

SPORTS  
PREVIEW

# Quaker football preview '92

ODAC Champs plan to restructure, hope to repeat

By Doug Brumley  
Sports Editor

Should we quake in our boots?

The Quaker Football team that last season matched the school football record for most wins in a season and brought home the Old Dominion Athletic Conference championship hardly resembles this year's squad. A comparison of the two rosters would indicate that many of the names from last year are missing—sixteen of them belonged to starters.

Not appearing on this year's roster are names such as Calvin Hunter, Rodney Alexander, Shannon Manire, and Clarence Inscore. The loss of players of this caliber could devastate a team. Ketchum, however, remains optimistic.

Ketchum's belief that repeating as ODAC champions is possible after such a loss of talent is based on the quality of this year's recruiting class, the quality of returning starters, and the fact that the team holds the title of defending ODAC champion.

"I think [the title of ODAC champs] helps us as a football team to raise our expectations," said Ketchum.

"You come after someone who has already won the title. You know that you're at a place where you can win the title. Now it's up to you to do it."

"I think it does help when you win it to get everybody to say, 'Hey! Let's win it again.'"

The key to winning it again will lie in how the holes on the team are filled. Several solid players from last year's squad will return to bring experience to the team. However, a tremendous amount of pressure will be placed on the team's new faces.

According to Ketchum, this year's squad freshmen and transfers are the best he has seen over the years he has been associated with team—first as a player, then as a coach. As many as nine may step into starting roles.

"We're not off at all from where we were last year physically," said Ketchum, "but we're off significantly mentally—our mental toughness."

"We are an amazingly young football team. As a coach, you always love to have experience because you know the kids have been tested under fire and you know how they'll respond. That was the best thing about last year's team—that we knew that they would never, ever not meet the

challenge.

"This year's team has never been tested—it's so new from top to bottom that they won't be tested until they get into the season. So we'll see what we're made of as the season goes along."

Junior linebacker Max Appleby and junior defensive back Drew Baker, the only defensive starters returning, as well as senior Billy Hardison, who was moved from offense to the position of defensive back, anchor a young defensive unit.

"We want to control the ball on offense and keep our defense off the field because we're still real young on defense," said Ketchum.

"We want to give them time to come together."

"Most of our depth is on defense. We just really believe you've got to have a strong defense to stay in ball games. It doesn't matter how good your offense is—some days it's off."

Ketchum hopes to put less pressure on the secondary at the beginning of the season by blitzing less. Hardison, junior Steve Green, and Sophomore Jamie Corey have shown promise at the position of cornerback during the preseason.

On the offensive side of the ball, the loss of the quarterback Calvin Hunter leaves the Quakers without a playmaker. Ketchum looks for the quarterback who takes over for Hunter to only be consistent.

"This year's quarterback does not need to be the playmaker—he needs to take what's there and not try for the big play," said Ketchum.

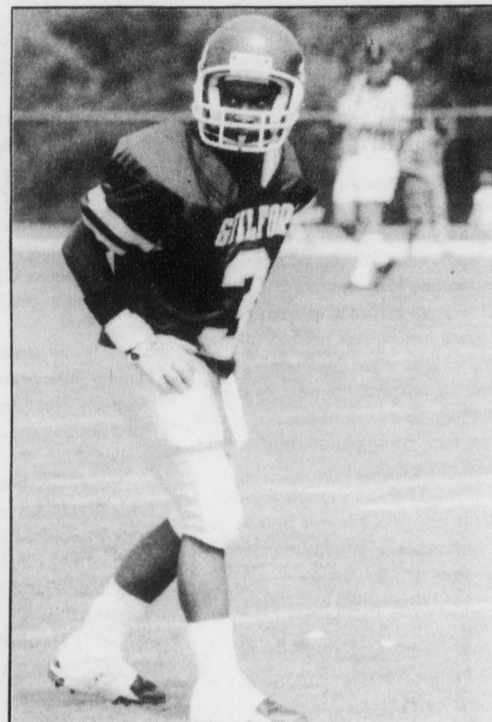
"At this point it has been very difficult to get our quarterbacks to adjust to that because they're used to seeing Calvin and they're used to making the big play or trying to make the big play, and we're not asking them to do that."

The role of starting quarterback is down to a head-to-head competition between junior Chris Chavis and senior Brindon Christman. Sophomore Jim Bob



(Left) Head Coach Mike Ketchum directs a team full of new faces this season. (Right) Junior wide receiver J.J. Rogers watches intently for the snap of the ball.

Photos by John Bell



Bryant and freshman Reuben Burton are the other two quarterbacks on the team who Ketchum expects will receive playing time by the second game.

All the quarterbacks expect Burton, who shows potential as a drop back passer, are more comfortable with roll-out style of passing. Ketchum said that the quarterbacks will not pass fewer times than last year, they will pass differently—utilizing mainly play-action and bootleg plays.

"You just have to do what your quarterbacks are best at, and right now we are much better at moving the pocket than keeping it still," said Ketchum.

There will be increased emphasis on the running game in the offense this year. Junior Pat Tully and senior Bron Thompson bring experience to the backfield. According to Ketchum, freshman running back Greg Marra will see quite a bit of playing time and freshman linebacker-turned-fullback Bill Neal will start.

Defensive players Max Appleby and Drew Baker will also see a little playing time on offense.

"We have overall more team speed than last year, which will really help on the specialty teams," said Ketchum.

With regards to the rest of the special teams, Ketchum said junior Phil Lemons has been punting the ball well and senior Ty Clodfelter and transfer student Steve Bryant have both been kicking well on field goal-extra point attempts and kickoffs. Ketchum said he may have one kick only field goals and have the other kick only kickoffs, in order to help save the field goal kicker's leg.

According to Ketchum, the team's strong points are its inside linebackers as well as the team's overall physical ability.

He cites the lack of experience on the offensive line as the team's weakest point.

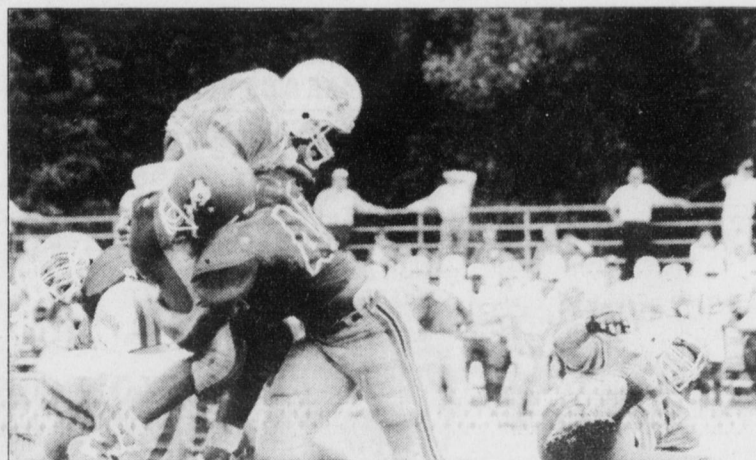
"Our goal is to win the conference. Our goal one day...is to

win the national championship."

"I honestly think the reason we play is to win. When you're playing in college and representing your teammates and your family and your school you should want to win every game. And as a coaching staff and as a group of players, we've decided that's what we're going to try to do."



The ODAC race this year is going to be a close one. In the pre-season media poll Emory and Henry were picked first, followed by Hampden-Sydney, then Guilford, and then Randolph-Macon.

"I feel you can put those four in a hat and pick one out to choose a winner," said Ketchum. "It'll be awfully tough."



Defensive back Drew Baker crushes an opposing receiver. Baker will anchor a young secondary this year.

Photo by John Bell

Weekly Meetings of  
The Guilfordian   
are held on Thurs-  
days at eight o'  
clock in the Passion  
Pit.   
If you have something to  
say, then 'Get off your  
ass...' and pick up a 3 1/2  
inch floppy.