ross**
Nicholas County's first away game will be against district opponent, the Raceland Rams, who, according to Bill Tom Ross, have lost a skilled backfield, but have an experienced front line which may pick up the slack.

The Rams went 9-3 in 1990, a record which was good enough to shoot them into post-season play. Unfortunately, Raceland was given no chance to advance when they fell to 1990 state runner-up Bellevue in the first post-season games.

However, Ross said, he has a problem he, as head coach, hasn't had to face before.

"All of our skilled backfield left last year and I have been left to replace almost all our backs and ends with young people."

"However, we are compensated by what I feel is one of our best ever front lines. They will be the key to our season this year," Ross said.

Though young, he said his backfield does have promising talent which may show itself. Their only drawback is a lack of starting team experience.

"I don't have very much information on Nicholas County at this time, but I see them play last year against the East Carter Raiders and they showed great improvement from the teams we used to face several years ago," Ross said.

Paris - **Roger Gruenisen**
The Paris Greyhounds will sport one of the oldest teams Paris Head Football Coach Roger

Gruenisen has seen in the last five years.

However, this does not mean that the perennial Nicholas County rival is by any means weakened. Though Gruenisen said the team is very young, they still sport three seniors, Mike Franklin, Darren Gray, and Collier Mathis, who was red shirted last year for medical reason, who have emerged as leaders.

However, Gruenisen said he was still looking for other good team members to fill spots left vacant by seniors of the 1990 class.

"I've got a few who are more busy learning their position to actually come out as leaders, yet the team has a good work ethic and a great attitude which leads me to believe we'll be competitive despite our lack of experience," Gruenisen said.

In a scrimmage with Frankfort, Gruenisen was pleased with the Greyhounds' performance. "We did better than I thought and actually gave Frankfort a pretty good game," he said.

West Carter - **Terry Osborne**
Though losing several key players from last year and working with several others on the injured list, if the West Carter Comets can keep injuries to a minimum and the Comets come out to a fast start, it could be a big season, Comet Head Coach Terry Osborne said.

"We looked a little rough against Fairview in one of our scrimmages, but our offensive line has proved themselves quite tough," Osborne said.

"The Comets came up short of a winning season last year with a 5-6 record, but the 1991 team features 16 seniors with seven of those returning from last year.

"Our front line is experienced and executes well and on top of that, I have 20 new freshmen to help bring us up in years to come," Osborne said.

"If we can get momentum started right off the bat, I think we'll come around from our weaknesses and have a decent showing. We have a real challenging schedule this year," he said.

Knott - **Christopher Blum**
The Triple-A high school will test not only the Bluejackets grill on the gridiron, but their patience on the bus as well, being about three hours driving time from Elm City, N.C.

However, Knott County Central does not have a long football tradition as many of its three-A district competitors, Maurice Dixon, Knott County's Head Coach said.

But the 2-8 record which marked



DUANE KENNEY



JIM COMPTON



ROBBIE HUGHES



ROBERT HOPKINS



ROBERT REED



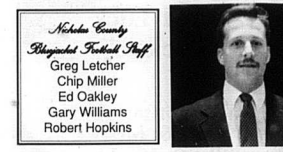
RONALD NEWBY



CHIP MILLER



GARY WILLIAMS



ED OAKLEY

Nicholas County Bluejackets Football Staff
Greg Letcher
Chip Miller
Ed Oakley
Gary Williams
Robert Hopkins

Be The Best You Can Be!!

Reese & Patsy Smoot
N. C. Judge Executive & Wife

Score Those Touchdowns!

Garrett's Furniture
222-226 W. Main Street
Carlisle, KY 289-2308

We Give You The Kind of Support You Can Bank On Everyday!

First National Bank of Carlisle