Spring 2019

UA19/16/2 Football Press Releases

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 3, 2019

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

CLASS OF 2019 EARLY SIGNEES EARN NUMEROUS ACCOLADES

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football’s Class of 2019 earned numerous district, regional and state postseason honors as high school and junior college seasons wrapped up across the nation. The Hilltoppers currently have 17 signees announced for head coach Tyson Helton’s first signing class.

Defensive tackle Ricky Barber from Doss High School in Louisville was named to the All-USA Today Kentucky Football First Team, All-State Courier-Journal Second Team, All-District 4-5A Team and Metro Louisville All-Area Team in 2018, then was picked to compete in the Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Football Game. In his junior season of 2017, he was named to the All-State Courier-Journal Third Team and Metro Louisville All-Area Team.

Defensive back Clayton Bush from South Warren High School in Bowling Green was named to the All-USA Today Kentucky Football First Team and All-State Courier-Journal First Team in 2018, then was picked to compete in the Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Football Game. In his junior season of 2017, he was named to the All-SKY Conference Second Team as a wide receiver.

Offensive lineman Jack Randolph of Franklin-Simpson High School in Franklin was named to the All-USA Today Kentucky Football First Team and All-State Courier-Journal Second Team, then was picked to compete in the Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Football Game. In his junior season of 2017, he was named to the All-SKY Conference Second Team as a wide receiver.

Defensive back T.J. Springer from Maplewood High School in Nashville was named to the All-State Class 4A Team and All-Region 4-4A Team in 2018. In his junior season of 2017, he was named to the All-Region 4-4A Team as a wide receiver.

Defensive back Desmond Johnson, from Valdosta High School in Georgia, earned back-to-back All-Region 1-6A Team honors in his junior and senior seasons. Meanwhile, defensive end Stephone Atkinson from Lake Minneola High School in Florida, was named to the Daily Commercial All-Area First Team.

Jordan Flack from Somerville, Ala., became the first Brewer High School offensive lineman to ever be named to the Alabama Sports Writers Association’s All-State Team, and he was also listed on the Class 5A All-Area Team.

Offensive lineman Daylen Powell from Summerville High School in South Carolina was named to the All-USA Today South Carolina Football First Team and All-Lowcountry First Team. Fellow Palmetto Stater, tight end Josh Simon from Crestwood High School, was invited to the Progress Energy Bowl North-South All-Star Game.

From the JuCo ranks, offensive lineman Garrett Nickelson was named to the All-Conference First Team following his 2018 season at Blinn College in Texas. In 2017, as a senior at Clear Springs High School, he was named All-District 24-6A First Team.

Receiver Manny Allen from Rancho Verde High School in Moreno Valley, Calif., played in the 2018 Polynesian Bowl and was a nominee for that year’s U.S. Army All-American Bowl Game.

In addition, wideout Tyler Smith from Salem High School in Ellenwood, Ga., played in the 2018 Elite Raw Talent All-American Bowl and wideout Dalvin Smith from Glasgow High School competed in the 2017 Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Football Game and was named to the All-SKY Conference First Team as a defensive back.
JUWUAN JONES NAMED 2018 FWAA FRESHMAN ALL-AMERICAN

SAN JOSE, Calif. — WKU Football defensive end Juwuan Jones has been named a 2018 Freshman All-American, the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) announced Monday morning prior to the evening’s College Football Playoff (CFP) National Championship Game.

He is believed to be the first freshman defensive lineman in program history to earn All-American honors.

After redshirting the 2017 campaign to make the switch from high school linebacker to collegiate defensive end, Jones’ five sacks in 2018 set a WKU FBS Era record (dating back to 2009) by a freshman. He made a career-high 2.5 sacks with a forced fumble vs. Old Dominion on October 20, which was the most sacks in a game by a Hilltopper since the 2016 Boca Raton Bowl.

The Sugar Hill, Ga., native earned a spot on the Conference USA All-Freshman Team, and was also the lone freshman defender to be voted All-CUSA Honorable Mention, both of which were announced on Dec. 4. His five sacks and 546 total snaps led all C-USA freshman defenders.

Jones becomes the Hilltoppers’ third FWAA Freshman All-American since the program moved to the FBS, joining offensive lineman Brandon Ray in 2014 and kick returner Willie McNeal in 2010. The most recent WKU defensive lineman to earn any type of All-American status was Quanterus Smith, whose 2012 season garnered Phil Steele Fourth Team and Sports Illustrated Honorable Mention honors.

He joins Louisiana Tech’s Jaylon Ferguson as the only C-USA defensive linemen to be listed since the FWAA began announcing Freshman All-American Teams in 2001. Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence was the only other Peach Stater on the 2018 Freshman All-American Team.

Founded in 1941, the FWAA consists of 1,400 men and women who cover college football. The membership includes journalists, broadcasters and publicists, as well as key executives in all the areas that involve the game. The FWAA works to govern areas that include game-day operations, major awards and its annual All-America team.

A 13-man panel of nationally prominent college football experts represented each of the FBS conferences, along with independents in the selecting the 32-man team. Both true freshmen (18 players) and redshirt freshmen (14 players) were considered.

WKU FOOTBALL ANNOUNCES COMPLETE 2019 SCHEDULE

DALLAS – Six home games and a game at Nissan Stadium in Nashville await first-year head coach Tyson Helton and the Hilltoppers on the 2019 WKU Football schedule, Conference USA announced on Thursday.

WKU begins its season at home for the third time in four years when Central Arkansas comes to town on August 31. The Bears, out of the Southland Conference, finished 6-5 in 2018 after a 10-2 campaign in 2017 and return 16 starters.

C-USA play begins in Week 2 with the season’s longest road trip at FIU on Sept. 7. The Hilltoppers have played a C-USA game within the first two weeks in two previous seasons (LA Tech, 2015; Rice, 2016) but have never started C-USA play this early on the road. WKU is also seeking its first victory over the Panthers in the Butch Davis Era.

Then, on Sept. 14, the Hilltoppers clash with the Louisville Cardinals at Nissan Stadium, home of the NFL’s Tennessee Titans. Louisville rallied from a 14-0 deficit last season to beat WKU in Cardinal Stadium.

After a bye week, WKU steps back into conference play for two games by hosting defending C-USA champion UAB in the first meeting of the programs since 2014. The Hilltoppers travel to East Division rival Old Dominion on Oct. 5.

On Oct. 12, WKU hosts Army at Houchens-Smith Stadium. The Black Knights are coming off one of their best seasons in recent history as head coach Jeff Monken led the team to a No. 19 finish in the final 2018 Associated Press poll and the first 11-win season in program history. It was Army’s highest finish in that ranking in 60 years.

A trifecta of C-USA games follows Army as WKU hosts Charlotte on Oct. 19, travels to Marshall on Oct. 26, then hosts Florida Atlantic to begin the month of November on Nov. 2.

WKU steps out of C-USA play for the final time with a road trip to Arkansas on Nov. 9, the first-ever meeting between the two schools, before traveling to Southern Miss for the first time on Nov. 23. The Hilltoppers and Blue Raiders of Middle Tennessee close out the regular season, at home, on Senior Night, on Nov. 30.

All dates are subject to change and kick off times and TV designations will be announced later this year.

2019 WKU Football Schedule

Aug. 31 – Central Arkansas
Sept. 7 – at FIU*

Sept. 14 – vs. Louisville (Nashville)
Sept. 28 – UAB*
Oct. 5 – at Old Dominion*

Oct. 12 – Army
Oct. 19 – Charlotte*
Oct. 26 – at Marshall*

Nov. 2 – Florida Atlantic*
Nov. 9 – at Arkansas
Nov. 23 – at Southern Miss*
Nov. 30 – Middle Tennessee*
## WKU 2019 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time (CT)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>at FIU*</td>
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<td>Miami, Fla.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sept. 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>vs. Louisville</strong></td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>Nashville, Tenn.</td>
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<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td><strong>BYE</strong></td>
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<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>UAB*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>at Old Dominion*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Norfolk, Va.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Army</strong></td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td><strong>Oct. 19</strong></td>
<td><strong>Charlotte</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nov. 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Florida Atlantic</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>at Arkansas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fayetteville, Ark.</td>
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<td><strong>Nov. 16</strong></td>
<td><strong>BYE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>at Southern Miss*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hattiesburg, Miss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nov. 30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Middle Tennessee</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home games in **BOLD** | * Indicates Conference USA game
PAIR OF FORMER HILLTOPPERS SET TO BUILD ON WKU'S SUPER BOWL LEGACY

NEW ORLEANS – With the Los Angeles Rams’ 26-23 victory over the New Orleans Saints in Sunday’s NFC Championship Game, a pair of former Hilltopper football stars, tight end Tyler Higbee and offensive tackle Darrell Williams, are headed to Super Bowl LIII.

Higbee, who was drafted by the Rams in the fourth round of the 2016 draft, has appeared in 48 games for the team including all 16 this season. In last night’s championship game, he caught the team’s only passing touchdown as well as two critical receptions on the final offensive drive of the game in overtime for the Rams.

On the year, Higbee is one reception and three yards away from new career highs with the Rams as he has tallied 24 receptions for 292 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

Williams, a four-year starter at tackle for the Hilltoppers, has spent time San Francisco 49ers and the Rams since he entered the league following the 2016 season. A two-time Conference USA champion, Williams appeared in seven games with the 49ers in the 2017 season before the Rams added him to their practice squad for the 2018 campaign.

“We’re just really excited for them,” said first-year WKU head coach Tyson Helton on Sunday. “To have two guys in the Super Bowl that are Hilltoppers is a big deal. It says a lot about our program. (Tyler) was always a playmaker and a guy you could count on. He loved the game of football, and you could see him out there (against the Saints) with that same attitude.”

Super Bowl LIII, held this year in Atlanta, will mark the first time a pair of former WKU players have appeared on a Super Bowl roster. Higbee and Williams stand to be the fourth and fifth WKU players to appear on a Super Bowl roster, and with Higbee’s status on the active roster, he aims to become just the second former WKU player to participate in the Super Bowl. Running back Rod Smart returned four punts for the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl XXXVIII in 2004.

Running back Bobby Rainey was on injured reserve with the Baltimore Ravens when they won a championship in Super bowl XLVII (2012), and offensive lineman Anthony Oakley was with the Chicago Bears during Super Bowl XLI in 2007. Dale Lindsey also appeared in the final NFL Championship game before the AFL-NFL merger (1970) when the Vikings defeated his Browns in 1969.

Numerous former WKU players have also appeared on the sidelines of the Super Bowl as coaches including: Romeo Crennel (XXI, XXV, XXXI, XXXVI, XXXVIII, XXXIX), Darryl Drake (XLI), Joe Bugel (XVII, XVIII, XXII), and Lindsey (XXIX).
GARRET CHACHEE JOINS WKU FOOTBALL STAFF AS RUNNING BACKS COACH

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – First-year head football coach Tyson Helton has added an experienced presence to the running backs room as 27-year coaching veteran Garret Chachere was named the program’s new running backs coach on Thursday.

Chachere (pronounced ‘SASH-uh-RAY’) comes to The Hill following a one-year stint at Southeastern Louisiana where he served as passing game coordinator and running backs coach. A former offensive coordinator and special teams coordinator, he has coached every position except offensive line during his career and coached on both sides of the ball in bowl games. He has both running backs and linebackers that he coached currently in the NFL and the CFL. The versatile coach has coached all-conference performers on offense, defense and special teams.

Chachere has also coached on staffs with eight future NFL quarterbacks, including Super Bowl LII MVP Nick Foles and first overall pick Jared Goff. He also coached former Arizona running back Ka’deem Carey, a two-time Pac-12 Offensive Player of the Year and Chicago Bears draft pick.

In his lone season at Southeastern Louisiana, Chachere’s top two running backs each earned All-Southland Conference honors with junior Devonte Williams earning first-team honors as a punt returner and junior back Darren Johnson picking up honorable mention honors at his position.

Prior to SLU, Chachere was the offensive coordinator at New Mexico Highlands for the 2017 season. NMHU was one of 10 Division II teams to average over 5.0 yards a carry, and the Cowboys improved over 80 spots in the national rankings in total offense, passing offense and rushing offense from the previous season. Under his guidance, NMHU set a new single-game record with 727 total yards versus Adams State.

Prior to his time at New Mexico Highlands, Chachere spent four seasons on the coaching staff at the University of California, including the final two as associate head coach. He was the Golden Bears’ running back coach in 2016. He coached the linebackers in 2014 and 2015 at Cal, after opening his tenure in Berkeley as the defensive ends coach in 2013.

The 2015 defense helped the Bears to their first eight-win season since 2009 and a win in the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl. The defense improved in every category from the previous season, including allowing 9.1 less points per game than the previous season.

Chachere spend the 2012 campaign at Southern Miss as the Golden Eagles’ special teams coordinator and tight ends coach, after spending three seasons on the offensive staff at Arizona. He was the running backs coach for the Wildcats in 2011, after spending the 2009 and 2010 seasons as the wide receivers coach.

His first two seasons in Arizona saw the Wildcats compete in the Holiday and Alamo Bowls. The 2010 Wildcats featured the nation’s ninth-ranked passing offense, as Chachere’s charges, David Douglas (52 passes, 515 cards, five touchdowns) and David Roberts (44-487), were standouts for Arizona.

Chachere oversaw one of the nation’s top special team units during the 2007 and 2008 seasons at Memphis. Both of his campaigns with the Tigers ended with Memphis competing in bowl games – the 2007 New Orleans Bowl and 2008 St. Petersburg Bowl.

From 1999-2006, Chachere was the linebackers coach at Tulane and the punt return coordinator for his first five seasons with the Green Wave. He mentored Anthony Cannon, a 2006 NFL Draft selection by the Detroit Lions. A first team All-Conference USA performer as a senior, Cannon posted four straight 100-tackle seasons under Chachere’s tutelage and ranked third all-time on the league’s career tackles list at the end of his Green Wave career. Prior to departing Tulane for Memphis, Chachere recruited running back Matt Forte to the school.
Chachere played for the Green Wave in 1987 and 1988 and was a member of the 1987 Independence Bowl team under then-head coach Mack Brown. A 1992 graduate of Tulane, the New Orleans native and Brother Martin High School alum earned his bachelor’s degree in communication.

THE GARRET CHACHERE FILE

PERSONAL
College: Tulane, ‘92

PLAYING CAREER
College: Tulane (1987-88)

COACHING CAREER
1992: Cheyney (Defensive Backs/Running Backs)
1993: Bloomsburg (Defensive Backs)
1994: Bucknell (Defensive Backs/Special Teams Coordinator)
1995: Nicholls (Linebackers)
1998: ULM (Tight Ends/Wide Receivers)
1999-03: Tulane (Linebackers/Punt Return Coordinator)
2004-06: Tulane (Linebackers)
2007-08: Memphis (Special Teams Coordinator)
2009-11: Arizona (Wide Receivers)
2011: Arizona (Running Backs)
2012: Southern Miss (Tight Ends/Special Teams Coordinator)
2013: California (Defensive Line)
2014-15: California (Linebackers)
2016: California (Running Backs)
2017: New Mexico Highlands (Offensive Coordinator)
2018: Southeastern Louisiana (Running Backs/Passing Game Coordinator)
2019: WKU (Running Backs)
ZACH LANKFORD NAMED NEW WKU TIGHT ENDS COACH

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – The next leader of the “Tight End U” position group on The Hill is a familiar face as Zach Lankford has been promoted to the tight ends coach position under head coach Tyson Helton. Lankford, who returned to WKU for his second stint with the program this spring, originally returned as an offensive quality control assistant in January. The Dacula, Ga., native previously spent three seasons at WKU, two as an offensive quality control assistant, from 2014-16. Lankford's time coincided with three consecutive bowl victories and two consecutive Conference USA championships.

In his first stint at WKU, Lankford assisted with the offensive line and helped to develop one of the program's all-time greatest offensive line groups in 2015 and 2016. Those two units were also roundly considered some of the nation's best in those seasons with starters Forrest Lamp, Brandon Ray, Max Halpin, and Darrell Williams leading the charge.

Lankford spent the 2017 and 2018 seasons at Faulkner University as the program's offensive line coach. Prior to coming to WKU, Lankford served as the Associate Director of Recruiting and Player Development at UAB, managing the program’s on-campus recruiting efforts and high school relations.

Lankford was also a stand-out tight end for the Blazers, completing his playing career in 2009. Lankford entered the coaching profession at Reinhardt University (NAIA) where he was an offensive intern and tight ends coach. Following a season there, he moved on to Georgia Military College (NJCAA) as the offensive line and tight ends coach.

Lankford earned his bachelor’s degree in History at UAB in 2010 after a four-year playing career for the Blazers at tight end. As a player, Lankford appeared in 39 games overall after a high school career that included a Georgia Class 7-AAAAA championship in 2004.

THE ZACH LANKFORD FILE

PERSONAL
Born: November 21, 1986
Hometown: Dacula, Ga.
High School: Dacula HS
College: UAB, ‘10
Wife: Anna
Children: Jack

PLAYING CAREER (Tight End)
High School: Dacula
College: UAB (2006-10)

COACHING CAREER
2011: Reinhardt (Tight Ends)
2012: Georgia Military (Offensive Line)
2013: UAB (Associate Director of Recruiting and Player Development)
2014: WKU (Offensive Graduate Assistant/OL)
2015-16: WKU (Offensive Quality Control/OL)
2017-18: Faulkner (Offensive Line)
2019: WKU (Tight Ends)
HILTOPPERS PUSH 2019 SIGNING CLASS TO 21 WITH FOUR ADDITIONS ON WEDNESDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU added four more future Hilltoppers to the class of 2019 on Wednesday as three high schoolers and one junior college transfer signed their National Letter of Intent to join the program this fall.

Junior college defensive lineman Celestin Haba (Columbus, S.C.), offensive lineman Wes Dorsey (Knoxville, Tenn.), kicker Cory Munson (Warner Robins, Ga.), and receiver Dayton Wade (Lovejoy, Ga.) all signed or publically announced their signings on Wednesday morning.

“I really felt like, between the first signing period (in December) and today, we really met our needs,” first-year head coach Tyson Helton said. “It’s an exciting time, and I’m really looking forward to working with them.”

WKU’s coaching staff elected to leave a small number of scholarships open in this class in anticipation of adding what Helton called “difference makers” in the transfer and graduate transfer ranks over the spring and summer.

“I think recruiting is changing a little bit,” Helton added. “I always want to save a couple of spots so we can save them for later in the spring and see what happens in that area. Overall, we’re very excited about this class.”

In Haba, the Hilltoppers added the nation’s top sack artist (17.5) in the junior college ranks out of Scottsdale Community College. From the high school ranks, the lineman Dorsey adds length and a high ceiling to develop, according to Helton. Munson is regarded as one of the strongest legs in this signing class, and Wade was named the Region 4 Offensive Player of the Year in Georgia and led all of the 6A division with 1,113 receiving yards.

The class all came together in just over two months since Helton was named the program’s 21st head coach on November 27, 2018.

“It has come together better than I expected. I thought, coming in, there were some commitments already there that were good commitments who we needed to keep. We added to that, and it was seamless. With our staff, we were able to get them on the road very quickly as well. I’m really happy with where we are today with this class.”

As a whole, the 21 players hail from eight states as well as Australia and include five wide receivers, five offensive linemen, four defensive linemen, four defensive backs, two specialists, and one tight end. Additionally, 11 of the 21 players are already on campus and working out with the team in winter conditioning with head strength and conditioning coach Jason Veltkamp and his staff. The Hilltoppers are tentatively scheduled to open spring practice on March 12 and will conclude with the annual Red vs. White game on April 13.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>Ht.</th>
<th>Wt.</th>
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<td>Manny Allen*</td>
<td>WR</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>185</td>
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<td>DL</td>
<td>6-2</td>
<td>220</td>
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<td>Ricky Barber*</td>
<td>DL</td>
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<td>270</td>
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<td>Doss HS</td>
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<td>Marcus Bragg*</td>
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<td>275</td>
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<td>Wes Dorsey*</td>
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<td>265</td>
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<td>Jeremiah Fails</td>
<td>WR</td>
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<td>Jordan Flack</td>
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<td>6-5</td>
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<td>Brewer HS</td>
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<td>Celestin Haba</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>235</td>
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<td>Scottsdale CC/Flora HS</td>
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<td>John Haggerty*</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>6-5</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Melbourne, Australia</td>
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<td>Desmond Johnson</td>
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<td>6-0</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Valdosta, Ga.</td>
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<td>Trae Meadows*</td>
<td>DB</td>
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<td>180</td>
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<td>Cory Munson</td>
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<td>Garrett Nickelson*</td>
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<td>290</td>
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<td>280</td>
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<td>TE</td>
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<td>230</td>
<td>Sumter, S.C.</td>
<td>Crestwood HS</td>
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<td>Dalvin Smith*</td>
<td>WR</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Glasgow, Ky.</td>
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<td>Tyler Smith</td>
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<td>175</td>
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<td>T.J. Springer</td>
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<td>180</td>
<td>Nashville, Tenn.</td>
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<td>Dayton Wade</td>
<td>WR</td>
<td>6-0</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>Lovejoy, Ga.</td>
<td>Lovejoy HS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* indicates signee enrolled early and joined WKU in the spring
Manny Allen – ★ ★ ★
6-3, 185, Wide Receiver
Rancho Verde HS (Moreno Valley, Calif.)

Allen played for head coach Pete Duffy, leading the Knights to a 13-1 record while outscoring opponents 690-to-195. He finished with 23 receptions for 452 yards and 2 touchdowns while playing in 11 of those games. He also added 14 punt returns for 461 yards - an average of 33 yards per touch - and 6 touchdowns. The previous 2 seasons at Centennial High School, he hauled in 68 receptions for 989 yards and 12 touchdowns. Currently rated as a three-star with an 88 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 53th overall in the state and 56th nationally as a wide receiver. He chose WKU over Louisville, Nebraska, USC, Notre Dame, Ole Miss, UCLA, Oregon and Washington.

Stephone Atkinson – ★ ★ ★
6-2, 220, Defensive End
Lake Minneola HS (Lake Minneola, Fla.)

Atkinson played for Hawks' head coach Walter Banks, recording a team-high 11 sacks as a junior. Rated as a three-star with an 84 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 169th overall in the state and 76th nationally as a weak-side defensive end. He chose WKU over Northern Illinois, South Alabama, Colorado State, Tulane, Utah State and UTSA.

Ricky Barber – ★ ★ ★
6-3, 270, Defensive Tackle
Doss HS (Louisville, Ky.)

Barber played for Dragons' head coach Phillip Hawkins. Was a Third Team Courier-Journal All-State honoree after his junior season, when he posted 48 tackles. At the time of his commitment in the fall of 2018, had a team-high 24 tackles and 4 sacks. He played in the 2018 Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Football Game. Rated as a three-star with an 82 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 20th overall in the state and 103rd nationally as a strong-side defensive end. He chose WKU over Cincinnati, Indiana and Purdue.

Marcus Bragg – ★ ★ ★
6-6, 275, Defensive Tackle
Arizona Western College/Miami Jackson HS (North Miami Beach, Fla.)

Bragg played for Matadors' head coach Tom Minnick. Compiled 35 tackles and 2 sacks over the past 2 seasons, including his freshman year at Mississippi Delta Community College.
WKU FOOTBALL 2019 SIGNING CLASS

Clayton Bush – ★ ★ ★
6-1, 200, Defensive Back
South Warren HS (Bowling Green, Ky.)

Bush became the first commit of the 2019 class on Dec. 21, 2017. He is the son of former Hilltopper linebacker Wayne Bush, who played on The Hill from 1985-88. Bush played for head coach Brandon Smith, leading the Spartans to a 15-0 record and a Kentucky Class 5A Championship. During the 2018 season, SWHS outscored opponents 624-to-145. As a senior, caught 29 passes for 619 yards as a wide receiver and 11 touchdowns, while making 58 tackles and 7 interceptions on defense. As a junior, caught 37 passes for 616 yards and 7 touchdowns as a receiver, with 63 tackles and 1 interception on defense. He played in the 2018 Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Football Game. Rated as a two-star with a 78 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 33rd overall in the state. He chose WKU over South Carolina, South Florida, Middle Tennessee, Miami (Ohio), Marshall, Florida Atlantic, FIU, Appalachian State, Tulane, Troy and UAB.

Wes Dorsey – ★ ★ ★
6-6, 265, Offensive Lineman
Grace Christian Academy (Knoxville, Tenn.)

Dorsey played for coach Rusty Bradley at Grace Christian Academy in Knoxville, Tenn. A three-star rated player and top-100 prospect in the state of Tennessee by 247Sports, Dorsey committed to WKU over offers from Central Michigan, Cincinnati, Massachusetts, and Eastern Kentucky. Dorsey was named a Tennessee Sports Writers Association Division II-AA all-state player.

Jeremiah Fails – ★ ★
6-0, 180, Wide Receiver
Ocoee HS (Ocoee, Fla.)

Fails played for Knights' head coach Aaron Shappard. Rated as a two-star with a 77 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 315th overall in the state and 388th nationally as a wide receiver. He chose WKU over Appalachian State, UConn, Southern Miss, Troy, Northern Illinois, Georgia Southern and Liberty.

Jordan Flack – ★ ★
6-5, 300, Offensive Line
Brewer HS (Somerville, Ala.)

Flack played for Patriots' head coach Geoff Walters. Rated as a two-star with a 79 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 91st overall in the state and 144th nationally as an offensive guard.
Celestin Haba – ★ ★ ★
6-3, 235, Defensive Line
Scottsdale Community College/Flora HS (Columbia, S.C.)

Haba joins the Hilltoppers after leading the nation in sacks at the junior college level at Scottsdale Community College. A three-star rated prospect by 247Sports, Haba racked up 17.5 sacks and 81 tackles during the 2018 season and was named an NJCAA All-American as well as the Western States Football League Defensive Player of the Year. Haba prepped at A.C. Florida High School for head coach Reggie Shaw.

John Haggerty – ★ ★
6-5, 230, Punter
Melbourne, Australia

Attended Tom Hackett Punting Academy. Ranked 17th in the 2019 class among punters, including 5th as an Australian-style punter.

Desmond Johnson – ★ ★ ★
6-0, 180, Defensive Back
Valdosta HS (Valdosta, Ga.)

Johnson played for Wildcats' head coach Alan Rodemaker, just like current Hilltopper safety Antwon Kincade. Was named First Team Region 1-6A as a junior, making 61 tackles - including 12 for loss - with an interception returned for touchdown. Rated as a three-star with an 81 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 175th overall in the state. He chose WKU over Kennesaw State, Samford, Liberty and Youngstown State.

Trae Meadows – ★ ★ ★
6-1, 180, Cornerback
Garden City Community College/Dudley HS (Greensboro, N.C.)

Meadows played for head coach Jeff Sims at Garden City Community College, where he had 34 tackles, 12 pass breakups and a 94-yard interception return for touchdown. Played his freshman season at N.C. State, where he had 4 total tackles as well an interception returned vs. Vanderbilt in the 2016 Independence Bowl. Played for head coach Steven Davis at Dudley High School. Rated as a three-star JuCo transfer with a 79 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 54th overall in the state and 37th nationally as a cornerback.

Cory Munson – ★ ★ ★
6-4, 180, Kicker
Northside HS (Warner Robins, Ga.)

Munson kicked for Eagles' head coach Kevin Kinsler. As a junior, made 17-of-23 field goals, including a program-record 59-yarder, which was the longest in the state that season. Also had 27 touchbacks on 52 kickoffs and averaged 41.1 yards on 54 punts, including a long of 71. Rated as a three-star with an 81 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 5th nationally as a kicker, and earned a five-star rating from Chris Sailer Kicking. He chose WKU over Georgia Southern and Georgia State.
Garrett Nickelson – ★ ★
6-4, 290, Offensive Lineman
Blinn JC/Clear Springs HS (League City, Texas)

Nickelson played for head coach Ryan Mahon at Blinn Junior College, leading the Buccaneers to a 7-4 record. Previously, he played for coach Craig Dailey at Cedar Springs High School. Rated as a two-star with a 77 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 21st overall in the state and 43rd nationally as an offensive tackle.

Daylen Powell – ★ ★ ★
6-5, 280, Offensive Line
Summerville HS (Summerville, S.C.)

Powell played for head coach Joe Call, leading the Green Wave to an 11-3 record and a runner-up finish in the South Carolina Class 5A Lower State Championship. Rated as a three-star with an 82 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 29th overall in the state and 145th nationally as an offensive tackle. He chose WKU over Appalachian State, Marshall and Georgia State.

Jack Randolph – ★ ★ ★
6-3, 295, Offensive Lineman
Franklin-Simpson HS (Franklin, Ky.)

Randolph played for head coach Doug Preston, leading the Wildcats to a 16-1 record and a Kentucky Class 4A Championship in a repeat of 2017. During the 2018 season, FSHS outscored opponents 668-to-222. He played in the 2018 Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Football Game. Rated as a three-star with an 83 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 17th overall in the state and 72th nationally as an offensive guard. He chose WKU over Louisville, Middle Tennessee, Marshall, Georgia State and Cincinnati.

Josh Simon – ★ ★ ★
6-5, 230, Tight End
Crestwood HS (Sumter, S.C.)

Simon played for Knights’ head coach William Ison. Rated as a three-star with an 80 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 44th overall in the state. He chose WKU over Wake Forest, Louisville, Appalachian State and East Carolina.

Dalvin Smith – ★ ★ ★
6-3, 180, Wide Receiver
Glasgow HS (Glasgow, Ky.)

Smith played for head coach Jeff Garmon and starred in multiple positions as a senior for the Scotties. Offensively, he completed 67 passes for 920 yards and 13 touchdowns, rushed 65 times for 582 yards and 8 touchdowns and caught 20 passes for 444 yards and another 7 touchdowns. Defensively, he tallied 25 tackles and 3 interceptions. Rated as a three-star with an 85 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 12th overall in the state and 136th nationally as a wide receiver.
WKU FOOTBALL 2019 SIGNING CLASS

Tyler Smith – ★ ★ ★
6-0, 175, Wide Receiver
Salem HS (Ellenwood, Ga.)

Smith played for Seminoles’ head coach Jarrett Laws. Had a sensational season as a senior, grabbing 50 receptions for 914 yards and 9 touchdowns to go along with 5 conversions. In his prep career, he had 76 receptions for 1,473 yards - an average of 19.4 yards - and 14 touchdowns. Rated as a three-star with an 85 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 99th overall in the state and 131st nationally as a wide receiver. He chose WKU over South Carolina, South Florida, Middle Tennessee, Miami (Ohio), Marshall, Florida Atlantic, FIU, Appalachian State, Tulane, Troy and UAB.

T.J. Springer – ★ ★ ★
6-1, 180, Defensive Back
Maplewood HS (Nashville, Tenn.)

Springer played for head coach Arcentae Bloome, leading the Panthers to a 12-2 record and an appearance in the Class 4A Semifinals. During the 2018 season, MHS outscored opponents 480-to-166. As a senior, made 48 tackles, 2 tackles for loss, 7 interceptions, 7 pass breakups, 2 fumble recoveries and 2 defensive touchdowns, while catching 21 passes for 397 yards and 5 touchdowns on offense to go along with 5 conversions. As a junior, made 48 tackles - including 4 tackles for loss - 1 interception, 11 pass breakups and 2 fumble recoveries, while catching 31 passes for 641 yards and 9 touchdowns on offense. Rated as a three-star with an 80 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 60th overall in the state and 215th nationally as a cornerback. He chose WKU over Southern Miss and Liberty.

Dayton Wade – ★ ★ ★
6-0, 170, Wide Receiver
Lovejoy HS (Lovejoy, Ga.)

Wade prepped a Lovejoy High School where he played for head coach Edgar Carson. A three-star prospect by 247Sports, Wade led Georgia’s 6A division with 1,113 receiving yards during his senior season and was named the Region 4 Offensive Player of the Year by the Atlanta Journal Constitution. As a junior, Wade racked up 510 receiving yards. Wade picked WKU over offers from Arkansas State, Georgia State, Appalachian State, Colorado State, Southern Miss, Troy, Tulane, among others.
WKU FCA ESTABLISHES MITCHELL HENRY LEADERSHIP AWARD

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – In remembrance of the life and legacy of former WKU tight end Mitchell Henry, the WKU chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) has established the “Mitchell Henry Leadership Award,” in conjunction with Henry’s family and the Mitchell Henry Foundation.

Henry, a star at Elizabethtown High School during his prep days, was a standout tight end for the Hilltoppers from 2011-14 and an integral part of WKU’s rise up the FBS ranks. During Henry’s time on The Hill, the Hilltoppers secured their first winning season at the FBS level (2011), first FBS bowl appearance (2012) and first FBS bowl win (2014). He passed away following a courageous battle with leukemia on June 30, 2017.

“Mitchell was never one to want to be in the spotlight,” said Madison Henry, wife of the late Mitchell Henry. “But I personally believe sometimes the ones not in the spotlight shine brighter than the ones who are. I know he would be so honored to be recognized for his leadership as he led by incredible example. It was difficult going through three different head coaches with three different coaching types in his four years at Western Kentucky, but the one thing he constantly did was stay true to what he believed in and who he was even if one of them expected him to be different.”

On the basis of character, work ethic, and leadership ability – three values Henry displayed and held dear – four WKU student-athletes, two football and two non-football, will be honored in the fall and spring for their commitment to those principles. Each spring, one of those four student-athletes will be awarded with scholarship monies at the Hilltopper Legacy Dinner. This year, the event will be held Sunday, April 14 inside E.A. Diddle Arena.

Two WKU student-athletes have already received the award: men’s golfer Dawson McDaniel and softball’s Kelsey McGuffin.

A mural has also been placed inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium where each award winner will be displayed.

“Mitchell’s relationship with Christ and his legacy as a student-athlete were such huge parts of his life,” said Wayne Dickens, WKU’s FCA Director. “With the Mitchell Henry Leadership Award, we wanted to try and find a way to continue to tell the story of Mitchell’s life as well as inspire a new generation of Hilltoppers to leave similar legacies here on The Hill and in their lives after their playing days are over.”

“His mom always prayed, ‘May the lights that shine on him never be brighter than the lights that shined in him.’ And I believe that statement still remains true to this day,” Madison Henry added. “In his last moments on this earth, I can promise it doesn’t matter what NFL team you played for or how many touchdowns you made, the only thing that matters is that you are saved by the grace of God.”

For his career, Henry tallied 1,094 yards on 78 catches with 12 touchdowns, enjoying his most productive season as a senior. A true ironman, Henry played in 47 games over his four-year career with 22 starts, including a career-best nine in his final campaign. Following his career on The Hill, Henry signed free agent deals with the Green Bay Packers, Denver Broncos, and Baltimore Ravens. Henry saw action in two NFL regular season games with the Broncos in 2015.

Apart from his playing career, Henry was praised for his commitment to the betterment of his fellow man and those around him.
BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU will hit the practice field for the first time under new head coach Tyson Helton on March 12, the first of 15 practices during spring football, and all practices will be open to the public.

The Hilltoppers will practice three times a week, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, with the weekday practices in the evening and Saturday practices tentatively scheduled for the mid-morning hours. Fans looking to get a jump start on checking out the new look Hilltoppers are invited to attend any and all portions of practice and watch from the east side of Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

Spring practice will conclude on April 13 with the annual Red vs. White Spring Game at 2 p.m. inside Houchens-Smith Stadium.

Tentatively, WKU will be on the field from 4 to 6 p.m. for Tuesday and Thursday practices at 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for Saturday practices and scrimmages. Time and dates are extremely subject to change.

On top of installing Helton’s new offensive schemes, the Hilltoppers will enter the spring looking to solidify their signal caller of the future after having three starters at the position last season. Junior Steven Duncan, sophomore Davis Shanley, and redshirt freshman Kevaris Thomas all saw time under center last season. WKU returns largely the rest of the cast on the offensive side of the football with three of the top four running backs and four of the top five pass catchers back for 2019. The Hilltoppers were also one of only three teams last season that did not have a senior offensive lineman, and all five starters are back up front.

Defensively, the Hilltoppers will need to replace the top two tacklers, but six of the top ten are back including a dynamic duo of defensive ends in DeAngelo Malone (9.0 TFL) and freshman All-American Juwuan Jones (6.0 TFL). Defensive coordinator Clayton White will need to find two new starting linebackers for his 4-2-5 alignment, but rising senior Eli Brown was disruptive in his snaps and junior Kyle Bailey has moved down into the box to add depth to the room as well after tallying 29 tackles last season.

On special teams this spring, Alex Rinella returns as the lone kicker with in-game kicking experience but sophomore Adam Krause, who held all of last season for WKU, will add his leg into the mix alongside Australian newcomer John Haggerty.

WKU 2019 Spring Practice Schedule
- Tuesday, March 12
- Thursday, March 14
- Saturday, March 16
- Tuesday, March 19
- Thursday, March 21
- Saturday, March 23
- Tuesday, March 26
• Thursday, March 28
• Saturday, March 30
• Tuesday, April 2
• Thursday, April 4
• Saturday, April 6
• Tuesday, April 9
• Thursday, April 11
• *Red vs. White Spring Game, Saturday, April 13 – 2 p.m.*
HILLTOPPERS ADD QUARTERBACK TY STOREY TO 2019 ROSTER

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Head football coach Tyson Helton announced the addition of former Arkansas quarterback Ty Storey (Charleston, Ark.) to the Hilltopper football program on Friday.

“We are excited to add Ty to our team,” Helton said. “His experience as a starting quarterback in the Southeastern Conference adds a veteran presence to our roster, and we are looking forward to continuing his development at the position this upcoming season.”

Storey appeared in 14 career games for the Razorbacks including 10 in 2018 with nine starts. On the season, Storey tallied 1,584 yards on 143-of-250 passing with 11 touchdowns. He also added 146 rushing yards and one rushing score.

He threw for a career-high 261 yards in his starting debut against Eastern Illinois and eclipsed the 200-yard passing mark four times overall on the year including 230 yards against Alabama. The 31 points scored by the Razorbacks that day against the Crimson Tide were the most allowed in the 2018 regular season by the eventual national runner-ups.

Prior to joining the Razorbacks, Storey was a consensus four-star prospect by every major recruiting outlet, and he was ranked as the No. 6 pro-style quarterback in the nation by Rivals. Storey led Charleston High School to back-to-back perfect seasons and a pair of Arkansas 3A state championships as a junior and a senior. Those marked the second and third state championships for Storey who was also a freshman linebacker when Charleston won the state championship in 2011. He ended his career with 29 consecutive wins to go along with 12,856 passing yards and 154 touchdown passes, the third-best and second-best marks, respectively, in the state’s prep history.

Storey was named a 2015 Parade All-American First Team at quarterback and was a two-time winner for the Gatorade Arkansas Football Player of the Year award as well as Wendy’s high School Football Player of the Year for Arkansas. As a senior, Storey threw for 4,159 yards and 53 touchdowns on 294 of 447 passing while adding 724 rushing yards and 20 rushing touchdowns. His 73 total touchdowns are the fourth-most in a single season in state history.

As a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Storey will have one season of eligibility with the Hilltoppers and will enroll at Western Kentucky University as a graduate student when the second bi-term begins on March 18.

The Hilltoppers open spring practice March 12 and will practice every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday leading up to the Red vs. White Spring Game on April 13. All practices are open to the public.
HILLTOPPERS HIT THE PRACTICE FIELD FOR FIRST TIME UNDER HEAD COACH TYSON HELTON

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – For the first time in Tyson Helton’s 19-year coaching career, he wasn’t coaching a position, correcting a quarterbacks eyes, or making sure his receivers were running routes to perfection.

Instead, he was the observer watching from the center of Feix Field in Thursday night as his Hilltoppers went through the first of 15 spring practices under his direction.

For the first-year head coach, it was a welcome albeit frustrating change of pace at times.

“I had to catch myself,” Helton said. “I kept peaking over there at the offense too much. I have to make sure I get down there on the defensive side of the field too. It was good, and we finished on time so I guess day one was good.”

For the players, it was the conclusion of a long winter conditioning program that has them up as early as 5 a.m. working out with the strength and conditioning staff. Based on Helton’s observations through the first day, however, that work is already paying dividends.

“I thought it was a really good practice. The guys were fired up. It was really organized so my hats off to the coaches and players who bounced around. I saw a lot of really good things out here today, so we have to keep building off of that.”

Though the Hilltoppers return nearly every starter on offense and six from last year’s starting defense, Helton, as with most new staffs, emphasized that every starting position is up for grabs under his direction.

“Every position (is up for competition). I told the players, ‘No one has a starting job. You’ve got to earn your job every single day. You’ve got to prove yourself every single day.’ That’s life in general. These guys have to come out here and show (the coaches) they deserve to be the starter.”

WKU will return to the practice field on Thursday, and all practices this spring are open to the public. Spring practices conclude with the annual Red vs. White Spring Game set for April 13 at 2 p.m.
FORMER HILLTOPPERS CONTINUE PRO FOOTBALL PURSUITS AT ANNUAL PRO DAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Seven former WKU Hilltoppers took the next step forward in the pursuit of a career in professional football as they worked through the program’s annual Pro Day on Wednesday.

“I’ve been dreaming about this since I was a little kid,” said defensive back DeAndre Farris, a captain on the 2018 squad. “I just wanted to come out here and showcase my talents, showcase my athletic ability to the scouts, and have fun.”

WKU’s Pro Day has become an annual event for NFL scouts to attend with NFL draft selections each of the past three years and five of the last six years dating back to 2013. The Hilltoppers are currently represented in the NFL by nine former players as well as in the Canadian Football League and newly formed Alliance of American Football.

On Wednesday, the seven participating Hilltoppers made their cases to add to WKU’s growing list of representatives in professional football.

“I was just trying to let (the scouts) know that, ‘Hey, I’m your guy,’ and I was very proactive about it,” added tight end Mik’Quan Deane. “Whatever they want me to do, whatever they need me to do, I’ll do it.” Deane is aiming to become WKU’s fourth tight end to join the active NFL ranks alongside Deon Yelder (Kansas City), Tyler Higbee (Los Angeles Rams) and Jack Doyle (Indianapolis Colts).

It was also a welcomed opportunity for head coach Tyson Helton to reconnect with many of the former players he knew as freshmen and sophomores when Helton served as the Hilltoppers’ offensive coordinator in 2014 and 2015.

“I love the fact that our guys have the opportunity to go on to the next level,” Helton said. “As we move forward, we want to put more and more guys into the NFL. We’ve had a good history of doing that. As we move forward in the years to come, we’re looking forward to some new high draft picks.”

WKU’s Pro Day participants included: TE Mik’Quan Deane, DB DeAndre Farris, RB D’Andre Ferby, DB Drell Greene, DL Julien Lewis, DL Evan Sayner, and LB Masai Whyte.
HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL 2019 HOME OPENER MOVED TO THURSDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU fans will get an early start on the Tyson Helton era in 2019 as the Hilltoppers’ season opener vs. Central Arkansas has been moved from Saturday, August 31 to Thursday, August 29.

An exact game time has not been set.

It will be WKU’s first Thursday night game since 2016 when the Hilltoppers also opened the season at home against Rice in quarterback Mike White’s debut. WKU also opened the 2015 season with a pair of wins in consecutive Thursday night games at Vanderbilt and against Louisiana Tech.

Hilltopper fans, and particularly the student body, have made the environment inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium electric on Thursday season openers. The 2016 opener vs. Rice was highest attended game by WKU students in the program’s FBS history and the second highest overall attended game of the year behind only the sellout vs. Vanderbilt. The 2015 home opener vs. LA Tech was also the highest attended game by WKU students that season and a top-five attended game by WKU students in the program’s FBS history.

Season tickets are available for WKU’s six-home game schedule by going online to WKUTickets.com or by calling 1-800-5-BIGRED.
WKU WRAPS UP THIRD WEEK OF SPRING PRACTICES WITH TEAM SCRIMMAGE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU wrapped up its third week of spring practices on Friday with a 100-play full team scrimmage inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium, the first full scrimmage for the team this spring.

“I thought, overall, there was great competition,” said head coach Tyson Helton. “The guys came out pretty pumped up. We had big plays on offense, but we also had turnovers so we’ve got to get that cleaned up. The defense had a lot of big stops which was good to see as well. I liked what I saw.”

WKU returns nearly every starter from the 2018 season on offense and five starters on defense. But while the starting production might be greater on the offensive side of the ball, the defense is in year three of their scheme under defensive coordinator Clayton White. For Helton and offensive coordinator Bryan Ellis, installing the new offense means finding the playmakers in the new scheme – something Helton was looking for on Friday.

“We need to see who steps up when the lights turn on,” Helton added. “I saw a lot of the guys who I thought would be playmakers (step up) today. They came out and played well. I thought Lucky Jackson and Xavier Lane did a nice job. Manny Allen had a catch or two. I thought Quinton Baker did well. Defensively, I really like our front four. They controlled the line of scrimmage well.”

The Hilltoppers have two more weeks of spring practices leading up to the annual Red vs. White Spring Game set for April 13 at 2 p.m.
SPRING GAME ONE WEEK AWAY AS HILLTOPPERS CLOSE OUT WEEK FOUR

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – With the annual Red vs. White Spring Game just one week away, the WKU Hilltoppers closed out week four of spring practices with their second full team scrimmage, and first-year head coach Tyson Helton liked the competition on both sides of the ball.

“We got done what we really needed to get done,” Helton said. “We worked a lot of situations today, and I thought our guys performed really well in them. The offense came out early with back-to-back scores, and the defense rebounded with a couple of stops and got the momentum back. I see a good football team starting to develop.”

The day began with two long scoring drives by the offense, but after both sides settled into their rhythms, it was a back-and-forth affair. Under third-year defensive coordinator Clayton White, the defensive unit began to create critical third down stops and ended the day with consecutive interceptions to halt redzone chances by the offense.

“The defense came up with critical stops when we needed them the most,” Helton added. “We went for it on fourth down a couple of times, and they were able to stop it. I thought overall, as a team, they played really well together.”

The Hilltoppers will take the field for two more midweek practices before the Red vs. White Spring Game on Saturday, April 13. Kick is set for 2 p.m. and South Lawn will be filled with inflatables, balloon and face paint artists for families who want to come early and make it an all-day event.

WKU’s Ticket Office will also be holding a “Select a Seat” event leading up to the spring game. Fans are encouraged to reach out to the ticket office HERE and a representative will be able to show fans their seats before purchasing them for the 2019 season.
HILLTOPPERS AIR IT OUT IN ANNUAL RED VS. WHITE SPRING GAME

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – In his introductory press conference, WKU head football coach Tyson Helton promised that his Hilltoppers would throw it deep, and throw it often. After what his team showed on Saturday in the annual Red vs. White Spring Game, it’s safe to say he has lived up to that promise so far.

The Red and White teams combined for 612 passing yards on the day with four receivers tallying 95 yards or better, and the offenses racked up nearly 700 yards overall as the White team defeated the Red team, 28-21.

“I thought it was a really good, competitive spring game,” Helton said after the game. “From what I understand, we didn’t have any injuries which is a good thing. The players enjoyed it. The fans enjoyed it. Overall, it was a very positive day.”

While the offense was the showcase of the day as WKU fans look for a return to the high-octane offenses the Hilltoppers became known for during Helton’s previous stint on The Hill under then-head coach Jeff Brohm, Clayton White’s defensive units lived up to their billings as the more experienced side of the football.

Cornerback Trae Meadows, a junior college signee who came to WKU this spring, led the way for the White team with seven tackles and five pass breakups while another pair of defensive backs, junior safety Antwon Kincade and freshman corner Beanie Bishop added interceptions for the Red team.

“Defensively, they’ve been together a little longer. The offense has come a long way, and they will continue to develop,” Helton added.

Rising sophomore quarterback Davis Shanley led the White team on a pair of scoring drives as he threw for 185 yards and two touchdowns. For the dual threat quarterback, the new offense has been an opportunity for that position group to let the ball sail downfield more this spring.

“It’s always fun throwing the ball down field as a quarterback,” Shanley said. “If we can complete them and they are high-percentage throws, we’ll keep doing it. But, we have a lot of other weapons in this offense besides just the deep ball that we can show too.”

That usage of the deep ball will only help the Hilltoppers’ secondary who get to practice against in every single day according to Bishop.

“We had a lot of competitiveness, and a lot of players got better today and over the course of spring ball,” Bishop said. “(Getting turnovers) is a big emphasis for us. It’s No. 1 on the board.”

WKU kicks off the 2019 football season at home on Thursday, August 29 against Central Arkansas.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 29, 2019
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

An action photo and headshot of Deane is attached. Credit WKU Athletics

FORMER TIGHT END DEANE SIGNS WITH NFL’S SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Former WKU tight end Mik’Quan Deane has announced that he has signed an undrafted free agent deal with the NFL’s Seattle Seahawks, continuing WKU’s legacy of producing NFL tight ends.

Since 2012, the Hilltoppers have now sent five tight ends into NFL camps including Deane this year: Jack Doyle (2009-12), Tyler Higbee (2011-15), Deon Yelder (2015-17), Deane, and the late Mitchell Henry (2011-14). In fact, five of the last six former WKU tight ends to start at least seven career games have gone on to an NFL camp.

“It will be a blessing to make my imprint on WKU (as a tight end to make it to the NFL),” Deane said following his Pro Day workout in March. “When I first got here from junior college, I analyzed (Yelder’s) game and saw what he did. I was just learning. I looked back at Tyler Higbee and Jack Doyle and tried to figure out what those guys did to become great.”

A two-year letterman at WKU after transferring from Northeast Oklahoma A&M College, Deane played in all 25 games of his career with seven starts. He finished his senior campaign with 44 receptions for 530 yards and six touchdowns, all career highs. His 44 receptions and 530 yards were the second-most among all pass catchers and his six touchdowns were a team-best. Deane set career highs at FAU with 10 catches and 112 yards while his two touchdown catches at Ball State was a career best.

For the season, Deane’s six touchdowns were the third-most by a WKU tight end in a single season, and his 44 receptions were the fourth-most in that category. Deane also cracked the top five in single-season receiving yards by a WKU tight end with 530.

He was an honorable mention award winner from the John Mackey Award twice during his senior season and was named to Pro Football Focus’ Conference USA Team of the Week once. The Tulsa, Okla., native was named to the 2018 Conference USA All-Conference Second Teamer.

Deane joins former WKU standout George Fant on the Seahawks roster. Fant, a former basketball star on The Hill who spent his final season of eligibility with the football team, was also an undrafted free agent and will be entering his fourth season with the team in 2019. Fant split time as a reserve tackle and tight end in 2018, and the Seahawks currently list four tight ends on their active roster. The organization did not draft a tight end this year.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / May 1, 2019
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

LOUISVILLE GAME TICKETS NOW ON SALE; ROAD GAMES ALSO AVAILABLE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Single-game tickets for all of WKU’s 2019 games away from Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium, including the Sept. 14 matchup against Louisville in Nashville, are now on sale.

Tickets can be purchased online at WKUTickets.com or by calling 1-800-5-BIGRED.

The Hilltoppers will travel to familiar sites of Miami (FIU), Norfolk, Va. (Old Dominion), and Huntington, W.Va. (Marshall), but the road schedule also features two new trips when WKU heads to Hattiesburg, Miss. (Southern Miss) and Fayetteville, Ark. (Arkansas) for the first time.

WKU’s matchup against Louisville at Nissan Stadium in Nashville is the second of a three-game series with the Cardinals and marks a return to the home of the Tennessee Titans. WKU last played in the stadium for the 2013 season opener when the Hilltoppers defeated Kentucky 35-26 in the debuts of new head coaches for both programs: Bobby Petrino and Mark Stoops.

The 2019 matchup will feature the same as both WKU and Louisville will be under the direction of first-year head coaches: Tyson Helton and Scott Satterfield.

WKU students with an active and valid student ID will be admitted into the game in Nashville for free.

Prices for tickets to games away from WKU are set by the host institution. Ticket prices for the matchup in Louisville vary by location.

2019 NON-HOME GAME SCHEDULE
Sept. 7 – at FIU - $27
Sept. 14 – vs. Louisville – Varies (see map)
Oct. 5 – at Old Dominion - $43
Oct. 16 – at Marshall - $38
Nov. 9 – at Arkansas - $53
Nov. 23 – at Southern Miss - $43

WKU opens the 2019 season under first-year head coach Tyson Helton at home vs. Central Arkansas on Thursday, Aug. 29. Game times will be announced at a later date.
WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / May 14, 2019
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Attached: stadium map with prices for WKU vs. Louisville at Nissan Stadium in Nashville.

KICK OFF TIME FOR WKU VS. LOUISVILLE IN NASHVILLE ANNOUNCED

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Fans of both teams will have ample time to tailgate pre-game and enjoy the city of Nashville post-game as a kick off time for WKU’s matchup vs. in-state foe Louisville at Nissan Stadium has been confirmed.

The Hilltoppers and Cardinals will kick it off at 3 p.m. CT from the home of the NFL’s Tennessee Titans.

Tickets can be purchased online at WKUTickets.com or by calling 1-800-5-BIGRED.

WKU last played in the stadium for the 2013 season opener when the Hilltoppers defeated Kentucky 35-26 in the debuts of new head coaches for both programs: Bobby Petrino and Mark Stoops.

The 2019 matchup will feature the same as both WKU and Louisville will be under the direction of first-year head coaches: Tyson Helton for WKU and Scott Satterfield for Louisville. The game is the second of a three-game series with the Cardinals.

WKU students with an active and valid student ID will be admitted into the game in Nashville for free.

WKU opens the 2019 season under first-year head coach Tyson Helton at home vs. Central Arkansas on Thursday, Aug. 29. Game times will be announced at a later date. Season tickets are on sale for the 2019 season and start as low as $85 per seat. The Big Red Family Plan returns in 2019 and includes four season tickets in Section 325 for only $220 – just $9 per person, per game.
HOME KICK TIMES FOR 2019 FOOTBALL SEASON ANNOUNCED

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Three early evening kickoffs and three early afternoon kickoffs will give WKU fans plenty of time to enjoy all of the activities surrounding the game as times have been announced for the 2019 home football slate.

The Hilltoppers open the campaign with a 6:30 p.m. kickoff on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas in the debut of new head coach Tyson Helton. Season tickets are on sale for the 2019 season and start as low as $85 per seat. The Big Red Family Plan returns in 2019 and includes four season tickets in Section 325 for only $220 – just $9 per person, per game.

2019 Home Schedule
Central Arkansas – Aug. 29 – 6:30 p.m.
UAB – Sept. 28 – 6 p.m.
Army – Oct. 12 – 6 p.m.
Charlotte (Homecoming) – Oct. 19 – 3 p.m.
Florida Atlantic – Nov. 2 – 3 p.m.
Middle Tennessee – Nov. 30 – 1 p.m.

WKU’s home opener will be the lone weeknight game of the season while the other five games are all set for Saturdays this fall. Charlotte will serve as the annual Homecoming on The Hill game while the UAB game falls on Parent and Family Weekend.

The Hilltoppers return 16 starters on offense and defense, the third-most nationally, and WKU’s 10 returning starters on offense rank as the most in the nation. No team in the country returns all 11 starters.
BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Eight Hilltoppers have been named to the Athlon Sports 2019 All-Conference USA Team, the magazine announced in their annual college football publication.

Senior offensive tackle Miles Pate, one of the league’s highest rated offensive linemen by nearly every major outlet, was named to the first team. Pate is one of two offensive linemen, out of 10, returning from last year’s 2018 All-Conference USA squad as announced by the league office. The Lawrenceville, Ga., native has appeared in 34 games with 19 starts over his WKU including all 12 last season.

Joining Pate on the Athlon preseason offense, senior receiver Lucky Jackson picked up a second team nod while junior tight end Kyle Fourtenbary and junior offensive lineman Tyler Witt both appeared on the third team.

Jackson eclipsed the 100 catch mark for his career last season as well as the 1,500 yard mark, and with 38 games played in his career, he returns as one of the league’s most experienced pass catchers. With eight more receptions and 319 yards, Jackson would break into WKU’s career record book at No. 10. For his career, he is averaging 38.3 receptions and 515 yards a year.

Defensively, WKU returns 10 starters including a pair of stout defensive ends who both appeared on the team.

Junior DeAngelo Malone and senior Ta’Corian Darden both notched second team accolades while sophomore Juwuan Jones, a freshman All-American in 2018, and junior safety Devon Key earned fourth team preseason mentions.

Darden, a former walk-on from Russellville, emerged as the ideal nickelback in WKU’s 4-2-5 alignment and has started 21 games over the past two seasons at the position. Jones set WKU’s FBS-era freshman sack record a season ago with five quarterback takedowns and looks to combine with Malone for one of WKU’s better pass rushing duos of the FBS decade this season.

The Hilltoppers, under the direction of first-year head coach Tyson Helton, kick off the 2019 season at home on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas. Kickoff is set for 6:30 p.m.

ATHLON SPORTS PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE USA

Offense
OL Miles Pate (1st)
WR Lucky Jackson (2nd)
TE Kyle Fourtenbary (3rd)
OL Tyler Witt (3rd)

Defense
DL DeAngelo Malone (2nd)
S Ta’Corian Darden (2nd)
DL Juwuan Jones (4th)
S Devon Key (4th)
DALLAS – Conference USA announced today the complete television selections for the 2019 football season, and the WKU Hilltoppers have 11 of 12 games currently slated for national broadcasts on the ESPN family of networks as well as Stadium.

WKU’s 12-game schedule will feature eight games on ESPN Plus including the 2019 home opener against Central Arkansas on August 29 at 6:30 p.m.

ESPN+ offers fans thousands of additional live events, on-demand content and original programming not available on ESPN’s linear TV or digital networks. This includes hundreds of MLB, NHL and MLS games, Grand Slam tennis, Top Rank boxing, PGA Tour golf, college sports, international rugby, cricket, the full library of ESPN Films (including 30 for 30) and more. Fans can subscribe to ESPN+ for just $4.99 a month (or $49.99 per year).

The Hilltoppers will be featured three times on Stadium including one game exclusively on Stadium on Facebook.

Stadium is the original multi-platform sports network featuring exclusive live and on-demand games and events, extensive highlights, classic games, original programming, and daily live studio programming. Stadium includes a 24/7 linear feed distributed across both digital and broadcast platforms, as well as a comprehensive array of on-demand (VOD) digital content including additional live games and events.

WKU’s game at Arkansas on Nov. 9 is the lone game without a TV selection at this time. Broadcast and kickoff information for that game will be announced at a later date.

**2019 WKU Football TV Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Network</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>Central Arkansas</td>
<td>ESPN+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>at FIU*</td>
<td>ESPN+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>vs. Louisville*</td>
<td>Stadium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>UAB* - ESPN+</td>
<td>ESPN+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>at Old Dominion*</td>
<td>ESPN+</td>
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<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>Army – Stadium</td>
<td>Stadium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>Charlotte* - ESPN+</td>
<td>Stadium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>at Marshall* - Stadium on Facebook</td>
<td>Stadium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Florida Atlantic* – ESPN+</td>
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<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>at Arkansas – TBD</td>
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<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>at Southern Miss* - ESPN+</td>
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<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Middle Tennessee* - ESPN+</td>
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The Hilltoppers open the campaign with a 6:30 p.m. kickoff on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas in the debut of new head coach Tyson Helton. Season tickets are on sale for the 2019 season and start as low as $85 per seat. The Big Red Family Plan returns in 2019 and includes four season tickets in Section 325 for only $220 – just $9 per person, per game.
LEGENDARY WKU COACH FEIX NAMED TO COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME BALLOT

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Jimmy Feix, the all-time winningest coach in the history of Western Kentucky University football, was named to the 2020 College Football Hall of Fame Ballot, the National Football Foundation announced this week.

The late Coach Feix is the only football coach in WKU’s history to eclipse the 100-win mark, amassing a career record of 106-56-6 (.649) in his 16 years as the programs head coach from 1968-83. He was added to the ballot for his career as a coach as he led the Hilltoppers to the NCAA Division II championship game in its first year of existence, 1973, before again taking WKU to the championship in 1975 where they took home runner-up honors in both seasons.

Feix was originally nominated for the College Football Hall of Fame in 1997.

Feix served his alma mater as an All-America athlete, assistant football coach, head football coach, assistant director of alumni affairs, director of alumni affairs and director of athletics almost continuously from his arrival on campus as a freshman athlete in 1949 until his retirement in 1990. He spent 27 years as a member of the coaching staff on The Hill, the last 16 of those (1968-83) as head football coach. Feix passed away in October 2014.

His 14 teams that competed in the Ohio Valley Conference went 67-28-2 (70.1%) in league play, winning or sharing the OVC championship on six occasions -- 1970, ’71, ’73, ’75, ’78 and ’80. His 1973 team was undefeated in the regular season and rolled all the way to the championship game, finishing the year 12-1-0. The Hilltoppers made the playoff field again in 1975 and advanced to the title game for the second time, but once again had to settle for runner-up honors with their 11-2-0 record.

Feix was named Kodak College Coach-of-the-Year for Division IV in 1973 and ’75. And, he was named OVC Coach-of-the-Year three times -- 1973, ’78 and ’80. In his 16 seasons at the Topper helm, he coached 16 athletes who followed him on the list of WKU football All-Americans.

The playing field at Houchens Industries - L.T. Smith Stadium, where his 16 teams played all of their home games, was named "Jimmy Feix Field" in his honor in 1991. In addition, he and another former Topper quarterback and head coach, Willie Taggart, were the first football athletes to have their jerseys retired in ceremonies on Feix Field in 1999.

Feix was a member of the 10-person inaugural class of the WKU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1991 as well as the head coach of WKU’s All-Century Football Team which was named in the fall of 2018. He was also an honored member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Hall of Champions (2007), the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame (2004), WKU’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni (2003) and the Henderson County Sports Hall of Fame (1988).

Of the 5.33 million individuals who have played college football since Princeton first battled Rutgers on Nov. 6, 1869, only 1,010 players have earned induction into the College Football Hall of Fame, or less than two one-hundredths of a percent (.02%) of those who have played the game during the past 150 years. From the coaching ranks, 219 individuals have achieved Hall of Fame distinction.
**Headshots of both players are attached as well an action photo of Jaden Hunter. Please credit University of Louisville and University of Georgia, respectively.**

HILLTOPPERS ADD LINEBACKER TRANSFERS STAPLES AND HUNTER

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU head football coach Tyson Helton announced on Thursday the addition of linebackers Malik Staples (Suwanee, Ga.) and Jaden Hunter (Atlanta, Ga.) to the 2019 team roster.

Staples, a graduate transfer from Louisville, will be eligible immediately while Hunter, transferring in as a redshirt sophomore from Georgia, will have to sit out due to the NCAA’s transfer rules. WKU is currently seeking a waiver for Hunter’s immediate eligibility.

“We are excited to welcome Jaden and Malik to our football program,” Helton said. “Both men add valuable experience and depth in our linebacker unit, and (linebackers coach) Maurice Crum is thrilled to get to work with them.”

Hunter appeared in four games over his two-year career at Georgia and was a consensus four-star prospect out of high school where he played for coach Kareem Reid at Westlake High. Hunter was rated the No. 3 outside linebacker in the nation and No. 46 player nationally by Rivals.com. A 2016 Atlanta Journal-Constitution All-State Class 7A defensive team member, Hunter helped lead Westlake to a trip in the Georgia High School Association playoff semifinals.

Staples played for coach Mark Fleetwood at Peachtree Ridge High in Georgia and was a three-star prospect by every major recruiting outlet. After converting from running back to linebacker, Staples was one of two true freshmen to play in 2016 for the Cardinals and appeared in all 13 games on special teams and as a reserve linebacker. Staples appeared in six more games for the Cardinals in 2017.

Staples is also a former teammate of offensive lineman Miles Pate as both prepped together at Peachtree Ridge.

The Hilltoppers open the campaign with a 6:30 p.m. kickoff on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas in the debut of new head coach Tyson Helton. Season tickets are on sale for the 2019 season and start as low as $85 per seat. The Big Red Family Plan returns in 2019 and includes four season tickets in Section 325 for only $220 – just $9 per person, per game.

How to Follow the Hilltoppers: For complete information on WKU Hilltopper Football, follow the program via social media @WKUFootball on Twitter and Facebook.

-@WKUSports-

Bryan Fyalkowski
Assistant Director of Media Relations
WKU Hilltopper Athletics

Cell: 412-335-2675
Office: 270-745-5388
DALLAS, Texas – Senior offensive tackle Miles Pate was voted to the 2019 All-Conference USA Preseason Team, the league announced on Monday. The Lawrenceville, Ga., native — who has appeared in 34 games with 19 starts over his WKU career — joined four other senior offensive linemen that made up the squad, as chosen by C-USA’s 14 head coaches.

As a redshirt junior, Pate started all 12 games and played 893-of-898 offensive snaps at the right tackle position. He led C-USA right tackles with a +21.8 overall cumulative rating by PFF College’s Signature Stats, which included +9.5 for pass blocking and +8.9 for run blocking. Pate ranked second among C-USA tackles with a 79.1 rating by PFF College’s Premium Stats; his 73.6 run block rating was second, while his 78.6 pass block rating stood fourth. Overall, he was called for only one penalty all season.

Pate was recently chosen as No. 40 on national college football writer Bruce Feldman’s "Freaks List" with the following write-up that featured some of his physical skills:

- "Similar to former Western Kentucky standout Forrest Lamp, Pate plays tackle but projects as an interior lineman at the next level. The 6-2, 314-pounder will be a three-year starter thanks to his terrific agility. He has a 31.5-inch vertical. His 4.50 short shuttle would have tied for second-best among O-linemen at this year’s NFL Combine. His 1.77 10-yard split also would have been one of the better times in the position group. WKU strength coach Jason Veltkamp says Pate moves like 290-pound Patriots lineman Joe Thuney (whom Veltkamp coached at N.C. State), but it’s even more freakish when you account for the fact that Pate is 314."

The Hilltoppers, under the direction of first-year head coach Tyson Helton, kick off the 2019 season at home on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas. Kickoff is set for 6:30 p.m.

2019 All-Conference USA Preseason Offense

QB    Mason Fine, Sr., North Texas  
RB    Spencer Brown, Jr., UAB  
RB    Benny LeMay, Sr., Charlotte  
OL    Miles Pate, Sr., WKU  
OL    Levi Brown, Sr., Marshall  
OL    Josh Dunlop, Sr., UTSA  
OL    Derron Gatewood, Sr., UTEP  
OL    Sosaia Mose, Sr., North Texas  
TE    Harrison Bryant, Sr., Florida Atlantic  
WR    Rico Bussey, Jr., Sr., North Texas  
WR    Adrian Hardy, Jr., Louisiana Tech  
WR    Quez Watkins, Jr., Southern Miss
WKU GREATER LOUISVILLE ALUMNI CHAPTER TO HOST 6TH ANNUAL FOOTBALL KICKOFF PARTY ON JULY 24

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The WKU Greater Louisville Alumni Chapter will host the Sixth Annual WKU Football Kickoff Party at Buffalo Wild Wings in the Shelbyville Road Plaza (4600 Shelbyville Rd. in Louisville) on Wednesday, July 24.

The event is set to begin at 6 p.m. ET, featuring head coach Tyson and select players from the city of Louisville. In all, WKU's 2019 roster features 36 players from the Commonwealth, the most among the three Football Bowl Subdivision schools in the state, and 10 from the city of Louisville.

Additionally, fans in attendance can expect plenty of autographs, prizes, giveaways and food specials. Helton and select Hilltoppers will also speak at the event, which will be emceed by Dominique Yates of the Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Hilltoppers open the 2019 campaign with a 6:30 p.m. kickoff on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas. WKU returns 16 starters on offense and defense, the third-most nationally, while the team's 10 returning starters on offense rank as the most in the nation.

WKU and Louisville will face off for a "Music City Showdown" on Saturday, September 14 at 3 p.m. in Nissan Stadium, home of the NFL's Tennessee Titans. The Hilltoppers last played in the venue for the 2013 season opener when WKU defeated Kentucky by a score of 35-26. The 2019 matchup between the Hilltoppers and Cardinals is the second of a three-game football series.
FRISCO, Texas — A WKU Football trio flew south on Wednesday to represent the Hilltoppers for the 2019 Conference USA Media Kickoff. Head coach Tyson Helton will be joined by senior wide receiver Lucky Jackson and junior safety Devon Key.

The event from July 17-18 will take place at The Star, which is the Dallas Cowboys’ World Headquarters and just down the road from C-USA’s main offices. WKU and the rest of the East Division members will have media obligations on Thursday from 8-11:30 a.m., while the West Division has hours on Wednesday from 1-4:30 p.m.

Live streams on Watch ESPN can be accessed via the links above.

There will be other events for the Hilltoppers, including a tour of the NFL facility and an evening outing at Pinstack Plano, which features bowling and arcade games. An annual tradition for the Red and White travel party is a lunch trip to Hard Eight BBQ for some authentic Texas eats.

Helton returns to The Hill three years removed from the 2015 football season which ended with WKU's final Associated Press ranking of 24 – the highest in school history – and a school-record 12 victories, including the first-ever FBS conference championship.

His tenure coincided with quarterback Brandon Doughty's astronomical ascension up the NCAA's career record book and total rewriting of the Hilltopper program's own offensive records. Two of Helton’s quarterback protégés were selected in the 2018 NFL Draft: USC’s Sam Darnold with the No. 3 overall selection by the New York Jets and WKU’s Mike White in the fifth round by the Dallas Cowboys.

A back-to-back C-USA Honorable Mention wideout, Jackson has 115 receptions for 1,547 yards and nine touchdowns in his three-year career on The Hill. In 2018, the Lexington native had a career-high 50 catches and four scores, as well as 552 yards to lead the WKU offense.

Jackson tallied multiple receptions and 20-plus yards while playing in 12 contests for the third-straight season. He notched a career-high eight catches on Sept. 22 at Ball State and a career-high two scores on Sept. 8 vs. Maine; he also had a season-high 115 yards against the Black Bears. Jackson also added an 18-yard touchdown rush on Nov. 24 at Louisiana Tech.

Key was a C-USA Honorable Mention selection last year after earning an All-Freshman Team nod in 2017. After redshirting in 2016, the Lexington native has started 24 games for the Hilltoppers over the past two seasons, racking up 165 tackles in the process. In 2018, Key tied for the lead among WKU defensive backs with 71 tackles and three interceptions, while also adding three tackles for loss and six pass breakups.

He had a 45-yard interception return for touchdown on Sept. 8 vs. Maine in the first quarter to put WKU ahead by a score of 14-0, only 103 seconds into the game. Key also recorded interceptions in each of the final two games of the campaign, on Nov. 17 vs. UTEP and on Nov. 24 at Louisiana Tech.
**Head shot attached, please credit "WKU Athletics" if used ... Action shots available upon request**

**CENTER SETH JOEST NAMED TO 2019 RIMINGTON TROPHY WATCH LIST**

NEW YORK, N.Y. — WKU Football junior center Seth Joest has been named to the 2019 Rimington Trophy Award Watch List, it was announced on Friday. The Versailles native started all 12 games and played all 898 offensive snaps as a sophomore in 2018.

Joest ranked second among C-USA centers with a 16.9 overall cumulative rating by PFF College’s Signature Stats, which included +12.2 for run blocking and +8.1 for pass blocking. He ranked second among C-USA centers with a 73.4 rating by PFF College’s Premium Stats; his 85.6 run block rating and 85.6 pass block rating both led the league.

The Versailles native is 1-of-80 student-athletes to be listed, including 1-of-11 from Conference USA.

The Rimington Trophy is presented annually to the most outstanding center in NCAA Division I College Football. Since its inception, the award — celebrating its 20th anniversary — has raised over $4.2 million for the Boomer Esiason Foundation, which is committed to finding a cure for cystic fibrosis.

Dave Rimington, the award’s namesake, was a consensus first-team All-America center at the University of Nebraska in 1981 and 1982, during which time he became the John Outland Trophy’s only two-time winner as the nation’s finest college interior lineman.

The Hilltoppers open the campaign with a 6:30 p.m. kickoff on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas in the debut of new head coach Tyson Helton. WKU returns 16 starters on offense and defense, the third-most nationally, while the team’s 10 returning starters on offense rank as the most in the nation.
NEW YORK, N.Y. — WKU Football junior tight end Kyle Fourtenbary has been named to the 2019 John Mackey Award Preseason Watch List, it was announced on Friday. The Opelika, Ala., native is 1-of-60 student-athletes to be listed, including only 1-of-5 from Conference USA.

Fourtenbary enters the 2019 campaign with 44 receptions for 398 yards and two touchdowns in his career on The Hill. As a sophomore in 2018, the Opelika, Ala., native made 36 catches for 302 yards and two scores, while also adding a two-point conversion.

Last year, Fourtenbary started in 11 contests and playing in all 12 games, recording multiple receptions in nine games and 20-plus receiving yards in eight contests. His two scores came on Sept. 15 at Louisville and on Oct. 20 vs. Old Dominion, respectively. Fourtenbary had career highs of six catches and 54 yards against the Monarchs, as well as a long reception of 28 yards on Sept. 22 at Ball State.

Former Hilltoppers honored by the John Mackey Award include:

- Mik’Quan Deane, who was a John Mackey Award Preseason Watch List member in 2018, before he had 44 receptions for 530 yards and six touchdowns.
- Deon Yelder, who was named John Mackey Tight End of the Week on Oct. 14, 2017, when he had seven receptions for 92 yards and one touchdown in WKU’s 45-14 victory vs. Charlotte. Yelder was also named Honorable Mention Tight End of the Week twice during his senior year, when he had 52 receptions for 688 yards and seven touchdowns.
- Tyler Higbee, who was a John Mackey Award Preseason Watch List member in 2015, before he had 38 receptions for 563 yards and eight touchdowns. Higbee was named John Mackey Tight End of Week on Sept. 3, 2015, when he had four receptions for 102 yards and one touchdown in WKU’s 14-12 victory at Vanderbilt.
- Mitchell Henry, who was a John Mackey Award Preseason Watch List member in 2014, before he had 32 receptions for 489 yards and four touchdowns. Henry was named John Mackey Tight End of the Week on Sept. 13, 2014, when he had seven receptions for 128 yards and two touchdowns in WKU’s 50-47 triple-overtime loss at Middle Tennessee.
- Jack Doyle, who was a John Mackey Award Semifinalist in 2012, when he had 53 receptions for 566 yards and five touchdowns. Doyle was named John Mackey Tight End of the Week on Oct. 6, 2011, when he had six receptions for 100 yards in WKU’s 36-33 double-overtime victory at Middle Tennessee.

Given annually to the most outstanding collegiate tight end, the award recipient has been selected by a vote of the John Mackey Award Selection Committee since 2000. The 2018 Mackey Award recipient will be announced on Dec. 11, and then presented live on Dec. 12 at The Home Depot College Football Awards Red Carpet Show on ESPNU.

NFL Hall of Fame member John Mackey is considered to be the best to have played the tight end position. A tight end by whom all others are measured, Mackey was a role model on and off the field as demonstrated.
by his Super Bowl Championship, his commitment to the community and his place in history as the first President of the NFLPA.

The Hilltoppers open the campaign with a 6:30 p.m. kickoff on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas in the debut of new head coach Tyson Helton. WKU returns 16 starters on offense and defense, the third-most nationally, while the team's 10 returning starters on offense rank as the most in the nation.
SENIOR MILES PATE NAMED TO 2019 OUTLAND TROPHY WATCH LIST

DALLAS, Texas – Senior offensive tackle Miles Pate has been named to the 2019 Outland Trophy Award Watch List, the Football Writers Association of America announced. The Lawrenceville, Ga., native — who has appeared in 34 games with 19 starts over his WKU career — is 1-of-83 student-athletes to be listed among the "best interior linemen in college football," including only 1-of-3 from Conference USA.

As a redshirt junior, Pate started all 12 games and played 893-of-898 offensive snaps at the right tackle position. He led C-USA right tackles with a +21.8 overall cumulative rating by PFF College’s Signature Stats, which included +9.5 for pass blocking and +8.9 for run blocking. Pate ranked second among C-USA tackles with a 79.1 rating by PFF College’s Premium Stats; his 73.6 run block rating was second, while his 78.6 pass block rating stood fourth. Overall, he was called for only one penalty all season.

Pate was recently voted to the All-CUSA Preseason Team and appeared as No. 40 on national college football writer Bruce Feldman's "Freaks List" with the following write-up that featured some of his physical skills:

- "Similar to former Western Kentucky standout Forrest Lamp, Pate plays tackle but projects as an interior lineman at the next level. The 6-2, 314-pounder will be a three-year starter thanks to his terrific agility. He has a 31.5-inch vertical. His 4.50 short shuttle would have tied for second-best among O-linemen at this year’s NFL Combine. His 1.77 10-yard split also would have been one of the better times in the position group. WKU strength coach Jason Veltkamp says Pate moves like 290-pound Patriots lineman Joe Thuney (whom Veltkamp coached at N.C. State), but it’s even more freakish when you account for the fact that Pate is 314."

The Outland Trophy, now in its 74th year, is the third-oldest major college football award. Created in 1946 when Dr. John Outland presented the FWAA with a financial contribution to initiate the award, the Outland Trophy has been given to the best interior lineman in college football ever since. Dr. Outland, an All-American at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1890s, eventually took up practice in Kansas City, Mo. An avid outdoorsman, Dr. Outland believed linemen did not get the credit they deserved and wanted an award to recognize them.

The winner is chosen from three finalists who are a part of the annual FWAA All-America Team. The FWAA All-America Committee, after voting input from the entire membership, selects a 26-man first team and eventually the three Outland finalists. Committee members, then by individual ballot, select the winner. Only interior linemen on offense or defense are eligible for the award; ends are not eligible.

The Hilltoppers, under the direction of first-year head coach Tyson Helton, kick off the 2019 season at home on Thursday, August 29 vs. Central Arkansas. Kickoff is set for 6:30 p.m.
LINEMAN TYLER WITT NAMED TO 2019 WUERFFEL TROPHY WATCH LIST

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — WKU Football junior offensive lineman Tyler Witt has been named to the 2019 Wuerffel Trophy Watch List, it was announced on Thursday. The Wuerffel Trophy is "College Football's Premier Award for Community Service" and is awarded to the FBS player who best combines exemplary community service with athletic and academic achievement.

Leading into the 2019 campaign, the Joliet, Ill., native was also listed by Athlon Sports as a Preseason Third Team.

Witt started all 12 games and played all 898 offensive snaps at the left guard position as a redshirt sophomore in 2018. He ranked fifth among Conference USA left guards with a +2.0 overall cumulative rating by PFF College's Signature Stats, which included +5.2 for pass blocking. Witt ranked fifth among C-USA guards with a 68.0 rating by PFF College's Premium Stats; his 64.5 run block rating was sixth, while his 78.6 pass block rating stood ninth. He was called for only two penalties all season.

Working towards a degree in Mechanical Engineering, Witt has earned back-to-back spots on the C-USA All-Academic Team. He has also earned C-USA Honor Roll in five semesters, as well as a WKU President's List distinction with a 4.0 GPA in his other semester on campus.

One representative from 93 different programs were added to the initial Wuerffel Trophy Watch List. After a nomination process, semifinalists for the award will be announced on November 5 and finalists will be announced on November 18. The formal announcement of the 2019 recipient will be made at the National Football Foundation's festivities in New York City on December 10.
HILLTOPPER FALL CAMP REPORT – JULY 31

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football made its fall camp debut on Wednesday morning, with the 2019 Hilltoppers taking to the turf at Houchens-Smith Stadium for the first day of team practice.

"I thought the guys came out and were pumped up. They practiced well and were pretty smooth and as a whole I am happy with it how it went," head coach Tyson Helton said. "Today was more of a first and second down day. We will get more into the third down and red zone stuff as we progress, but the guys handled everything we gave them."

Junior center Seth Joest – who was named to the 2019 Rimington Trophy Watch List on July 19 and is set to anchor a WKU offensive line that returns eight lettermen all 60 starts from a year ago – echoed Helton's sentiments.

"This was the hardest first day I have had yet but that's a good thing," the Versailles native said. "Not even so much the heat but we're all just working really really hard, grinding every single rep, moving fast from station to station. We're all really motivated."

Joest ranked second among C-USA centers with a 16.9 overall cumulative rating by PFF College's Signature Stats, which included +12.2 for run blocking and +8.1 for pass blocking. He ranked second among C-USA centers with a 73.4 rating by PFF College's Premium Stats; his 85.6 run block rating and 85.6 pass block rating both led the league.

But with the Hilltoppers finishing 3-9 a season ago, Joest explained how hungry this group really is as only 30 days remain until the team's season opener vs. Central Arkansas on Thursday, August 29 at 6:30 p.m.

"Everyone has a chip on their shoulder and it's really good to see," he said. "We're working our tails off. We have a lot to prove this year and we're working extra, extra hard for that."

Sophomore quarterback Davis Shanley also sees a spark surrounding the WKU players and coaches: "We're more motivated than we have ever been, you can feel that it's different around here ... The first day out had a lot of intensity from both sides of the ball, I know these guys out here are going to give it everything they've got on every single play."