

Hapeville Charter Enters 2nd Varsity Football Season

The Hapeville Hornets learned a lot from their first varsity football season last year. Although the team did not advance to the playoffs, it responded well to the level of competition it faced.

In their first season as a varsity team, the Hornets finished 3-7, and suffered losses at the hands of Greater Atlanta Christian Academy, Eagles Landing, Prince Avenue, and a few other well established programs.

According to Hapeville's Head Football Coach Winston Gordon, the team lost those important games because of its lack of discipline.

"We couldn't compose ourselves," he said, "...in the crucial region games, we could not execute efficiently under pressure."

The team tended to struggle at the start of games. One mistake led to another, and the Hornets usually found themselves playing catch-up late in games.

"You can't win a championship by playing catch-up," he said, "You have to come out and set the tone for the rest of the game. That's what we tell them [the players]."

The Hornets lost 13 starters due to graduation. However, the team is rebuilding, and is expecting more production and efficiency from its new group of players.

The offense is now at the command of Christian Nelson, a 6-foot-3, 235-pound freshman quarterback. Running backs Joseph Ross (senior) and Antoine Wilder (junior) aid him in the backfield along with wide receiver Jaquez Ezzard (sophomore). The offensive line is led by two 250-pound senior linemen: Rohan Francis and Damien Campbell.

The defense attests to being faster and stronger this season. Its new 4-2-5 scheme caters to fast, big, and quick athletes. The defense is led by defensive ends Brandon Banks (sophomore) and Elijah Goodman (junior), along with cornerback Kquanzay Wyley (sophomore).

One thing remains the same, however, for this football team –the empty feeling of a disappointing season last year.

"The disappointment from last year will be our motivation for this season," said Coach Gordon.

"Our frustrations will hopefully bring us together and cause us to operate in unity. Football championships are not won by individuals –they are won by teams."

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