

Football Weekly - BY MATTHEW HATFIELD
High School Football Playoffs - Friday, November 19th, 2004

Division 6:

Deep Creek [9-1] V. Landstown [10-0] - 7:30 PM - Va. Beach Sportsplex

Both the Deep Creek Hornets and the Landstown Eagles are not new to the playoff picture. Landstown has less experience since it's a relatively new school, but Chris Beatty coached them all the way to the Division 6 State Championship one season ago. They got there by going undefeated in district play, beating Chesapeake powers Oscar Smith and Western Branch by a combined score of 52-9 in the playoffs and outlasting L.C. Bird 34-16 prior to their championship bout with Westfield. The Eagles fell short of becoming D-6 Champs as they lost 35-14. Last year they did it with potency on the offensive side of the ball led by QB T.J. Mitchell and talented wide receiver Jeremy Gilchrist. Mitchell, Gilchrist and others have departed, though the team went through the regular season unblemished once again. Changes have occurred on both sides of the ball starting with Markus Black taking over for Mitchell at QB and he has done fine completing 58% of his passes for 1769 yards and 25 touchdowns. Percy Harvin, a junior, has established himself as one of the finest players in the state. He scores touchdowns many different ways (21 total) and along with Damon McDaniel the two have scored 14 touchdowns of 40 yards or more. What hasn't changed is the fact the defense still is extremely tough, their wide receivers may be the fastest in the area and their overall team speed continues to be excellent.



QB/DB Bobby Gatling (#5) will have to generate big plays on both sides of the ball as a QB and defensive back.

Meanwhile, their opponent Friday night, the Deep Creek Hornets (eight time Southeastern District Champions), return to the playoffs once again. Head Coach David Cox has compiled a record of 75-16 in eight seasons there. They've been Eastern Region

Champs three times and State-Runner up twice. Fresh off a 19-6 victory over Western Branch in nasty conditions, they will attempt to win another difficult game against a well-rested Landstown team. No team in the Eastern Region averages more rushing yards per game than Deep Creek. The duo of Jarrell Brooks and Kishaun Jones has totaled 1938 yards through ten contests. Much of the credit also has to go to the offensive line consisting of Vernon Eason (All-District caliber player), Thomas McCutcheon, Devon Futrell, Anthony White and Chaz DeLoatch. They also do the job defensively shutting the run down to less than 100 yards per game. Josh Anderson, D.J. Bunch, Stephen Price and Ras-I Dowling are also guys who contribute.

Pick: Landstown 28-21.

--- I know some will say that Deep Creek plays in a better district with tougher competition. Week in and week out Western Branch, Oscar Smith, Hickory and Indian River are on the schedule. That's very true, but Kempsville and Kellam are two strong teams in the Beach District Landstown just rolled over after the first period of play. For Deep Creek to win, the rushing game obviously has to be good and it should be, but the other dimension - the passing game - has to appear. You can catch the Eagles off guard, especially if you limit their big plays and make them beat you by putting drives together. For Landstown they must cut down on stupid things like turnovers (which could have cost them vs. Tallwood if the Lions had a better offense) and penalties. Harvin's like the High School equivalent to USC college football player Reggie Bush. You try to get the ball in his hands as many ways as possible. Deveon Simmons is their beast on defense - he'll be ready. And don't be surprised if the Eagles try to run the ball more than you would think.

Granby [7-3] V. Oscar Smith [10-0] - 7:30 PM - Hickory High School

Conventional thinking would tell us that Oscar Smith (10-0) will destroy 7-3 Granby, a team that lost to a .500 Maury school last Thursday 39-13. Not so fast my friend! This is a re-match from earlier this season when Rich Morgan's Tigers beat Dave Hudak's Comets 26-7. Oscar Smith did finish undefeated as one of just three Eastern Region teams to do so. However, the status of fabulous quarterback Greg Boone (976 yards passing and 19TD tosses) is up in the air. Boone suffered an injury in the team's double-overtime squeaker over Hickory. It had to have been Boone's worst game of the season as he turned the ball over repetitively and couldn't find a rhythm. Luckily for Oscar Smith, running back Andre Cook was able to rush for 235 yards on the ground to get by Jeff Beard's feisty Hawks. Last week Boone did not start vs. Indian River as sophomore Dexter Merritt started in his place. They'll tell you (being Oscar Smith's coaching staff) that Boone is okay for this game, but we shall see. Of course, that is what you would expect them to say right? I mean nothing against the coaching staff of Oscar Smith, but you don't think they'd say something different would you? Tommie Lawrence is another playmaker for them that happens to be a threat as a return man, receiver and defensive back. Julius Macklin and company know how to stuff the run. That shouldn't be really a priority here unless Rome does a whole lot on the move. Granby needs to establish a running game right away. If they don't and Boone is effective, then it could be a rough night for the Comets.



These are the two difference makers I think. When Greg Boone is healthy Oscar Smith usually doesn't have any trouble with anybody. But the star Boone played poorly (to put it nicely) vs. Hickory and did not go against Indian River. Running back Andre Cook (#2) has picked up the load and without him the Tigers wouldn't be undefeated. Granby's chances of winning depend on the arm and legs of Bobby Rome. Chris Bell is his g-to-guy and might be their best defensive player. Rome must find him plenty of times and do things on the move for the Comets to bounce back from a Maury loss.

Pick: Oscar Smith 32-16

--- If I was coaching Granby here's what I'd do: I'd test Boone out by showing many different variations of blitzes and also force him throw the ball quickly into tight coverage. Believe me, it's easier said than done to stop this Oscar Smith team. They (Granby) can pass it on the Tigers. Whether or not they are able to run it with Dionne McClain reaming to be seen. Granby certainly wishes corners Kirk Belgrave and Galen Hunt, both of which transferred over the summer, were there to help defend the Tigers' fine receiving corps.

Division 5:

Woodside [8-2] V. Phoebus [8-2] - 7:30 PM - Todd Stadium

At the beginning of the season, I picked the Phoebus Phantoms as the top rated team out of 38 in the AAA High School Football Eastern Region. What I saw was Bill Dee's football group ready to build on last year's playoff victory over Hampton. They are angry about losing to the Crabbers 33-22 four weeks back. And even more upset over the early October loss to Woodside 14-13 on a Monday night. Why was the game played on Monday night you ask? The game was re-scheduled (due to inclement weather I believe - I can't remember that far back) and the Wolverines were able to catch the Phantoms off guard. Joacim Wigfall - the featured back for Woodside - was very impressive that night and actually played better than Phoebus' Elan Lewis. Now how many guys can say that? Lewis has 6839 rushing yards in his career going into this game. That's just flat out crazy! **The future Virginia Tech Hokie is just 282 yards shy from capturing the Virginia AAA career High School Football rushing record!** Who holds that record was something I looked up in the archives and was somewhat surprised to find out it was

Daniel Davis with Brooke Pointe back in 1998. Good special teams, tenacious defense, balanced offensive formula and physically outplaying the Phantoms again is the blueprint they will try to use Friday evening. Stefan Welsh actually is a better basketball player than he is a football star. People forget also that he had two interceptions back in the team's 12-5 season opening win over Norcom, a game he played a monumental part in from start to finish. He's very talented offensively and will factor in on offense, defense and special teams. I'm guessing the outcome will be decided by less than three touchdowns and perhaps by fewer than ten points.

Pick: Phoebus 34-23

--- Slowing down Lewis once is tough enough. Doing it a second time would just be an amazing achievement and probably give the Wolverines a playoff W. Wigfall and Welch have to be on as well and the score needs to stay under 30. When Woodside has allowed 25 or more this year they are 0-2. When Woodside has allowed less than 25 they are 8-0. On the Phoebus side of things - I think it's important they make both Aaron Ward and DeNathian Robinson threats. Make them think Lewis' number will be called and run some trick plays to catch them unprepared. Stephen Friday can be a force at tight end and defensive end.

Booker T. Washington [5-5] V. Hampton [10-0] - 7:30 - Darling Stadium

Now of the four Eastern Region Playoffs games that will be played on Friday - I'd venture to say that this one will be the biggest blowout. Sorry Booker T. fans, but the fact of the matter is Hampton is definitely one of the five best teams in the state (or so it appears) and Booker T. is mediocre at best. I mean that's what 5-5 is right? Mediocre is how I define it - and I've been on a soapbox all year about D-5 and D-6. A matter of fact, I have been for the last few years. Indian River also went 5-5 and in my opinion played a harder schedule. That's not what gets to me - what does get to me is you have Kempsville (8-2), Kellam (8-2), Hickory (7-3), Bethel (7-3) and Tallwood (7-3) all sitting home on Friday night. Instead - a Booker T. team, which started out 1-4, will be playing in the playoffs. Don't get me wrong, the Bookers aren't bad. Having that said, to put them in the same sentence as the Crabbers really is something I am unable to comprehend. So what can Larry Stephney's team do to shut us all up? Well, of course shocking the world by beating Hampton certainly would be the biggest playoff upset in quite some time. No team in the Eastern District really was plagued more by turnovers, and penalties to a certain degree, during the month of September than Booker T. Washington. If they gave the Crabbers chance to score off turnovers than they can forget about it!

Freshman quarterback James Vann truly is something special and will give the Bookers a chance to win the Eastern District the next couple of season you would think. In 2004 Van threw for 18 touchdowns, 1622 yards and completed just over 56% of his pass attempts. Vann's favorite target is without question junior wide receiver Terreon Conyers, who finished only second to Salem's Teyron Burden in South Hampton Roads receiving. Burden hauled in 4.8 passes per game for 74.7 yards receiving per game and

caught eight touchdowns. 6-2 185 pound junior Antoine Thompson accounted for another 32% of Vann's completions. Thompson also hauled in eight touchdowns and averaged 15.1 yards a reception on 603 total receiving yards. Like Ocean Lakes, the Bookers often use three d-linemen up front and go with five or six defensive backs if need to on big passing downs. They'll need to vs. Hampton, a team that's got arguably the best wide receiver in the state. His name is Todd Nolen, whose gone over 1,000 yards receiving. Regarded as the best wideout Mike Smith has ever had at Hampton, Nolen has a very bright future that has the letters N-F-L written all over it (barring any injuries or decision to pursue another career). Sophomore QB Tyrod Taylor's been great and had one of the game's for the ages in the team's win over Phoebus (416 total yards and produced five touchdowns). In that game Nolen also went over 200 yards receiving and averaged 34 yards per catch on his seven grabs.

Pick: Hampton 49-7

--- Again Booker T. has a lot to be proud of - finishing the season 4-1 under a freshman QB. Everyone wants to talk about McPherson, Taylor and Nolen for Hampton and deservedly so considering all they've done in 2004. Here are the five names to note here and through the rest of the playoffs in my opinion: Dominique White, Herbert Broughton, Timothy Richardson, Brandon Vines and Sean McNeil. Those five young men compose one of the best offensive lines in the state of Virginia. North Stafford is probably the only school with a better o-line. They will pay dividends for the Crabbers when these playoffs are all said and done because of their hard work on the offensive line and on defense.



On October 8th, 2004 Hampton High School defeated the Kecoughtan Warriors 44-3 and (Hampton, Virginia) became only the 12th school in America to win 700 games. A testament to the hard working players they've brought in and Mike Smith's coaching staff over the many, many years. One word sums up 26 district titles - Incredible!

All photos used in this article are from the following websites: - Thank You!

<http://www.virginiapreps.com> <http://www.rivals.com>

<http://www.deepcreekalumni.com/DCSports.html>

http://www.sbo.hampton.k12.va.us/sports_clubs/highlights.html

2004 High School Football Hatfield Awards:

I first want to say what a joy it has been covering High School Football in the Hampton Roads area once again for ESPN Radio 1310's High School Football Scoreboard Show hosted by Richie Summerville and Hatfield Sports - www.matthewhatfield.com . I'd also like to note that this one of the greatest areas as far as sports and football goes in the country. There's a wealth of amazing talent throughout the entire state of Virginia and these athletes have shown that over the years. Two more things worth noting before I had out my awards. There's a lot of tremendous players who won't get listed here, but I want to tip my hat to them as well. For Coach of the Year I did not select who I believe is the best coach in the district - the coach I think has done the best job. In next week's HSF Weekly I will delve into each school's season a little more and point out some of the other coaches who have done marvelous jobs.

Thank You,
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Beach District:

Offensive Player of the Year:	Percy Harvin - Landstown	RB/WR/KR
Defensive Player of the Year:	Deveon Simmons - Landstown	LB
Newcomer of the Year:	Kevin Simmons - Kempsville	RB
Coach of the Year:	Thad Harrold - Tallwood	
Playmaker of the Year:	Demetrius Taylor - Kellam	LB/RB

Eastern District:

Offensive Player of the Year:	Bobby Rome - Granby	QB
Defensive Player of the Year:	Sam Daniels - Wilson	DL
Newcomer of the Year:	James Vann - Booker T.	QB
Coach of the Year:	Dealton Cotton - Maury	
Playmaker of the Year:	Chris Bell - Granby	WR/DB/KR

Southeastern District:

Offensive Player of the Year:	Greg Boone - Oscar Smith	QB
Defensive Player of the Year:	Josh Baker - Western Branch	LB
Newcomer of the Year:	Brian Inghram - Hickory	
Coach of the Year:	Jeff Beard - Hickory	
Playmaker of the Year:	Tommie Lawrence - Oscar Smith	WR/DB/KR

Peninsula District:

Offensive Player of the Year:	Elan Lewis - Phoebus	RB
Defensive Player of the Year:	Stefan Welsh - Woodside	DB
Newcomer of the Year:	Tyrod Taylor - Hampton	QB
Coach of the Year:	Tracy Harrod - Denbigh	
Playmaker of the Year:	Todd Nolen - Hampton	WR/DB/KR