

## 1992 Nicholas County High School Bluejackets Varsity Schedule

Date	Opponent	Place	Time
Aug. 28	Powell Co.	Away	8:00
Sept. 4	Madison So.	Home	8:00
11	Fairview	Away	8:00
18	Paintsville	Away	8:00
25	Raceland	Home	8:00
Oct. 2	Paris	Home	8:00
9	West Carter	Away	8:00
16	Grant Co.	Home	8:00
23	East Carter	Home	8:00
30	Bath Co.	Away	8:00

## 1992 Nicholas County High School Bluejackets Freshman & J.V. Schedule

Date	Opponent	Place	Time
Aug. 31	Lewis Co.	Home	5:30
Sept. 8	Mason Co.	Away	6:00
14	Open		
21	Lex. Cath.	Home	5:30
28	Bath Co.	Home	5:30
Oct. 5	Fleming Co.	Home	5:30
12	Bath Co.	Away	5:30
19	Bourbon Co.	Home	5:30
26	Paris	Home	5:30



## Blue Jackets marked by experienced line, new backfield

By Josh Shephard  
The Canine Mercury Staff Writer

**CARLISLE** — In 1991, the Nicholas County Bluejackets had their first winning season under Head Coach Greg Letcher since he first manned the helm in 1989. A year afterward, the question is if Nicholas County can continue its winning season momentum into the 1992 season.

Letcher admits that the Bluejackets have several holes to fill since the departure of eight key seniors, all of which formed the core of the Bluejackets' backfield. Though there is a great deal of desire on the part of the team to fill skill positions in the backfield and defensive secondary, the Bluejackets will feature ball carriers led predominantly by sophomores and juniors.

"What we may have lost in experience with the past team, I think we gain in the depth and flexibility of the players looking to step up into backfield roles. In many ways, they are not too different from the old team when they first started.

"I know the backs are dedicated to the team and, because they're young right now, they make mistakes. But just because they start out looking like they have less ability is no reason to throw the towel in and say we're not going to be in it this year. I prefer to think we may be," Letcher said.

Depth and flexibility, Letcher said, are the hallmarks on this team. Three sophomores and one freshman have been slated to fill the quarterback spot, but either can play positions at halfback or end, even take up the receiver's job.

"In defense, however, there is still a good deal of work to do to get the Jackets on good pass coverage.

"The coaches can only do so much outside of a real game. The experience in pass coverage comes from being out there in the field, playing as a full defensive unit. In the Carroll County game, the Panthers exposed

that weakness on the outside and were able to turn in some big plays," Letcher said.

One thing, however, that also was on display was the most powerful asset in the Bluejackets' arsenal — the offensive line.

Averaging 220 pounds per player, each experienced and well acquainted with the feel of a winning season, the Bluejackets line have proven themselves capable of making things happen on the field.

They have forced incomplete passes, they have scored an impressive series of pre-season sacks, they have been behind consistent yardage plays, and they have given pass plays time to develop, Letcher said. But despite their build and obvious talent, they have to learn to remain consistent.

In the Carroll County scrimmage, there was only one fumbled snap, an uncommon occurrence in a first scrimmage, Letcher said, and a very good sign.

In addition, the line distinguished itself in its efforts to open the holes for runners. "In the past two scrimmages, I've been pleased with the performance of the front line. It is there that we have kept our experience and its apparent when we see young runners making four and five yards at a time. But it's not all the time and the team knows its got to step up in its protection and stay with the blocks," Letcher said.

It is with this line, Letcher said, that, hopefully, a strong team running game will develop. It is also with this line, on offense, that Letcher hopes to get Jackets in to create no end of havoc.

"I really have to credit the line for their commitment to conditioning in the off-season. They have done well to keep their endurance up. They are used to getting hit and they can make things happen. A backfield is automatically better when it has good blockers to lead

them," Letcher said.

Looking ahead to the new season, Letcher said the Bluejackets in viewing a number of different offensive and defensive formations. They need to be quick in recognizing them and making adjustments.

The facets the team needs to develop over the course of the season, he said, was improvement of the Bluejackets' perimeter defense, having the offensive line maintain their blocks, especially at the tight end spots where penetration into the backfield has caused some unnecessary scrambling.

But the quarterback spot currently has the Jackets ailing. "It's going to force the line to do extra work until we get our starting quarterback enough experience not to hesitate, but get the play done," Letcher said.

But the team is ready, Letcher feels, to enter the

season and enjoy some competitive district play.

"When I started as head coach here, I had a record of 2-9, next year it was 4-7, then last year we went 7-4 and made it to post-season play. It felt good to finally end with a winning season and I'm not willing to fall back. If this team wants it as bad, there is no reason we shouldn't have a successful season.

"The district is tough this year. Raceland and Bath County have several players returning from last year and Paris is a lot more experienced team. We can't look past anyone. To be competitive, this team has to play like a team and get together. It requires a willingness to give it their best shot and not give up if things don't immediately fall our way. With the fans behind us, I believe this team is willing to shoot for a lot," Letcher said.

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