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Kickoff '24: Experienced Eagles ready for new challenges

By Liam Dreesen MDJ Sports Writer
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North Cobb Christian will lean on experience this season after retaining a majority of their impactful players from last season.

The offense is returning more than half of its total yards of production from last season, and the defense is returning its top four tacklers.

Out of all of the returning players there may be none more impactful than sophomore quarterback Teddy Jarrard.

“I mean, he’s integral, he’s the trigger man,” Coach Matt Jones said. “He’s going to determine our success in so many ways.”

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Jarrard finished his freshman year second in the county with more than 2,000 passing yards. He also added 18 touchdowns and was named to the Region 6AA first team.

Jarrard's performance was a major reason the Eagles exceeded Jones' expectations by finishing 9-3 with a region title under their belt.

"We started around 15 kids that were ninth graders last year," Jones said. "Going into last year, I would have thought there was no way we would win the region or be 9-3. So we had a fantastic year"

Playing such a young roster last year will now allow the Eagles to enter next season with a lot of experience under their belt.

"They would make a good play and it just kind of gave them that hunger to make more good plays," Jones said. "And so now walking into this year, they know what that feels like and they've been there, and they can have so much more confidence."

Jarrard said that he wants the team to win the region championship this season, along with a personal goal of throwing for more than 3,000 yards.

This is the first year Jones will have a quarterback returning, and he said that is going to be huge for the team's success this upcoming season.

"Everyone's on the same page," Jones said. "We can build, and don't have to go back to rebuild from the start."

The Eagles' defense will be led by seniors Spears Martin, Beedjy Guerrier, Raymond Dixon and Thomas Hale. This same group of players led the defense last year, a unit that only allowed 12.5 points per game.

Jones said this group of seniors will be the reason the defense is one of their strong suits again this season.

The Eagles will have the goal of getting past the second round of the state playoffs, which has been their downfall in each of the last two seasons.

Jones said staying healthy and making the little plays at the end of games will help them find more success in the playoffs this season.

“When the time comes to make the plays at the end of the game, we have to make the play,” he said.

Before they make it to the playoffs they will first have to withstand the challenges of entering a new region.

The Eagles will be joining Region 7AA which Jones said is full of great teams that have tough kids that play super hard.

One of those teams is Rockmart, who won the region last year after going undefeated in region play.

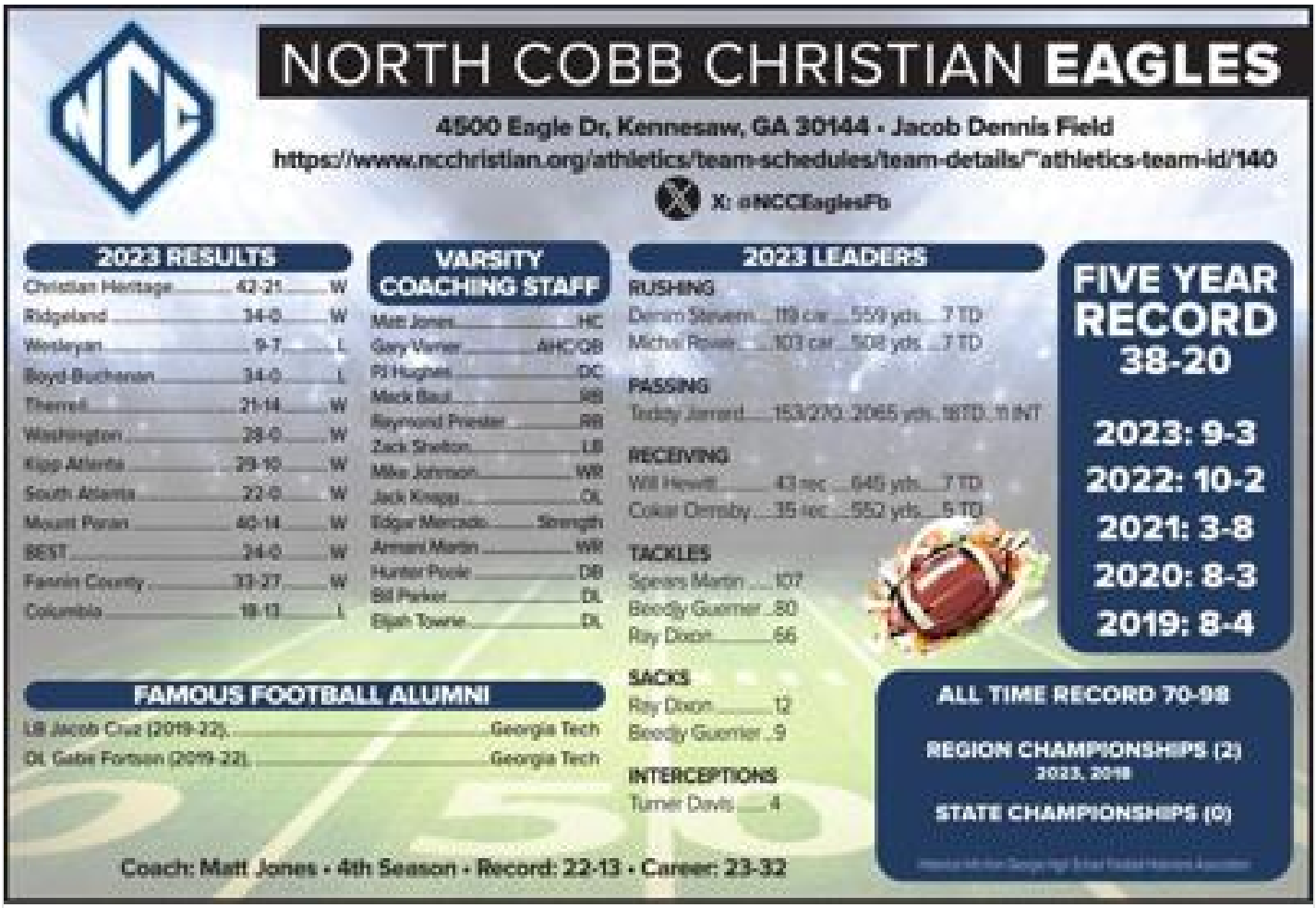
The Eagles and Yellow Jackets will face off in Week 7 of this season.

“We are just trying to take it day by day really, and I look forward to that one, that will be a good game,” Jones said of the matchup. “Our kids are excited about that. But there’s so much to go between now and then that we have to do to be successful in that game.”

Jones said that building depth and working on consistency were things the team needed to work on before the season.

“Right now we’ll do one thing really well, and you can see it, and then the next play is just awful,” he said.

He also said that it will be key for the team to have a hard working mentality and to stay hungry in order for them to succeed this year.



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