

Numbers Short At Columbia

COLUMBIA — Coaches dream of inheriting a successful program.

Take Class 1-A Columbia for instance.

Last year, the Wildcats tied Chocowinity for the conference title and earned the playoffs for the second straight year. They thrilled their fans by advancing to the state championship game — several hundred made the 500-mile trip to Murphy.

Although Murphy ended Columbia's Cinderella dreams with a 56-15 triumph, the Wildcats emerged with the best record in the school's history — 12-3.

That would seem like enough to excite the community's youngsters into wanting to be a part of the program.

However, in the off-season head Spencer White departed for the Perquimans helm.

Kevin Wilson, an assistant coach at Class 4-A Durham Jordan, was hired. Wilson came in familiar with running a 1-A program, having been an assistant at Richlands, his alma mater, for four years.

Wilson came in, looked the situation over and instituted a lifting and running program in July.

He had a turnout of approximately 15 players.

On the opening day of practice, that number remained the same — the smallest turnout on record, he said.

"We had six or eight different circumstances come up," Wilson said. Many prospects were involved in farm work and could not get away. Others were working at the beach and needed to stay through the summer, others had conflicts at home . . ."

One of the players that didn't appear was Andre Cummings, one of the stars of last year's team.



Members of the 1988 Columbia Wildcat football team are, from left, front row: Tim Howlett, Dwayne Willis, Eric Sykes, Eric Brown and Mike Owens; second row: Thomas Wall, Hank Reynolds, Harvey West, Mike Holiday and Johnny Spencer; back row: Nelson Davenport, Kevin Spencer, Jeff Creef, Joe Pledger and Winson Barnes. Not pictured is Allen Bateman.

Cummings has transferred to Hertford High School.

However, five lettermen including three starters on offense and one on defense did materialize.

The cream of the returning crop is Joe Pledger, a six-foot-two, 180-pound senior back. He is joined by Jeff Creef, the Daily News' Top Pitcher in baseball last spring, and by Kevin Spencer, a 6-3 lineman.

Pledger and Creef will join junior quarterback Eric Brown (5-5, 180) in the backfield of Wilson's I-formation attack.

Pledger will get the lion's share of the running duties while Creef may be a threat to peel out and dish off the halfback pass.

The primary passing targets will be flanker Mike Owens, a 5-6, 155-pound junior and Hank Reynolds, a 5-9, 160-pound junior.

Because of injuries, Wilson had to reshuffle his offensive linemen.

Creef and tackle Eric Sykes appear to be the leaders of a defensive unit that lost nine player to graduation.

Wilson is frank in the assessing his squad's weaknesses.

"We will be slow and weak," he said. "We have no depth, we're young and inexperienced."

However, there is something about Columbia's team. Call it an intangible. The Wildcats drew a good crowd for their first scrimmage at nearby Creswell. The offense, hampered by exchange problems between the quarterback and the center, was able to move the ball. Pledger bulled behind the line and the receivers got the opportunity to flex their skills.

It only takes 11 to play the game — Wilson has a few more than that to work with.

COLUMBIA August

26 at Jones Senior

September

2 Gatas

8 Open

18 Mantoo

23 Mattamuskeet*

30 North Edgecombe*

October

7 at Bath*

14 Chocowinity*

21 Jamesville*

28 Creswell*

November

4 at Belhaven*

Pack Coaches Year-By-Year

Year	Coach	W	L	T	PF	PA
1987	Bob Hanna	5	5	0	178	182
1986	Bing Mitchell	2	8	0	88	288
1985	Bing Mitchell	4	8	0	183	210
1984	Bing Mitchell	3	7	0	158	166
1983	Bing Mitchell	8	4	0	232	136
1982	Bing Mitchell	8	1	0	288	85
1981	Bing Mitchell	3	7	0	131	150
1980	Bing Mitchell	1	9	0	75	248
1979	Phil Harris	2	7	1	74	229
1978	Phil Harris	8	2	0	185	113
1977	Phil Harris	2	8	0	54	192
1976	Jean Worthington	2	7	1	88	202
1975	Dick Cherry	4	6	8	134	186
1974	Dick Cherry	3	7	0	149	202
1973	Dick Cherry	3	6	1	115	190
1972	Dick Cherry	3	7	0	123	207
1971	Dick Cherry	1	9	0	44	230
1970	Dick Cherry	8	2	0	288	107
1969	Dick Cherry	7	3	0	223	131
1968	Dick Cherry	3	6	1	137	118
1967	Choppy Wagner	5	4	1	170	99
1966	Choppy Wagner	8	3	0	200	127
1965	Choppy Wagner	8	2	0	206	80
1964	Choppy Wagner	8	3	0	202	127
1963	Choppy Wagner	9	2	0	185	43
1962	Choppy Wagner	7	3	0	123	81
1961	Choppy Wagner	4	5	1	128	160
1960	Choppy Wagner	3	7	0	72	134
1959	Choppy Wagner	9	3	0	187	77
1958	Choppy Wagner	6	3	1	152	68
1957	Choppy Wagner	8	4	0	215	103
1956	Choppy Wagner	11	1	1	370	75
1955	Choppy Wagner	2	7	1	78	156
1954	Choppy Wagner	4	2	3	77	84
1953	Choppy Wagner	7	3	0	182	99
1952	Choppy Wagner	8	2	2	183	145
1951	Choppy Wagner	11	0	0	240	40
1950	Choppy Wagner	9	2	0	210	81
1949	Choppy Wagner	8	4	0	201	74
1948	Choppy Wagner	6	4	0	118	68
1947	Choppy Wagner	10	0	0	224	65
1946	Choppy Wagner	4	3	1	90	38
1945	E. S. Johnson	3	5	1	82	120
1944	E. S. Johnson	2	7	0	38	151
1943	E. S. Johnson	7	2	0	222	50
1942	E. S. Johnson	8	2	0	255	38
1941	Choppy Wagner	3	6	0	81	96
1940	Doug Kelley	3	4	0	55	113
1939	Doug Kelley	3	4	2	60	63
1938	Doug Kelley	1	7	0	47	116
1937	Doug Kelley	2	6	0	78	95
Totals 1937-1987		261	227	19		

1988 Columbia Roster

NO.	Player	CLASS	HGT.	WGT.	POS.
50	Tim Howlett	Jr.	5-7	130	Line
40	Dwayne Willis	Jr.	5-6	130	Back
6	Eric Sykes	Jr.	5-5	150	Line
1	Eric Brown	Jr.	5-7	160	Back
15	Mike Owens	Jr.	5-6	155	Line
25	Thomas Wall	So.	5-10	175	Back
22	Hank Reynolds	Jr.	5-9	160	Line
60	Harvey West	Jr.	6-0	200	Line
62	Mike Holiday	So.	5-10	175	Line
45	Johnny Spencer	So.	5-10	160	Line
77	Nelson Davenport	Sr.	6-2	260	Line
55	Kevin Spencer**	Sr.	6-3	185	Line
7	Jeff Creef**	Sr.	6-2	190	Back
44	Joe Pledger**	Sr.	6-2	185	Back
20	Winson Barnes	Jr.	6-3	170	Line
—	Allen Bateman	Sr.	5-10	170	Line

Season Champs

TOBACCO BELT CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS

- 1977 — Bath
- 1978 — Mantoo
- 1979 — Mantoo
- 1980 — Mantoo
- 1981 — Belhaven
- 1982 — Bath
- 1983 — Creswell
- 1984 — Jamesville
- 1985 — North Edgecombe
- 1986 — North Edgecombe
- 1987 — Chocowinity
- Columbia

NORTHEASTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS

- 1977 — Plymouth
- 1978 — Tarboro
- 1979 — Ahoskie
- 1980 — Edenton
- 1981 — Roanoke Rapids
- 1982 — Washington
- 1983 — Tarboro
- 1984 — Tarboro
- 1985 — Ahoskie
- 1986 — Edenton
- 1987 — Edenton

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