

Sports

Saturday, October 12, 2024

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SECTION B

H.S. FOOTBALL

TIME TO REGROUP



JUSTIN EPLEY, THE NEWS HERALD

Draughn football players listen to head coach Chris Powell following a win over Chase on Sept. 12.

Local schedules coming together after Hurricane Helene chaos

JUSTIN EPLEY
Sports editor

After two-plus weeks of chaos caused by a stoppage in place due to the effects of Hurricane Helene, all three of Burke County's active varsity high school football teams either have resumed play or now know when they will, and schedules slowly are coming together.

While Freedom (in a home Northwestern 3A/4A Conference game versus Alexander Central at Patton late Friday in Morganton) and East Burke (in a road Catawba Valley 2A Conference game at Bunker Hill late Friday in Claremont) resumed play in Week 8 to end three-week layoffs, Draughn finally set its first game back from what will be a four-weeks-and-change hiatus by announcing on Thursday that it will host Western Highlands 1A/2A Conference opponent Mitchell at 2 p.m. this coming Saturday, Oct. 19, for Week 9.

The game is being played on a Saturday due to special provisions put into place by the WHC, whose communities mostly are in the mountains and were hit particularly hard by the storm on Sept. 27.

"Most of our conference teams are starting back next week with athletics, but face nighttime travel restrictions," wrote DHS coach Chris Powell on the team's Facebook page. "We will work on the following weeks'

schedules next week."

These decisions and a wholesale resumption of play came after the NCHSAA extended the fall season by a week with a Wednesday decision. For football, this comes with a stipulation that a minimum of three calendar days must occur between contests as teams seek to make up for lost time. Sunday practices and games remain disallowed.

"Changes to the fall calendar are difficult as well as complex but necessary," said NCHSAA President Stephen Gainey and NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker in a joint statement. "Keeping our student-athletes safe as we try to minimize risk of injury was central to any decisions made. We commend the work of the NCHSAA staff in its research, the Board of Directors in making time to consider these changes, and the willingness of our host partners to accommodate any changes and make their venues available."

The Cavaliers will follow up their road trip to Bunker Hill by hosting Lincoln-ton this Friday, visiting West Lincoln on Oct. 25, hosting West Caldwell on Nov. 1, visiting Newton-Conover on Nov. 5 and hosting Bandys at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 9.

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H.S. ROUNDUP

East Burke's Willis 7th in United Way Invitational

FROM STAFF REPORTS

NEWTON — East Burke's Cadence Willis was the top local runner in Wednesday's John F. Hall United Way Cross Country Invitational, held at Southside Park.

The Lady Cavaliers' Willis placed seventh in the girls championship race with a time of 20:49.52.

EBHS was led in the boys invitational race by Elijah Baker (second; 18:16.33), Ethan Bishop (10th), Marc Denton (22nd), Randy Bradshaw (25th), Kade Tolbert (35th), Benjamin Bolyann (36th), Job Snow (58th) and Eduardo Valencia Soria (62nd).

In the girls invitational race, EB was led by Aubrey Sanders (15th), Genevieve Wilson (53rd), Jocelyn Martinez Lopez (57th), Regan Parsons (65th) and Eve Sweet (73rd).

For Patton in the girls invitational, Elise Sawdy (second; 21:45.47) led Layla McGuire (fourth; 22:29.23) and Nora Wykle (21st).

In the boys invitational, PHS was led by Gabe Wykle (third; 18:30.01), Will Evans (eighth), Nicholas Parlier (16th), Eliuth Nicolas (24th), Carter Phillips (37th), Bryant Arrowood (44th), Jude Gregory (46th) and Jonah Gregory (70th).

Freedom was represented in the boys championship race by Nick Chiota (44th), Jonah Griggs (49th), Christopher Uren (54th), Frank Harrelson (62nd), Eric Francisco (93rd), Ian Austin (97th), Rex Jones (98th), David Cook (99th), Parker Brown (104th) and Brayan Garcia (105th).

In the girls championship, FHS was led by Chloe Spencer (69th), Gracie Farris (77th), Abigail Beam (82nd) and Josephine Moore (83rd).

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ACC FOOTBALL

QB struggles, injuries tough obstacles for FSU, UNC, NC State

AARON BEARD
Associated Press

The plan seemed straightforward for Florida State: find a veteran quarterback in the transfer portal, then plug him in for the reigning Atlantic Coast Conference champion and preseason favorite to win it again.

North Carolina State and North Carolina made similar bets to bolster their offenses.

Yet things have gone awry. FSU has had ineffective play at the position for a team that is perilously close to being winless. For the Tar Heels and Wolfpack, injuries to the arriving starter have forced them to alter their approaches amid 0-2 league starts.

"It's just having the ownership of the offense, having guys in the system, that have been with the coordinator," said ACC Network analyst Eric Mac Lain, a former Clemson offensive lineman. "That changes a lot all over the place, with new coaches and new players. Having that continuity as the guy and having the reps as the guy, it's one of those things that that's where you see the drop-off."

Just as elite play can elevate a program — look at UNC with eventual No. 3 overall NFL Draft pick Drake Maye the past two years — setbacks at the position can become an obstacle. And the ACC is seeing that scenario unfold this year.

No. 10 Clemson (4-1, 3-0) leads the ACC standings with Cade Klubnik ranking in the top 10 in the Bowl Subdivision ranks for TD passes (14) and top 20 in passing efficiency (two interceptions). No. 6 Miami (6-0, 2-0) is still unbeaten behind Washington State transfer quarterback Cam Ward as the FBS leader in passing offense (369.8) and passing TDs (20).

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NASCAR CUP SERIES

Two teams ask court to recognize them as chartered

JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE — The two teams suing NASCAR asked a judge for a preliminary injunction Wednesday so they can compete next season under the charter system they are challenging as their antitrust case moves through federal court.

23XI Racing, which is owned by Michael Jordan, veteran driver Denny Hamlin and Curtis Polk, and Front Row Motorsports, owned by Bob Jenkins, sued NASCAR and chairman Jim France last week in the Western District of North Carolina. The two teams accused NASCAR of being "monopolistic bullies" after refusing to

sign new charters proposed by the stock car series.

The charter system is a revenue-sharing model that is similar to a franchise in other professional sports. Although charters can be sold and leased, the charters have contractually binding terms, expiration dates and can be revoked by NASCAR. Teams fought to have them made permanent, but NASCAR would not consider the issue and the newest extension runs through 2031.

23XI and Front Row allege in their suit that the agreement that goes into effect next season limits competition by unfairly

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BUTCH DILL, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bob Jenkins, owner of Front Row Motorsports, and Michael Jordan, co-owner of 23XI Racing, talk before a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Talladega Superspeedway on Sunday in Talladega, Ala.