

Jordan Says Eagles May Fly In '88

Graduations are a happy time for high school seniors.

But, for the last two years, West Craven coach Clay Jordan has bid goodbye to 38 senior football players.

1986's senior class numbered 17 — the 1987 Eagles survived, earning the playoffs and finishing the season with a 7-4-1 worksheet after a loss to Tarboro.

Last year's graduating class included 21 players.

Therein lies the challenge for Jordan, who starts his 11th year at the helm.

He said he is optimistic — despite not being picked to win the Class 3-A Coastal Conference race by his fellow coaches.

"Being picked to finish in the middle of pack makes anything else we do gravy," Jordan said. "In the past we've had a lot of pressure on us.

"I will be disappointed if we don't battle for a playoff spot. But, you never know what sophomores and first-year juniors will do."

"We might be picked to finish fifth or sixth in the conference — I'll take that bet."

Jordan has gotten used to having to coach in the last days of November while a lot of other teams are getting ready for basketball.

West Craven has reached the playoffs six of the last 10 years and will be gunning for its fifth consecutive post-season trip.

In the last four years, West Craven has finished 10-1, 12-2, 10-2 and 7-4-1.

This year's edition will be a more inexperienced one. The Eagles have four players returning from last year's squad, including two starters.

The 31-man roster lists eight seniors, 18 juniors and five sophomores. A number of the younger players performed on last year's 8-2 junior varsity edition — a team that lost its last game after 10 players were elevated to the varsity ranks.

Size-wise, West Craven is mammoth with eight players tipping the scales over 220 pounds. Junior tackle Stacy Fulcher is the biggest, distributing 235 pounds over a 6-foot-8 frame.

Junior tackle Eddie McKeel (6-1, 245) is the strongest of a squad devoted to power lifting, Jordan said.



Members of the 1988 West Craven Eagle football team are, from left, front row: Tony Bryan, John Dizon, Leonard Simmons, Kip Bryan, Adrian Cameron, Colvin Sanders, Russell Acker, Bobby Newby and James Johnstone; second row: William Sanders, Larry Green, James Smith, Troy Dawson, Chuck Bandy, Bobby Gaddy,

Monte Brown, Lee Becton, Kevin Holzworth and Tony Gatlin; back row: Dennis Howard, Darail Singleton, Horace Smith, Joel Brown, Jeff Powers, Darren Bizzell, Stacy Fulcher, Eddie McKeel, Jay Gaskins, Arthur Golden, Thomas McGee and Craig Coward.

The fastest is Lee Becton, a sophomore.

Becton (6-0, 175) is slated to take over the tailback position. He will only be the second sophomore to start for a Clay Jordan Eagle squad — the other was two-time All-Washington Daily News performer Jesse Campbell.

Becton became the first freshman to start for the West Craven basketball team last year and advanced to the state championships in track. This summer he won a silver medal in Junior-Olympic competition in Florida. Last year, Becton scored three touchdowns in the playoffs after being elevated from the junior varsity.

Jordan regards Becton a plus — even though he is a sophomore.

"He is still developing," Jordan said, noting Becton's 4.65 timing in the 40-yard dash.

Joining Becton in the backfield will be senior Monte Brown (5-11, 190) — the apparent victor in a pre-season battle for the starting position with Kevin Holzworth, a 5-10, 155-pound sophomore.

Both shared playing time in West Craven's scrimmage.

"The quarterback situation will be a plus for us," said Jordan. "Both are straight-A kids. They're good young'uns.

"Monte Brown will have to contribute — whether it is at quarterback or not. We will be as solid at quarterback as we have ever been."

At the blocking back, senior Chuck Bandy (5-11, 210) has been moved from offensive guard to fullback. His progress in the pre-season has been hampered by a ankle injury suffered in practice.

Although the offense will be run-oriented, a band of Smurfs will be available at the receiving positions, Jordan said.

"We'll average six or seven throws a game — depending on the situation," he said. "Kip (Bryan) and Adrian Cameron can catch and run although we sometimes have a hard time finding them."

"Both are big-hearted kids."

Bryan is 5-7 and weighs 160 pounds while Cameron is 5-8 and weighs 150 pounds.

The offensive line will be totally retooled. Jordan said four players from the junior varsity will man the blocking positions. He said he was boosted by their size but was worried about inexperience.

Jordan said he expects four players to play offense and defense.

Darren Bizzell will play nose guard and center. Bizzell (6-3, 215) was injured last season. Thus far, he has been a big surprise, Jordan said.

At defensive tackle, Darail Singleton (6-2, 265) teams with Horace Smith (5-11, 240).

Bandy will play middle linebacker while Brown is the leading candidate at one outside linebacker position. The other is up for grabs he said. Senior John Dizon and junior Tony Gatlin are battling for the other.

In the secondary, Cameron and Bryan will play the corners while Colvin Sanders will work at free safety.

Overall, experience is the biggest question mark for the Eagles, Jordan said.

"We're going to be green, green, green," he assured. "We'll jump offside time after time in the first games."

But, given game experience, West Craven will be a good bet to be in the race for one of the Coastal's three playoff berths.

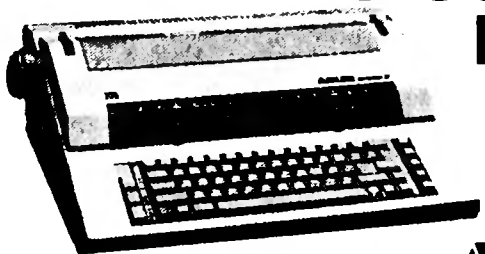
That's a bet Jordan will take.

1988 WEST CRAVEN		1987 WEST CRAVEN	
26	at North Pitt	8	North Pitt
September		7	Greene Central
2	Greene Central	7	New Bern
9	New Bern	34	Pamlico County
16	at Pamlico	45	West Carteret
23	West Carteret*	25	North Lenoir
30	at North Lenoir*	16	D.H. Conley
October		9	Washington
7	Open	14	East Carteret
14	at Conley*	0	Havelock
21	Washington*	28	East Wake
28	East Carteret*	7	Tarboro
November			
4	At Havelock*		

1988 West Craven Roster

NO.	Player	HGT.	WGT.	CLASS	POS.
24	Russell Acker	5-7	140	Jr.	End
44	Chuck Bandy	5-11	210	Sr.	Back
52	Joel Brown	5-10	180	So.	Line
1	Monte Brown	5-11	190	Sr.	Back
4	Kip Bryan	5-7	160	Jr.	End
81	Tony Bryan	6-0	175	Jr.	End
22	Lee Becton	6-0	175	So.	Back
55	Darren Bizzell	6-3	215	Jr.	Line
10	Adrian Cameron	5-8	150	Jr.	Back
2	Craig Coward	6-0	165	Jr.	End
83	Troy Dawson	5-9	175	Jr.	End
30	John Dizon	5-9	180	Sr.	Back
51	Stacy Fulcher	6-8	235	Jr.	Line
54	Jay Gaskins	5-10	240	Jr.	Line
7	Bobby Gaddy	5-10	170	Sr.	End
32	Tony Gatlin	5-9	165	Jr.	Back
	Arthur Golden	5-11	195	Jr.	Line
70	Dennis Howard	6-2	270	Jr.	Line
80	Larry Green	5-10	150	Sr.	End
5	Kevin Holzworth	5-10	155	So.	Back
20	James Johnstone	5-8	145	Jr.	End
84	Thomas McGee	6-1	205	Sr.	End
61	Bobby Newby	5-10	220	Jr.	Line
74	Jeff Powers	5-10	220	Jr.	Line
50	Eddie McKeel	6-1	245	Jr.	Line
53	William Sanders	5-10	180	Jr.	Line
40	Leonard Simmons	5-9	160	Sr.	Line
8	Colvin Sanders	5-9	165	Sr.	Back
60	Darail Singleton	6-2	265	So.	Line
63	Horace Smith	5-11	240	So.	Line
82	James Smith	5-10	170	Jr.	End

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