

Backfield, Experience The Keys For Plymouth

PLYMOUTH — The Plymouth Vikings hope to follow a path blazed by senior running back Gerald Puckett into a high-enough finish in the Northeastern Conference race to make the state Class 2-A playoffs this season.

Puckett rushed for over 1,200 yards and scored 13 touchdowns as a young, inexperienced Viking squad finished 5-5 last season.

This season, 21 lettermen, including seven returning starters on offense and six on defense, return in hopes that a year's experience — and Puckett — will lead a Plymouth resurgence.

Nicky Alexander (6-0, 165, Sr.) and Shawn Walker (6-0, 160, Jr.), up from the junior varsity team, will give the Vikings depth at the quarterback position. Both need to succeed running and throwing the ball if the Vikes are to return to contention within the NEAC.

Last year, Walker threw three touchdown passes after coming up from the junior varsity team, where he added six TD passes and was the squad's leading rusher.

In addition to Puckett, Tim Collins (5-8, 150, Sr.) and Jermaine Davenport (6-0, 145, Jr.) should see some action at either tailback or fullback.

Leading the offensive line will be Marty Biggs, Tyree Carr, Chris Cherry, Chris Coker, Phillip Garrett and Michael Jordan. Kip Hicks, Kevin McNair, Curtis Norman and Jordan return as offensive and defensive linemen.

Ronnie Blount (6-1, 195, Sr.) will have to provide the leadership on defense from his linebacker's spot. The Vikings graduated their leading tackler in middle linebacker Freddie Williams, who also was the tight end last season. Williams earned Washington Daily News All-Area recognition for



Members of the 1988 Plymouth Viking football team are, from left, front row: Shawn Walker, Nicky Alexander, Gerald Puckett, Jermaine Davenport, Tim Collins, Curtis Brown, Lenny Small and Chris Cherry; second row: Head coach Robert Cody, Ronnie Blount, Travis Rouson, Tyree Carr, Phillip Garrett, Chris Norman,

Errin Bryant, Marty Biggs and Michael Jordan; back row: Kevin McNair, Chris Coker, Andro Garrett, Donovan Collins, Kip Hicks, Andy Womble, Stephen Paul, Tyrone Simpson, assistant coach Jim Hicks and assistant coach Kevin Cutler. Not pictured is assistant coach Stanley James.

his outstanding play at both ends last year.

Andro Garrett, Tyrone Simpson, Travis Rouson and Errin Bryant will see action at linebacker spots. Cherry is another player that may see action both ways due to lack of depth.

Puckett should handle a cornerback spot on defense while Col-

lins and Simpson will be the safeties.

Others that should get plenty of playing time are Lenny Small (5-8, 165, Sr.), Andy Womble (5-11, 140, Jr.) and Donovan Collins (6-3, 190, So.).

With a quick and experienced group of returners, the Vikings could challenge for one of the NEAC's three playoff spots providing injuries don't hit the key positions, Cody said.

PLYMOUTH	
August	
26	at Creswell
September	
2	Washington
9	Farmville
16	at East Carteret
23	at Roanoke*
30	at Williamston*
October	
7	Northampton East*
14	Edenton*
21	Roanoke Rapids*
28	at Hertford County*
November	
4	Open

1988 Plymouth Roster

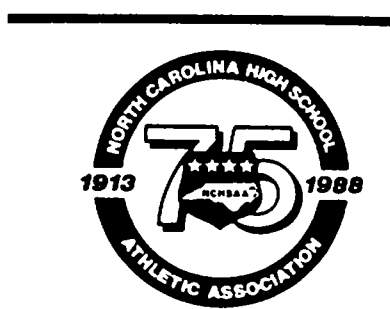
NO.	Player	HGT.	WGT.	CLASS	POS.
15	Nicky Alexander	6-0	165	Sr.	Back
11	Shawn Walker	6-0	160	Jr.	Back
65	Marty Biggs	5-11	155	Sr.	Line
55	Tyree Carr	6-0	255	Sr.	Line
44	Chris Cherry	5-11	185	Sr.	Line
71	Chris Coker	6-0	205	Sr.	Line
77	Donovan Collins	6-3	190	So.	Line
30	Tim Collins	5-8	150	Sr.	Back
75	Andro Garrett	6-0	225	Jr.	Line
61	Phillip Garrett	6-2	200	Sr.	Line
80	Kip Hicks	6-1	175	Jr.	Line
66	Michael Jordan	6-1	203	Sr.	Line
68	Kevin McNair	6-0	165	Sr.	Line
62	Curtis Norman	5-11	175	Jr.	Line
17	Gerald Puckett	6-0	185	Sr.	Back
53	Travis Rouson	5-8	185	Jr.	Line
99	Tyrone Simpson	6-1	215	Sr.	Line
42	Lenny Small	5-8	165	Sr.	Line
81	Andy Womble	5-11	140	Jr.	Back
88	Stephen Paul	5-10	140	Jr.	End
50	Ronnie Blount	6-1	195	Sr.	End
32	Curtis Brown	5-6	165	Jr.	Back
63	Errin Bryant	5-8	150	Sr.	Line
22	Jermaine Davenport	6-0	145	Jr.	Back

NCHSAA Celebrates 75th

Associated Press
The North Carolina High School Athletic Association will celebrate its 75th anniversary this fall. The Association's logo will show up on the 50-yard line at some football stadiums, on uniform patches, on billboards and in ads in almost every high school program in the state.

The celebration is a sign of the association's success. Its budget has tripled in the past five years with the advent of corporate sponsorships that bring in about \$200,000 per year. State championships have been classified in many sports and upgraded in practically every sport.

"We have a firm set of beliefs to try and make high school athletics the best experience that it can be for the youngsters of this season," Charlie Adams, the executive director of the North Car-



olina High School Athletic Association, said.

"We have never changed for change's sake, but neither have we refused to change simply because we had always done something another way. We have made some mistakes, but probably 75 to 85 percent of the changes have been positive. I won't apologize for the mistakes because some

them led to real progress.

One of Adams' top priorities was moving state championship events into the nicest facilities available. The association took another step toward that goal in May, when it scheduled the state 4-A football championship game this fall for Wake Forest University's Groves Stadium in Winston-Salem.

As has been the case with many of the changes, not everyone is excited about the move. Opponents say leaving the high school campuses and hometown fans is bad.

Proponents point out this year's boys' basketball finals drew more than 13,000 spectators to the Smith Center on the campus of the University of North Carolina. The girls' finals at UNC's Car-

(See NCHSAA, Page 13)

GOOD LUCK

in the upcoming season
to our

CHOCOWINITY INDIANS!!

FOOD KING

IGA

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Belhaven