

High School Football Weekly --- Wednesday, August 31st, 2005

BY MATTHEW HATFIELD

() Record = Overall Record including playoffs

High School Football Picks: Thursday - 9-1-05

Tallwood (7-3) @ #1 Landstown (14-0)	Pick: Landstown 49-13
Ocean Lakes (5-5) @ #5 Kempsville (8-2)	Pick: Kempsville 28-7
#8 Deep Creek (8-3) @ Norcom (3-7)	Pick: Deep Creek 30-3
Menchville (0-10) vs. #10 Maury (5-5) @ Lake Taylor	Pick: Maury 24-0
Kellam (8-2) @ First Colonial (6-4)	Pick: Kellam 26-13
Bayside (2-8) @ Green Run (0-10)	Pick: Green Run 13-10
Princess Anne (3-7) @ Salem (1-9)	Pick: Salem 23-17
Granby (7-3) @ Bethel (7-4)	Pick: Granby 21-14
Denbigh (5-5) @ Churchland (2-8)	Pick: Denbigh 16-8

High School Football Picks: Friday - 9-2-05

Wilson (6-4) @ #2 Phoebus (9-3)	Pick: Phoebus 42-10
#9 Booker T. Washington (5-6) @ #4 Oscar Smith (11-1)	Pick: Oscar Smith 27-16
Lake Taylor (4-6) @ Lakeland (2-8)	Pick: Lake Taylor 34-6
Norview (4-6) @ King's Fork (0-10)	Pick: Norview 30-6
Kecoughtan (5-5) @ Nansemond River (3-7)	Pick: Kecoughtan 20-12

Note: Ranking # is equivalent to Matthew Hatfield's 2005 Class AAA Eastern Region High School Football Preseason Rankings compiled on Tuesday, August 16th, 2005. Also, the record in the parenthesis was the team's overall mark last year, but from here on out it will indicate their current 2005 regular season record.

Game of the Week: Friday - Booker T. Washington @ Oscar Smith - Last season the Tigers put a good 'ol fashioned whooping on BT Washington, beating the Bookers by a score of 33-6. Two years ago Larry Stephney's team lost their opener to Deep Creek, 55-7, totaling just 152 yards of offense. This opening is important for them, especially since they still have games with playoff contenders Maury, Granby, Deep Creek and Warwick next week. Remember now that Oscar Smith doesn't have do-everything QB Greg Boone, All-Region players Tommie Lawrence and Julius Macklin, or Andre Cook (197Yds. 2TD's in last year's match). They're going to lean on a big offensive line and rising junior Dexter Merritt, a 'loose' quarterback as one coordinator told me a week ago. Could be close. **Why Oscar Smith Wins: Face it - the defense of the Tigers is better. You can make the case that BTW's West Coast like offense can be just as productive as what the Tigers run on Friday night. The difference maker will be OS defensive end Brian Whitmore, who's drawing major offers everywhere you look.**

City of Champions: If you haven't read my Beach District JUMBO preview, check it out. The city of Virginia Beach won numerous State Championships in 2004-05, including the city's first ever outright state title in football. The winners: Landstown, coached by creative offensive play designer Chris Beatty. Want to hear a Lee Corso 'yo'

stat? **Entering 2005, only three of Landstown's last 24 regional games have been decided by two touchdowns or less.** This will be the first chance for fans to see transfers Donny Kirby and Quinton Rainey in their new uniforms. It also begins the countdown to the college selections of maybe the region's best ever receiving duo, definitely the best one in recent memory. Percy Harvin and Damon McDaniel are the two I'm referring to, and they combined to score all seven touchdowns in last year's 49-19 win over Tallwood.

2002 Beach District Title Re-Match: Kempsville will be showcasing quite a few new players Thursday night, including former Salem quarterback Tajh Taylor. Taylor threw for over 1300 yards as a freshman and hopes to open up the Chiefs passing attack vs. an Ocean Lakes team that got shutout by Kempsville in last year's finale. The Dolphins don't have the two-headed running back monster of Scotty McGee and Joe Baptiste. Therefore, Roy Banks might have to take on a larger role as he makes the transition from quarterback to tailback.

Playoff Wild Cards? First Colonial and Kellam are on the verge of taking that next step in the Beach District. Chris DeWitt has guided Kellam to a .667 winning percentage since 2002, while FC has won 13 of its last 20. The Knights may use a mixture of runners - J'here Hill, Javon Boddie, Nate Akers - to keep the Patriots guessing and on their heels. FC needs a big game from senior college quarterbacking prospect Frank Berry to get the nod here. Up front the road guys have a key strength and experience edge.

Div. 6 Elimination Game: Thursday - Granby @ Bethel - Darius Mullen is really a well-rounded athlete at Bethel. As a sophomore, Mullen was one of the Peninsula District's best baseball players, hitting over .300 and stealing nearly 15 bags. Last season he broke onto the scene in football, throwing for 551 yards and rushing for another 543 in seven games. Meanwhile, the Comets of Granby have quite possibly the state's best perimeter playmaker that doesn't go to Landstown High in Chris Bell. Fellow DB/WR Kirk Belgrave can take advantage of his open opportunities, and ends Josh Cabbage and basketball reserve Jesse Sumkins - both over 6-4 - could create havoc off the edge. **Why Granby will have a better record: The stat that just keeps coming back to me and probably will all year is the fact that Bethel loses 20 of 22 starters, including RB LaDarius Adams. Unlike maybe a Deep Creek, Western Branch or Hampton, the Bruins can't plug and go. Even though Granby loses QB Bobby Rome, the Comets can contend much easier for a winning season in the Eastern District.**



Maury's DeAngelo Branche found the end zone three times last year in a win over Menchville. (Photo Courtesy of VirginiaPreps/Rod Johnson).