



The Carolina Renegades squad is hoping for a championship this season.

Submitted Photo

Renegades

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18 win over the Stanly County Panthers. They nearly took it all last season, losing by a point to the Greenville (S.C.) Seminoles in the CCFL semi-final game in Columbia, S.C.

"When these lights go on, these guys light up," said Dan Finkelstein, team vice president and receivers coach.

A longtime football fan, Glossenger started the Renegades five years ago. He played the game in the Army, but an injury put him on the sidelines. He channeled his love for the game into coaching for the Carolina Heat in Greensboro and Thomasville Titans, both CCFL teams. He then decided Winston-Salem needed its own team.

"I just saw the need in Winston because of the amount of talent in Forsyth County," said Glossenger, who works as a maintenance engineer and lives in Davidson County.

Over the past three years, the Renegades, one of the 1,200 semi-pro football teams in the country, has had five of its players picked to play in the semi-pro National All-Star Game in Las Vegas. Glossenger has also been a pick, serving as an offensive coordinator and head coach in the big game.

Renegades Running Back Al Washington, now in his third season, has been picked twice to play in the All-Star Game. The former N.C. A&T Aggie is a Greensboro firefighter. He's been playing the sport since he was eight and says that being on the field still makes him feel young.



Renegades co-owners Sandy and Dale Glossenger started the team five years ago.



Coach Dan Finkelstein prepares to throw a pass.

Photos by Todd Lack

"It's something fun to do to stay fit," said Washington, 32, who plans to retire from the team after this season.

Defensive Back Dwayne Ijames has been a Renegade for two years. He played at Elon College and then briefly for the NFL's Cleveland Browns and the AFL's Laredo

(Texas) Lobos and Corpus Christie (Texas) Sharks. He said he left the sport after a lockout spurred by a dispute over salaries. He was reminded how much he still loves the game when he saw his friends suited-up for the Renegades.

Ijames, a 28-year-old substance abuse counselor in Greensboro, believes his experience is an asset, allowing him to guide others on the team while enhancing his own play.

"I play wise and smart now instead of physical and fast. I'm just as effective without all the testosterone," said Ijames, who too may call it quits after this season for a chance to serve as a Renegades coach.

Defensive End Marques "Bus" Newman, 30, who's played at Fayetteville State University and with the AFL's Dallas (Texas) Desperadoes, is a second-year Renegade. He says the team is like a family and that he and all of his teammates share one goal.

"We grew as a team and

everybody's back this year, and our one goal is to get in that championship and get that ring. (We) got a lot of people on their last year playing football, and we're trying to get it for them," said Newman, who plans to start teaching high school soon.

Glossenger likes his team's chances.

"Really, honestly and truly, because of the talent we got, the only people that can beat us are ourselves," said Glossenger.

To sustain itself financially, the team depends on ticket sales and on sponsors like Nitty Gritty, Mossy's Sports Bar in Clemmons, JP Looneys in Kernersville and Smith and Associates in Houston, Texas. Atkins Academic and Technology High School provides the team with a place to practice and a stadium in which to play home games. In exchange for the support it has received, the team gives back whenever it can. The Renegades collected food for Second Harvest Food Bank and lent some muscle to a Habitat for Humanity build. The Renegades also asked fans to bring items to games to create 70 care packages to an Army engineering unit in Afghanistan. That cause was personal for the Glossengers, who have two sons in the military.

The next Renegades home game will be against the Winston-Salem Red Wolves at 7 p.m. this Saturday at Atkins High School, 3605 Old Greensboro Road. For the Renegades full season schedule, got to www.renegadesfootball.com.

Election

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Data from Rasmussen Reports, a polling agency, shows promising results for the Obama campaign, as 71 percent of African Americans reported being "very excited" about voting in the upcoming election, compared to only 47 percent of whites. Rasmussen also found that the African-American electorate in North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia has grown much faster than the non-African-American electorate over the past four years.

"African Americans across North Carolina are enthusiastically engaged in the President's re-election campaign several months before November, recognizing the role they play in continuing the President's historic journey to a second term," French stated. "...North Carolina voters know President Obama's commitment to restoring middle class security and making sure that hard work pays off stands in stark contrast to Mitt Romney's history as an outsourcing pioneer shipping jobs overseas instead of creating jobs here at home..."

Chenita Barber Johnson, president of the African American Caucus of Forsyth County, said the caucus, a subsidiary of the NC Democratic Party, is working hard to make sure African American voters know what is at stake if they stay home this Election Day, with voter registration and voter education efforts across the county.

"We stand to lose a lot of what we've gained if the African American community is not really energized to support Obama in the presidential election," said the city native. "...We did make history (in 2008). People said we couldn't do it. Now that we've done it, we have to keep the history moving forward, by keeping him in office."

Barber Johnson, who has

led the Caucus for the past two years, said she believes the 2010 election, in which many Democrats fell to Republican contenders in the state and across the nation, was a stark reminder that low participation can lead to big changes.

"I really think the election of 2010 was a wake-up call. I think it really shocked a lot of people," she remarked. "Because of what happened in 2010, we understand now

how fragile and how wonderful our democracy is."

African American voters have heavily favored Democratic candidates for decades, Dinan said, but what made the difference in 2008 was the enthusiasm for the Obama campaign.

"There's no surprise—who they voted for," he remarked. "The big change there was they turned out in greater numbers than ever before."

Dinan said young voters,



Dinan

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