

2008 PIGSKIN PREVIEW



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Quarterback Brandon Haywood (5) makes Rockmart a threat in the southern half of Region 7-AA, while Pepperell's Matt Kelley (90) and the Dragons will chase after a trip to the playoffs.

REGION 7-AA

Teams line up to be undisputed champ

By Jeremy Stewart
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There will be an undeniable Region 7-AA champion at the end of the regular season.

Whether any team can challenge Calhoun's run of seven straight region championships this year remains to be seen.

But the programs of Greater Rome are prepared for battle and will work it out on the gridiron, leading up to the Nov. 7 region playoffs.

SUBREGION A
Armucbee Indians
Coach: John Mullinax
2007: 3-7, 1-5

A renewal is being unveiled by the Indians this season with new quarterbacks Dalton Earwood and T.C. Boyd heading up a triple-option offense.

And with 17 returning starters, including all-around athlete Kyle Davis and leading rusher Davante Hudson, the Tribe is ready to try to record their first winning season since 1999.

Coosa Eagles
Coach: Chad Perry
2007: 6-4, 3-3

Coach Chad Perry is entering his fourth year with the Eagles and he has a bevy of talent to help make it a positive one.

Coosa's backfield is headed up by Lebron Neal and Quentin Hight while Shane Smith is back behind center and Cody Shephard returns at receiver.

The Eagles' front lines are stout and experienced with both groups critical to the success of the team as a whole.

Model Blue Devils
Coach: Gordon Powers
2007: 3-7, 2-4

What Model lost in All-Area quarterback Bear Crowder, the Devils retained on their offensive and defensive lines.

The strength up front will help returning running back Desmond Brown and wide receiver Lyle Morris give their new quarterback plenty of opportunities.

The Blue Devils' defensive line will anchor their 4-3 scheme while their secondary catches up in the first part of the season.

Pepperell Dragons
Coach: Jeff Shiflett
2007: 9-4, 5-1

The Dragons took themselves from 0-2 to the quarterfinals in 2007 and expecta-

tions are high.

All-Area rusher Brandon Whitaker and All-State lineman Michael Ozment head up the 10 returning starters on offense, which also includes running back Marcus Jackson and quarterback Jonathan Watters.

On defense, three All-Area picks return: lineman Matt Kelley, linebacker Logan Osborne and defensive back Kendrick Cheeks.

Rockmart Yellow Jackets
Coach: Dan Duff
2007: 7-3, 5-1

In almost any other region, the Jackets would have been playoff bound in 2007 but the cards did not fall their way.

But 2008 will see them be aggressive again with All-Area quarterback Brandon Haywood back to lead a powerful offense.

Lorenzo Johnson, an All-Area pick as a sophomore last season, is back at defensive end while speed will be a weapon on both sides of the ball.

Temple Tigers
Coach: Seth Rogers
2007: 0-10, 0-6

After going winless in 2007, the Carroll County team is going to be on the mend in 2008.

Starting as many as eight sophomores could be problematic but receiver Darius Copeland will bring experience to the offense.

SUBREGION B
Adairsville Tigers
Coach: Mark Arthur
2007: 7-3 overall, 3-2 subregion

A season under head coach Mark Arthur put the Tigers back in the mix of top teams in the region but left them just shy of a postseason berth.

All-Area quarterback Grant DeBruin has graduated and there will be some concerns with depth but a strong front line should help boost the Bartow County school.

Calhoun Yellow Jackets
Coach: Hal Lamb
2007: 10-2, 5-0

The term "rebuilding year" is nonexistent when speaking of the traditionally strong Yellow Jackets.

Calhoun has lost quarterback Tre Lamb and leading rusher Adam Urbano, both 2008 All-State picks, but with top receiver Derek Ramsey and an experience line returning, the Yellow Jackets' spread offense will be as potent as ever.

Michael Johnson will be a standout in the linebacking corps but finding a replacement for All-Area kicker

2007 FINAL REGION 7-AA STANDINGS

A Division		
	All	Reg.
xPepperell	7-3	5-1
xDarlington	8-2	5-1
Rockmart	7-3	5-1
Coosa	6-4	3-3
Model	3-7	2-4
Armucbee	3-7	1-5
Temple	0-10	0-6
B Division		
	All	Reg
xCalhoun	9-1	5-0
xChattooga	7-3	4-1
Adairsville	7-3	3-2
Dade County	2-8	1-4
LaFayette	1-9	1-4
Sonoraville	1-9	1-4

x- Earned playoff berth

Andy Elakman could be a concern.

Chattooga Indians
Coach: John Starr
2007: 7-4, 4-1

Returning skill players are in abundance for coach John Starr but concerns about depth and size will once again be a factor.

Junior running back Senorise Perry is back after a breakout year where he ran for 946 yards and All-Area linebacker Greg Shropshire, who recorded 103 tackles in 2007, will rejoin Ryan Hamilton on defense.

Experienced quarterback Jared Nelson will take most of the snaps while consistent placekicker Bernardo Mosqueda is back.

Dade County Wolverines
Coach: Bradley Warren
2007: 2-8, 1-4

A lack of consistency has plagued the Wolverines of Trenton but new head coach Warren is looking to alleviate that.

Depth is a concern on both sides of the ball but a few solid athletes and an improving special teams will work to improve on their average of one win in the last four seasons.

Gordon Central Warriors
Coach: Chad Fisher
2007: 0-10, 0-7

The Warriors have had a lot of change in the past few seasons and their drop from AAAA to AA is just the latest.

Twelve starters return on offense and defense but a still-young offense and an inexperienced secondary will create plenty of challenges for second year coach Chad Fisher.

Sonoraville Phoenix
Coach: Chuck King
2007: 1-9, 1-4

After two seasons of varsity competition, the Phoenix won their first game last year and with the experience they have returning are looking for much better things in 2008.

All-Area strong safety Trent Payne will be an all-around weapon once again while quarterback Y.J. Glover has speed on his side.

REGION 6-A

Growing ranks leads to a real race for title

By Scott Herpst
Rome News-Tribune Sports Writer

There will be no more easy rides to the playoffs for teams in Region 6-A.

Reclassification has increased the number of football teams in the region to its highest level in nearly a decade and the four teams that qualify will have certainly earned their way.

The biggest name to join the fray is Darlington, but don't expect the old guard to give up their spots so easily.

Another former Class AA school, Walker, will also be in the mix while Mount Zion of Carrollton will play a region slate for the first time since rejoining in 2006.

Bowdon Red Devils
Head Coach: Dwight Hochstetler
2007: 3-8 overall, 1-2 region

Injuries have taken a toll on the Red Devils the past two seasons, but the longtime Class A power should be better this year.

Junior Jordan Loveless will take over under center while running backs Ivan Glenn and J.J. Beasley will both return to the backfield.

Loveless and Avery Cheeks will anchor the secondary.

Bremen Blue Devils
Head Coach: Ricky Tolleson
2007: 9-3 overall, 3-0 region

The Blue Devils enter the season as the favorites to three-peat as champs as they return eight starters on each side of the ball.

Bremen is loaded at the skill positions, led by quarterback Clayton McIntosh and the

backfield duo of Marcus Coggins and Kail Singleton.

Paving the way up front will be college lineman prospect Jay Stansberry. Curt Barrett is a veteran on the defensive side.

Darlington Tigers
Head Coach: Tommy Atha
2007: 9-3 overall, 5-1 region

The Tigers will be putting their streak of 12 consecutive winning seasons in the hands of junior quarterback Nash Nance.

Senior Collie Powers will likely handle much of the load in the backfield while seniors Will Orr and Dylan Baker will give Nance some solid receiving targets.

Four starters are back on the offensive line, but the defense was hit hard by graduation.

Gordon Lee Trojans
Head Coach: Kevin McElhaneey
2007: 6-6 overall, 2-1 region

The Trojans lost only a few starters and will have several players back who were forced to miss last year due to injury.

Junior quarterback Josh Weller returns while the running game has speed with senior Jacob Groce.

The defense brings back linebacker Austin Goodlet, top defensive back Jordan Afman and an aggressive and experienced line.

Mt. Zion, Carroll Eagles
Head Coach: Bill Bailey
2007: 1-9 overall, 0-0 region

The Eagles will jump back into the region fire this fall, but they will not be coming unarmed.

2007 FINAL REGION 6-A STANDINGS

	All	Reg.
xBremen	8-2	3-0
xGordon Lee	5-5	2-1
xBowdon	3-7	1-2
xTrion	2-8	0-3
#GSD	7-1	x-x
#Mt. Zion	1-9	x-x

x- Earned playoff berth
#- Played non-region schedule

Junior quarterback Christian Heard threw for over 1,350 yards last year. Tailback Orlando Perkins is also back after combining for more than 1,000 yards as a junior.

But the biggest name is Octavious Thomas, a Division I-caliber athlete, who transferred from Carrollton. His impact should be felt immediately.

Trion Bulldogs
Head Coach: David Humphreys
2007: 2-9 overall, 0-3 region

The Bulldogs have turned to former Rome High head coach David Humphreys to return Trion to its glory days.

Senior quarterback Daniel Prince will direct the new split-back veer offense while junior Ryan Wilson will be a featured back. Seniors Jeremy Knowles and Zach Roden will anchor the offensive line.

On defense, names to watch include senior linebacker Jake White and junior defensive back Glenn Emery.

Walker Wolverines
Head Coach: Ben Williamson
2007: 2-8 overall, 2-6 region

The Wolverines haven't been a varsity program for very long, but qualified for the Class AA state playoffs in both 2005 and 2006.

However, heavy graduation losses took its toll last year and first-year head coach Ben Williamson will have direct another young team as they try to make a name for themselves in a tough Class A region.



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