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S.C. SUPREME COURT

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Supreme Court

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APPEAL FROM BERKELEY COUNTY
Kristi Lea Harrington, Circuit Court Judge

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Supreme Court Case No. 2021-001520
Appellate Case No. 2018-000791
Case No. 2016-CP-08-0131

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Jeffrey Lance Cruce, Petitioner,

v.

Berkeley County School District, Respondent.

APPENDIX VOLUME II

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contracts?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And in the teacher contracts, it allows for not only the teaching but the assignment of extracurricular activities, correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Is it your understanding that being a head football coach is an extracurricular activity?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what about the athletic director?

A. That's a stipend position. That's not part of the original contract. You can get extra days added onto it.

Q. Did you have the right under that agreement to reassign Mr. Cruce out of his head coaching position?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you have the right under that agreement to reassign him out of the athletic director position?

A. Yes.

Q. To your knowledge, was he paid a full amount of all pay, including stipends, for the contract year that he signed for 2015/16.

A. That's what I heard in court several

times.

Q. And that is a contract that he had signed for a year, correct?

A. Correct.

Q. And he was paid fully out under that contract?

A. Yes.

Q. Just to make certain, you never told him to violate any law of the State of South Carolina, did you?

A. No.

MR. MORGAN: Thank you. No further questions.

THE COURT: Ms. Bloodgood, anything further?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You may step down.

Thank you.

Call your next witness.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Wendy Cruce, Your Honor.

WENDY CRUCE,

being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

THE CLERK: State your full name for the record and please spell your last name.

THE WITNESS: My name is Wendy White Cruce, and my last name is spelled C-r-u-c-e.

THE COURT: Ms. Bloodgood, your witness.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you, Your Honor.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MS. BLOODGOOD:

Q. Let me search for an exhibit. It will go a little faster. I'm looking for 17.

MR. MORGAN: Your Honor, may I approach and help?

THE COURT: You may.

BY MS. BLOODGOOD:

Q. Ms. Cruce, would you tell the jury very briefly about your education background?

A. Yes. I grew up in Berkeley County in Hanahan, and I'm -- graduated from Hanahan High School. I attended Clemson and I have a bachelor's degree in English, and I think that's it.

Q. Okay. And how about your professional background?

A. I have worked for about 25 years in human resource -- in the human resource field, yes.

Q. Okay. And do you have any professional certifications?

A. I have a senior human resource professional certification.

Q. How long have you been married to Coach Cruce?

A. We just celebrated our 32nd anniversary.

Q. And do you attend his football games?

A. I do.

Q. Did you attend the Berkeley High School football games, most of them?

A. I did, yes.

Q. And how did Jeff's firing as coach and as athletic director and his transfer to the middle school affect you?

A. Well, it was -- it was devastating. It was devastating to our whole family. I don't know how to describe how hard it was. Jeff's career is what our family does, you know. I've always worked, but his -- his career as a head football coach is -- you know, it's who he is. It's what our family does.

We've relocated geographically four times for his career and, I mean, it's just -- just what our family does, our whole -- my whole family does. It's not -- I mean, being a head football

coach is not an extracurricular activity. It's a career path.

And all of us were very emotionally involved in his career and, you know, my father never missed a game until he became ill, so it was rough.

Q. Did you -- did you ever think that your husband was going to lose his job as the driver's ed teacher?

A. No. I never thought he would lose his job as a head football coach either.

Q. And did -- you said that you relocated. Did you have to quit your job?

A. We -- yes. In this -- in this last relocation, we moved to North Carolina, and I did. I had a very good job. I worked at Santee Cooper in the human resources group, and I -- I did leave that job. And we sold our house so that we could try to go someplace that Jeff could start over.

Q. Was it easier for him in North Carolina once you got there?

A. We thought that it was going to be, because once we made the decision that we needed to retire and go look someplace else in another state, we thought that it was going to be good because he

just had so much activity. He applied at, you know, 36 different schools and he had tons of interviews.

He ended up with, you know, being a finalist in five positions and -- and that was all very encouraging to us, but it -- it -- it did not turn out the way that we thought. He was able to get a job, but he wasn't able to get a comparable job, and so...

Q. You say, he retired. Why did he have to retire?

A. Well, because we -- you know, he was fired in December, and we had -- we knew that he would get paid through June. So for a few months we -- we didn't consider retiring. We thought that he would be able to find a job in the Charleston area.

And once we realized that that just wasn't going to happen, we -- we had to sell our house really quickly because we could not afford our mortgage with the reduction in pay that his job would -- you know, it would become effective in July. So we put our house on the market.

And when he retired, we said, we'll retire and go look for another job so that he could

supplement his income -- his retirement income with income from another coaching job, we hoped a head coaching job.

Q. Did you also -- were there also changes in your life in terms of this change in his job and as a result of this termination as coach and athletic director and transfer?

A. I mean, it changed everything about our financial situation because we made the decision to retire, and we left my job and we moved to North Carolina, because if you retire in South Carolina, there wasn't a way for him to work at a public school in South Carolina again.

So, yeah, we -- we have one car. We -- we were able to buy a house, but with great difficulty because we -- you know, we thought his income was going to be higher because so many schools were interested in him.

But, as it turns out, his new salary is very low and so we were not able to qualify for a mortgage. We finally -- we lived in an apartment for about six months, and we were finally able to qualify for the mortgage for a much -- you know, much smaller house. And we just have a much simpler, more streamlined life than we did before,

yes.

Q. And there's been some discussion about this chart that I showed Mr. Steele that we've marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 17. This is the booster club membership.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. What do you know about this chart?

A. Well, I know that that chart came from Carolyn West, who was my colleague at Santee Cooper. And at the time, she was the treasurer of the athletic booster club.

Q. Did you actually create this chart?

A. That's actually a chart that Carolyn created and e-mailed to me, but we produced it.

Q. Okay. And the last number on the chart, 15, is that for the full 2015/16 year, or is that for half the year?

A. No; it is for half the year. Those numbers, she gave those to me in December when I first found out that Jeff was fired for booster club membership.

We didn't know -- we didn't know anything about booster club membership. So I went to Carolyn and I said, can you tell me what the membership numbers have been?

Q. Okay. And you can't say anything that she said to you.

A. Okay. I'm sorry, yes.

Anyway, I inquired about booster club numbers and I was able to get the last five years of history of booster club numbers.

Q. Okay. And did you also have to spend any money in order to get up to North Carolina and to get out of your situation?

A. Yes. We had to -- you know, we had to sell our house. We had to pay a Realtor fee and relocation.

Q. Let me show you what we've marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 18, and it's called South Carolina Deferred Compensation 401(k). Are you familiar with that document?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. It's behind you. What's the significance of that document?

A. When we realized that we were not going to be able to qualify for a mortgage with our new income level, one of our options was to pay -- we had one car loan, and if we paid that car loan off, then we would be able to get a small mortgage.

And so I withdrew this money from my

own 401(k) in order to pay off the car loan.

Q. And is that the $37,000 that's on this chart?

A. Yes. That -- that's what I had to withdraw, with penalties, to have the amount I needed to pay off our car loan, yes.

Q. I know there's been damage to -- Jeff has testified to that, but, personally, what -- how has this experience damaged you?

MR. MORGAN: Objection; relevance, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Approach.

(Bench conference.)

THE COURT: Sustained. Rephrase your question, please.

BY MS. BLOODGOOD:

Q. Mrs. Cruce, I don't -- and without saying what people are saying, what have you observed about how this has affected your husband?

A. He's struggled to regain his footing, I think, emotionally and, especially, in his career. It's been hard for me to watch him with something like that, that he's done all of his life.

Q. Okay.

A. So ...

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you. Thank you. I don't have any other questions?

THE COURT: Mr. Lamber, your witness.

MR. LAMBERT: May it please the Court, Your Honor.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MR. LAMBERT:

Q. Good afternoon, Mrs. Cruce. Remind the jury again, where did you work?

A. I worked at Santee Cooper.

Q. In HR, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. What was your salary when you left that job?

A. I made $110,000 a year.

Q. What was your mortgage payment on the house you had to sell here in Charleston?

A. Our mortgage payment was roughly $2800 a month.

Q. You left your job at Santee Cooper voluntarily, correct?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. You said you had just celebrated your 32nd wedding anniversary?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you and your husband been married essentially his entire career as a coach?

A. Yes.

Q. Where all, again, has your husband coached high school football? What high schools in what towns?

A. We lived in Florida for a year and coached there for one year. We moved to Hampton, South Carolina, where he coached for three years. Then we moved here, where he's coached at three different schools in this area. And now we live in North Carolina where he is an assistant coach at a school there.

Q. Okay. And the three schools here were Hanahan, Cane Bay, and Berkeley?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. In each of the towns you've lived in and the schools where your husband has coached, was football a big deal?

A. I guess so.

Q. Did people talk about the game that was coming up that Friday night around town?

A. Yes, I guess so.

Q. Were games covered in the local papers?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you see your husband quoted in those newspapers articles about his team?

A. I saw articles about the team that my husband coached, along with articles about every other team in this area.

Q. Would people from all over town come to games when he was coaching at Berkeley?

Let me rephrase the question and see if I can make that a little simpler.

Would folks come to Berkeley High School football games who weren't just the parents of the players?

A. I don't know. There were a lot of people in the stands. I don't know how many of them were parents and how many were fans.

Q. You would expect, given the number of players on the team and the number of people in the stands, that all of them couldn't have a child playing for Berkeley High School?

A. At all of the schools that he has coached at, I'm sure there was a combination of parents and fans in the stands.

Q. Would people come at Berkeley High School and watch the team practice?

A. Yes, they did.

Q. Was it your impression that people in Moncks Corner understood football? Not just who won and lost, but more of the nuances and the subtleties of the game?

A. I don't think so.

Q. I mean, people knew enough about the game to talk about, well, we're running an up-tempo offense now instead of running the ball on every play like we did years ago, right?

A. I don't agree with that. I don't agree or disagree with that.

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, may I hand this to the court reporter?

THE COURT: You may.

THE COURT REPORTER: Court's Exhibit 4.

(COURT EXH. 4, Deposition transcript, was marked for identification.)

BY MR. LAMBERT:

Q. Mrs. Cruce, would you please turn to page 57? I am looking on page 57, starting at line 19. And after I read that question, if you'll read the response you gave from your deposition. It continues over onto page 58.

Okay. Did you -- kind of after that was implemented -- talking about his new coaching

scheme -- or even at the beginning, did anyone come up to you at work and comment on the new scheme?

A. Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think that I did a pretty good job of explaining it to some people at my work. And then throughout the season -- do you want me to keep on reading?

Q. That's fine for now.

A. Okay.

Q. So --

A. But can I -- when you asked me to read this particular remark, these are people that were making remarks to me about the -- Jeff's new scheme. And I was trying to explain it to them that they weren't telling me about it.

Q. My only point is, don't people in Moncks Corner understand more about football than just who wins and losses, as in the type of offensive scheme the team has changed to start running?

A. I don't agree or disagree with that statement. I think -- I've been around football fans my whole life, or at least for the last 35 years. I think everyone thinks that they understand the game of football.

Q. Everyone knows it better than the

coach?

A. There are a lot of, you know, quarterbacks in the bleachers.

Q. There are.

Was coaching at Berkeley High School different than coaching other places for your husband?

A. I think that coaching at Berkeley High School is a very tough -- it's a tough place to coach. I think my husband said that in his testimony, and I --

Q. Why is that? Sorry.

A. You know, I don't know why. I really -- I can't tell you why. I know that when I began working at Santee Cooper, I -- for about eight years while the previous coach was there, who was a good friend of our family, I thought it was odd how very critical the people who lived there were of him.

So I did a hear a lot of criticism of that coach for many years while he was there. We did not live in Moncks Corner, but I thought they were very critical of the coach.

Q. Did all of this make you nervous for your husband to take the job at Berkeley High

School?

A. I didn't think it was going to be a very -- you know, part of me thought that it wouldn't happen to him, you know, but, yes, I certainly -- I certainly had a feeling that they were just especially critical.

Q. Any thoughts as to why they're so critical?

A. I don't know. No, I don't have any thoughts. Sorry.

Q. That's all right. You said they're critical and it's a tough job. Is that because people in this town take football very, very seriously?

A. I guess people in this town take football very, very seriously, but there are seven high schools in Berkeley County. I'm sure all of those fans take football very, very seriously too.

Q. Did you get the same impression of what the community was like at Hanahan and Cane Bay and in Hampton that you got in Moncks Corner?

A. I'm trying to -- I'm trying to understand what it is that you're wanting me to say here.

Q. I just want you to answer the question.

Your impression of having lived in --

A. This last question that you just asked me, could you rephrase it?

Q. Sure. You talked about how critical and intense --

A. Right.

Q. -- people in Moncks Corner were --

A. Right.

Q. And I'm asking were the communities at Hanahan, at Cane Bay, at Wade Hampton similarly critical and intense, or was it especially so -- was it unique here in Berkeley?

A. Well, having coached at three Berkeley County schools, I can say that I believe that it was more -- the fans were more critical in Moncks Corner than they were in Hanahan or at Cane Bay.

Q. Earlier, your husband's attorney, Ms. Bloodgood, in a question said, Berkeley High School football isn't major college football, it isn't the NFL.

Do you agree that coaching at Berkeley is actually somewhat similar to coaching an intense -- with the fan base, is it as intense as coaching some NFL teams?

A. Well, a few minutes ago the other

attorney referred to it as an extracurricular activity. So, you know, I don't believe it's an extra curricular activity. I think it's an important responsibility.

And I think that when you're a coach, you have to focus on what's best for the players and team, and your customer is the student and the student's family. And that's what's most important.

So the fact that Berkeley had a very outspoken fan base, I don't understand what difference that makes.

Q. Well, I think the way people in a community take football affects the way the coach is viewed in the community. So I want you to, if you would, please open your -- the copy of that deposition in front of you to the bottom of page 18.

I'll start at line 20. And if you and I could just go back and forth on the question and answers until we get to the end of line 12 on the next page. So I'm starting at line 20 on page 18.

And your husband coached at Berkeley twice. Once he was not the head coach.

A. That's correct.

Q. Do you remember any comments about his team or players during that period?

A. Are you reading from this?

Q. I am. And I want you to read the answers you gave in your deposition when you were sworn to tell the truth, just like you are right now.

THE COURT: Can you tell her what page and line --

BY MR. LAMBERT:

Q. Yes. We're on page 18.

A. Okay.

Q. And I'm going to start back over at line 20.

A. Okay.

Q. And I will read the question, if I can get you to read the answer, we will go to the next page on line 12.

And your husband coached at Berkeley twice. Once he was not the head coach.

A. That's right.

Q. Do you remember any comments about the team or players during that period?

A. Well, I remember that the community in the stands were ugly about the head coaches -- it's

sort of part of the community personality -- both of the head coaches he worked for there, Dennis Weibert and also Jerry Brown.

Q. So the same kind of comments from fans?

A. Yes. It's a very rough -- I think it's sort of like being a coach for the Philadelphia Eagles or something like that. I heard that they have a couple of judges that actually work under the stadium to resolve fights and arrests that happen there. I don't know if that's true, but I've heard it.

And Mr. Frampton says, that's true.

Q. So you've actually compared coaching at Berkeley High School to being as intense with the way people take football as to coaching the Philadelphia Eagles?

A. I said, the fans were very outspoken, they were very harsh. The harshness was what I was comparing to the Philadelphia Eagles' fans.

Q. And they take their football very seriously in Philadelphia, don't they?

A. The -- this take their football seriously, are you meaning that take their football seriously means the same thing as they are very harsh towards their head football coaches; is that

what you're saying?

Q. They're harsh to their football coaches. They care a lot if their team wins or loses.

A. I believe that the fans in Moncks Corner care very much if their team wins or loses, and I believe they're very harsh towards whoever is the head football coach there.

Q. Continuing on this theme of how harsh the fans are because of how intense they are about football, I want to go to page 21 of your deposition. And we will do the first question and answer on that page, so down to line 11. I'll start at line 1.

So, in your experience, just being in Moncks Corner for work, are the fans unhappy unless you're winning or --

A. I'm sorry. I said, they can be unhappy even when you are winning.

I said, they are -- I really don't want this to go on my deposition transcript, and this is way before Jeff went to work there, but I thought that if it was legal to put people in an arena and let lions eat them that this would be a good thing, because people there would go and watch that.

Q. I guess what I'm getting at in all of this --

A. Yes, please. I'm trying to figure it out.

Q. Football is a big deal in this town and your husband was the head coach, right?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. He was a recognized figure in town, right? If he walked down the street in Moncks Corner, people knew that was Coach Cruce.

A. I suppose. We did not live in Moncks Corner, though.

Q. Did people in Moncks Corner ever come up to you and recognize you as the coach's wife?

A. No. I worked at Santee Cooper, and so the people that I worked with in Santee Cooper knew who I was. I know when he first started coaching there, I don't think anybody in the stadium recognized me unless they worked with me at Santee Cooper.

Q. By the end of his five years, did people in the stands know that you were the coach's wife?

A. Possibly. I mean, I -- are you saying, did people --

Q. Would you wave to people when you walked in and say, hello, and they would wave back?

A. No. I, actually, just kept my head down when I walked in.

Q. Why is that?

A. No one was interested in speaking to me at a football game in Moncks Corner. No one came up and spoke to me or my family there.

MR. LAMBERT: I have no more questions, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Redirect?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You may step down. Thank you.

Call your next witness.

MS. BLOODGOOD: That's my last witness, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Reserving all motions and matters, do you have any witnesses?

MR. MORGAN: We have one, Your Honor.

MR. LAMBERT: One, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Just for scheduling, approach.

(Bench conference.)

THE COURT: All right. Ladies and

gentlemen, I told you we would go until 2:00. We're waiting on one witness who is about five minutes away, so I'm going to let you go take a comfort break. And then that should be a short witness; we'll stop about 2:00. And then we'll have further information.

So please remember all of my admonitions. Do not begin your deliberations; take your notepads with you or leave them right in the chair.

Please rise for the jury.

(Jury out, 1:22p.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Be seated.

All right. Just so it's clearly articulated on the record, we have one witness. I'm trying to get all of the testimony in so that I can -- we can break at 2:00. And then after -- when I return from my appointment, we will be back and then we'll argue all the motions that we need, including your motions at the close of the plaintiff's case.

MR. MORGAN: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: So the record should have been clear when I said, reserving all motions and matters, and I mean, once if we get started

arguing, then it's not going to make sense and then just have the jury come back at 4:00 for what you told me was a short one.

So I think it just makes sense to do it procedurally this way. And then the jury -- I can release the jury for the day. And, as I understand it, then all that is remaining is to argue and charge in the morning; is that correct?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes.

MR. MORGAN: That would be my understanding, Your Honor, yes. And we appreciate your courtesy.

THE COURT: All right. My clerk tried to get the exhibits in order. I think this is a good time for you to make sure everything is on the table, everything that you think has been admitted. If there's anything we need to address, we will utilize this time as productively as we can.

MR. MORGAN: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. So we're at ease until your witness comes.

(A recess transpired.)

THE COURT: Anything before we bring in the jury?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right.

(Jury in, 1:38 p.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

Again, reserving all motions and matters, call your first witness.

MR. LAMBERT: The defense calls Chris Stevens, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Sir, please come forward and be sworn.

CHRIS STEVENS,

being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

THE CLERK: Please be seated. State your full name for the record and please spell your last name.

THE WITNESS: My name is Chris Stevens. Stevens is S-t-e-v-e-n-s.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Your witness.

MR. MORGAN: May it please the Court?

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. MORGAN:

Q. Mr. Stevens, good afternoon.

A. Good afternoon.

Q. What is your current job?

A. I'm the head athletic trainer for Berkeley High School.

Q. What does that mean? What do you do?

A. I take care of all of the athletic injuries, illnesses regarding all of their after-school athletics programs.

Q. Does that include the football team?

A. It does.

Q. During Christmas break or the beginning of the spring semester in the 2015/16 school year, were you asked a question about the eligibility of student athletes for winter sports?

A. I was asked about the physicals regarding their eligibility, yes.

Q. Who asked you that question?

A. That would be our -- actually, still current strength coach, Mike Ward.

Q. What did you do after you were asked that question?

A. I went to administration to access the athletic director's office to find the physical forms. And me, Mike Ward, and one of the assistant principals walked into the office to find them.

Q. What did you do after you were in the office?

A. We went through the athletic file cabinet to search for athletes that were weight conditioning to make sure that they were medically cleared to be in the weight room.

Q. In the process of doing that, did you discover that there were some records that were missing?

A. There were some inaccuracies to some of the files.

Q. This is a document that's been previously marked as Exhibit Number 13. It's an e-mail that you sent. Do you recognize this document?

A. Yes, sir.

MR. MORGAN: May I approach, Your Honor?

THE COURT: You may.

BY MR. MORGAN:

Q. I hand this to you just so it's a little easier to read, Mr. Stevens. Did you write that after you went into the office to review the files?

A. I did.

Q. Everyone you sent that e-mail to, were they coaches for a Berkeley High School athletic

team?

A. They were former coaches.

Q. At the time --

A. Some still are and then some were former coaches.

Q. But at the time you sent this e-mail, they were all then coaching at Berkeley High School --

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Okay. Changing gears for a moment, you had said you were also the trainer for the football team, correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When Coach Cruce went to less contact in practice, did he ever discuss with you that that was to prevent concussions?

A. We never sat down and discussed it directly, no.

MR. MORGAN: Thank you very much.

I have no further questions, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Ms. Bloodgood.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MS. BLOODGOOD:

Q. Mr. Stevens, I'm Nancy Bloodgood. I

represent Jeff Cruce. Have you ever checked high school eligibility for athletes?

A. I now assist in that process, yes, ma'am.

Q. And when Coach Cruce was terminated, when you were in his office looking through files, at that point, had you ever checked high school eligibility --

A. I had never done eligibility at Berkeley High School, no, ma'am.

Q. And, at that time, did you know what had to be in a file?

A. I did from previous experience.

Q. Eligibility files?

A. Yes, ma'am.

Q. How did you know that?

A. Well, I've been in athletic training since 2010, so I'd had previous experience and knowledge of records that need to be in place.

Q. You're not certified to do eligibility files, right?

A. Not directly, no, ma'am.

Q. How were you -- you're not certified as an athletic director --

A. No.

Q. -- to check eligibility?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you. I don't have any other questions.

THE COURT: Redirect?

MR. MORGAN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You may step down. You are free to leave. Feel free to stay with us.

MR. MORGAN: The defense rests, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. And, again, reserving all motions or matters, any rebuttal witnesses?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, we have moved quickly, and so we are actually ahead of schedule. My attorneys were right on time that we would be able to stop at 2:00 p.m., but what remains -- you have heard all the testimony. There are some matters of law that I must take up outside of your presence, and so we will adjourn for today.

You will come back tomorrow at 10:00 a.m., at 10:00 a.m., and we will have closing arguments and I will instruct you on the law applicable to this case.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have your

THE COURT: Correct.

All right. So what we will do, I have -- please make sure -- do I have your cell numbers? So when I get off the bench, please give your cell numbers to my clerk. When I am 30 minutes away, she will call you and you will report in 30 minutes. We're at least down for 90 minutes.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Okay.

THE COURT: Okay. But, otherwise, be back at 4:00, and then we'll argue the motions and matters. But if something -- if I'm able to get back more quickly, she will call and let you know. All right?

MR. MORGAN: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: So if you need any anything, talk to the bailiff, but, otherwise, I will see you back no later than 4:00 p.m.

(A recess transpired.)

MR. LAMBERT: The defendant would move for a directed verdict, Your Honor, on both of the claims, and there are legal reasons why judgment as a matter of law should be granted. I will start with the public policy claim first, and I have three reasons why directed verdict is proper.

Number one, Mr. Cruce was not

terminated from his position. He was reassigned and his extracurricular responsibilities were removed, but he was not terminated as an employee of the Berkeley County School District. He's not terminated; he couldn't have been terminated in violation of public policy. That's number one.

Number two, this gets into -- a little more to some legal points. The public policy exception is to South Carolina's at-will employment doctrine. Mr. Cruce was not an at-will employee. As he testified multiple times, he signed a one-year contract each year with Berkeley County School District to teach.

He taught out his 2015-2016 contract and was paid everything he was owed under it; therefore, he was not an at-will employee, so it's not even possible that the public policy exceptions could apply to him.

And third, the public policy exception to an at-will employee, even if he could possibly be categorized as one, requires that as a condition of continued employment, he's required to break the law or the termination itself is a violation of the criminal law.

He testified himself that he was never

told or required to violate the concussion statute and never told or required to violate the guidelines, which don't even have the force of law and can't be the basis for a public policy claim.

So for three separate reasons, the public policy claim fails.

As to his defamation claim --

THE COURT: Let me hear from -- do one at a time.

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, Your Honor.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Okay. Your Honor, it's our position that he was constructively discharged when he was moved into a position that he hadn't had in 24 years to a middle school when he was a high school teacher and that -- to a lower salary, and he had no choice other than to resign that employment. And constructive discharge is when you are put in a position that is so intolerable you have to leave that job.

And I think there's evidence before the jury that they did ruin his career; they put him in a position, promised him help, he never got it. There was no way he could stay in that and continue his career as a high school coach.

So we think there's evidence in the

record from which a jury could find that he was constructively discharged. It would have been very easy to move him to a high school, and there was no consideration given to that at all.

The -- he is an at-will employee. The personnel handbook will say he's an at-will employee. All teachers in South Carolina are at-will employees. They do have a -- usually, they give them a contract for a year-to-year for -- especially, for a continuing -- and this is a continuing contract because he had worked for a long time, but teachers in South Carolina can be terminated at any -- at any time. They have grievance rights, but they are still at-will employees.

Most of these contacts in school districts actually say they are at will. I know this one does not say it, but I think that there are other documents that do say that he is an at-will employment.

And, quite honestly, I can find this, but as a matter of law, teachers in South Carolina don't get contracts that they cannot be terminated under -- under the term of that contract.

This contract says, in fact, that the

assignment's tentative and may be changed by the administration upon notice to and consultation. That is a not a contract for a definite term of employment.

So it says, year to year, and it does have a term on it, but it does say that, however, it is understood that this assignment is tentative, and that is at-will language. So he's an at-will employee. I just think that's -- I've never heard that argument before, but teachers are at will.

An employment contract will be something like, you are hired for this position and here is your term of employment and here's how we can fire you and here's how we can't fire you. It has terms in it. It has much more than, it's tentative and can be changed upon notice. That's at will.

THE COURT: But don't you have to show that he was terminated in violation of a clear mandate of public policy?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes, let me address that, Your Honor. Under the public policy, the statute says that -- well, if you are discharged in violation of a public policy, if you're required to violate the law as a condition of your employment,

that's Miller v. Fairfield Communities, Inc., 299 S.C. 23 Court of Appeals (1989).

The law is not that someone has to say to you, break the law and if you don't, I'll fire you. No. It's that a condition of his employment was that he hit more.

The principal said, if you don't hit, you're going to be fired. That's in evidence. He was told he was fired for not hitting enough --

THE COURT: But your client testified, no one instructed me to violate concussion protocol. Principal Steele said, I never instructed him to violate concussion guidelines, the concussion protocol statute, and Coach Cruce was not terminated solely on the basis of his performance as an AD.

So tell me what public policy is then --

MS. BLOODGOOD: The public policy is the statute that I submitted earlier. There's a DHEC statute that says that coaches have to have model policies. DHEC is going to post them. Coaches have to follow them. They have to report injuries. There's another statute that says that the principal has to put it in the files and report

it.

And, at the end of that statute, what it says is, a coach can be liable if he's grossly negligent. Now, there's limited liability under that statute, but there is liability. If he were grossly negligent in managing concussions, he would be subject to liability, criminal liability under this act.

THE COURT: Let me ask it this way, maybe I didn't ask the question clearly enough. Why don't you tell me what it is that you're alleging that the defendant made him violate and what public policy it is, because I haven't heard testimony as such?

I hear what you're saying, I have the statute in front of me, and what I heard your client say to me was -- or to the jury, nobody ever said I needed to violate DHEC and State concussion protocol guidelines.

MS. BLOODGOOD: That's right, Your Honor. No one did --

THE COURT: So is there some other public policy exception that you would add?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No. It is that statute.

THE COURT: All right.

MS. BLOODGOOD: However, no one said, violate that statute. What they said to him is, if you don't hit more, you are going to be fired. And that is -- that didn't tie it into the statute, but the statute creates the public policy that's against concussions.

So when a principal says, if you don't hit more and if you don't have more blocking and tackling --

THE COURT: But can't you hit more without violating the public policy?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Not without exposing your students to more concussions and injuries. And he testified --

THE COURT: So it's your position that your client testified to that?

MS. BLOODGOOD: He testified that his strategy was passing and fast pace and less -- just a helmet on and less stuff on at practice so that there would be more moving along and an offense game. And what he said was, that reduced concussions because you have less blocking and tackling less on the ground.

So his philosophy, as he tried to --

THE COURT: But isn't that just exactly what it was? It was a philosophy. Principal Steele didn't say, violate this. You must do this. I want more tackles. I want more injuries.

MS. BLOODGOOD: He didn't say injuries, but he said, I want more blocking and tackling, and you're not hitting enough, and I'm going to fire you because you're not hitting enough.

That is the same thing as saying, we want you to hit. We want you to put the students in danger. We don't want you to be careful about concussions. We don't want --

THE COURT: But during the winning season, was your client violating public policy?

MS. BLOODGOOD: He was violating public policy when he fired him as the coach, athletic director --

THE COURT: No. No, your client. Your client.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Oh, I'm sorry.

THE COURT: In the way he was coaching and playing football. And I apologize, I am ignorant about football. I went to a high school that did not have a football team until I was in

tenth grade, so I know nothing about football.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Right.

THE COURT: But I do know about public policy.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Right. No, during the school year he was trying not to violate the public policy. He was trying to decrease and control concussions through this new way of playing. The principal didn't like it; they wanted hitting, they wanted action.

So because my client refused to put his students in a position where there would be more concussions --

THE COURT: But wasn't that his choice and his decision as a coach to do so? As he said, he was putting all his chips on the table.

MS. BLOODGOOD: But it led -- it was his choice, but it led to his termination. The principal said, if you don't hit, I'm going to terminate you.

THE COURT: We're here at the directed verdict stage, so I just need -- your position is that your client was forced to violate public policy or refused to violate public policy, which is the hitting, and, therefore he was terminated.

MS. BLOODGOOD: My position -- yes. My position is that a condition of his employment was that he ignore DHEC's law and he violate that -- not violate the law, but that he not do what he thought was in the best interest to minimize concussions. And --

THE COURT: But I thought former Supervisor Blackburn testified that his activities as an athletic director were not part of his original contract, and so this was just extracurricular fun stuff he was doing.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Right. So what they said was -- it's unclear whether it's the coaching or the -- I think the coaching, she said, was part of the teacher contract. And the principal terminated him in all -- well, in two of those as a coach, part of the teaching contract.

So that is a termination, to answer that -- that argument. But he was terminated as a coach because he did not -- he would not change his way of doing his job, and so that makes it a condition of his employment. When he is required as part of his job --

THE COURT: So your position, again, is that he was hired as a coach, not as a teacher.

MS. BLOODGOOD: All three at the same time, Your Honor. But there has been testimony that the coaching is very, very important in the scheme of things.

THE COURT: But I think that this is something that needs to be parsed out in order for us, first of all, to determine if he was terminated, because we all agree there is no controversy that he was transferred.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Right. My argument --

THE COURT: And so would you agree with me that the contract was for teaching? His employment was for teaching and that coaching and athletic directing were a supplement to that teaching contract, then we have no wrongful termination; would you agree with me?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No. I would --

THE COURT: Why not?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Your Honor, that was a constructive discharge and pushing -- taking him out of his position, putting him in a middle school at a different job that he had not done in 24 years, did not get the training, was forced to get out of that job. That's a constructive discharge for the teaching position.

The coaching position, the testimony was that -- from Ms. Blackburn that the coaching was part of the teaching and then the athletic director was something else. That was separate.

So when the coaching -- it's clear he was terminated from coaching, and then he was transferred in the teaching. But my position is he was terminated from coaching and constructively discharged from his teaching position because of the situation. Because --

THE COURT: And, again, the public policy you feel is the violation of the DHEC statute?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes. By making a condition of employment that my client not be cognizant of concussions and not do what was necessary in model policies to protect the kids like the statute says --

THE COURT: Well, how do I get over the legal hurdle that all the testimony was -- and, again, nobody told me to violate DHEC statute. I never told him to violate concussion guidelines. How do I get over that hurdle?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Your Honor, I think those specific words, no doubt, were not -- nobody

said, here's the DHEC statute. We don't like it. I don't think they knew about the DHEC statute, quite honestly, but they said -- they pretty much said the exact same thing.

The substance of what they said was, as a condition of your employment, you are going to do more blocking and tackling and more hitting, and that -- and in the practices --

THE COURT: They said to him in those words?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes. The principal -- there's testimony that the principal said to him, I'm firing you because you're not hitting enough. And he said in his deposition, you're not blocking and tackling enough in the practices. There are people watching. We want more tackling and blocking.

There was testimony from Coach Cruce that there were less injuries when he went to this offensive -- you know, more throwing and less blocking and tackling. So he did testify that it was working and that there were less injuries and less concussions.

It was part of the way -- by doing the fast offense, you're going to have less injuries

with the blocking and the tackling, but it's not as dramatic. It's not as much fun to watch.

And that's why he was told, if you want to keep your job as a coach, you've got to do more hitting. That's what the principal said, more blocking and tackling. He differentiated between the words, but he said, or I'm going to fire you. That's a condition of your employment.

So he didn't use -- I don't think he knew about the DHEC statute, but the DHEC statute -- in the public policy realm, the DHEC statute is the vehicle that the legislature uses to say this is important.

THE COURT: Does it matter whether or not Principal Steele knew about the DHEC statute?

MS. BLOODGOOD: I don't think it does, Your Honor, because the public policy of the State, whether he knows it or not, the seminal case is when somebody is subpoenaed to go to court and the employer says, you have to stay at work. You can't follow that subpoena.

Now, they don't -- the employer doesn't know that it's important to respond to a subpoena, so it's not necessary that the employer know what the public policy of the State is.

It's my job to say, here's the statute, and it says the public policy of the State is we want to limit concussions. We don't want to expose students to danger, and that is enveloped in a statute.

So, of course, he doesn't have to say, don't violate the statute. He just has to say, I'm going to fire you if you do something that is against public policy.

What I'm saying, the public policy in this State is to limit concussions, and Coach Cruce was trying to do that with his offensive -- with his philosophy.

THE COURT: Doesn't there also have to be a retaliatory position on behalf of the employer in response to the plaintiff's failure to follow through with that public policy?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Well, Your Honor, so say there -- on the -- say there's a -- no, there doesn't have to be retaliation. The employer has to do something that's against public policy and say -- it's not retaliation, but condition is on the employment. That's where you condition the employment.

It's more that the -- that the employer

has to say, I'm going to fire you if you go to that subpoena. I'm going to fire you if you don't start hitting more.

THE COURT: And then fire that employee because they went to court because --

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes. Yes.

THE COURT: Because they went ahead with the public policy.

MS. BLOODGOOD: That's right. And that's what I'm saying, Your Honor. In this case, he was fired as coach, and that's in the contract, and then he was transferred.

THE COURT: Again, does your client have to know that that's the public policy in place?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor. I don't think either of them had to know. I'm just saying that it's an exception to the at-will employment. You can fire anybody for any reason, but not for a bad reason. And one of the bad reasons is that if you're violating the public policy -- if the public -- if the State says it is our policy that concussions are bad for students, it's our policy that it's the coach's responsibility to take care of students.

And then if an employer says, I want you to hit more, I want you to block and tackle, and I don't like your philosophy of trying to avoid -- he didn't -- it wasn't that blunt, but the end result is, he is -- the end result of what they did was to say, I don't like your policy of avoiding blocking and tackling, of doing less hitting, and I'm going to fire you if you don't -- and they fired him as coach and transferred him off into the boondocks, which I think there's plenty of evidence that that's a constructive discharge.

THE COURT: I'm sure that the teachers at Sedgefield would not like to be told they're in the boondocks.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes. And I don't even know where Sedgefield is. I'm thinking more high school to middle school --

THE COURT: It's in Berkeley County. It's in the heart of Berkeley County.

MS. BLOODGOOD: But high school to middle school.

THE COURT: All right. So, let me hear from you.

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, Your Honor. As to the contract issue, we have a signed contract. It

doesn't matter what any other contracts could say or might say. This is a contract to render acceptable service for 190 days, or the given school year. He may be assigned reasonable extracurricular activities. That's what athletics are.

And then he has an assignment each year, where it's going to --

THE COURT: Where is his compensation package? Where does it say that -- he gets paid as a teacher and then he gets extra for his extracurricular activities, correct?

MR. LAMBERT: Correct. There is not a document I'm aware of in evidence that has a breakdown of the numbers. Mr. Cruce's testimony was, I got a base teacher salary and about $10,000 for being a head coach and then some other amount for being the athletic director on top of that.

But the point simply is that he had a contract. It's for a specific period of time. And related to that, there's no constructive discharge because he served out his 2015-2016 contract and then he chose to resign. But what he simply did was, he didn't sign a contract for the next year. He finished the contract he was on. He didn't

renew it.

Finally, as to the hitting more and violating public policy, more blocking and tackling does not mean he was required to violate the DHEC statute, which puts no regulation or restriction on the amounts of practice or any guidelines.

Exhibit 15 to Mr. Cruce's deposition, which is now Court's Exhibit -- I'm not sure if it's 2 or 3. It talks about -- it's from the National Federation of State High School Association, and its restriction or its guidelines and recommendations is that they recommend full contact be allowed in no more than two to three practices per week, consideration should also be given to limiting full contact on consecutive days and limiting full contact time to no more 30 minutes per day and no more than 60 or 90 minutes per week.

Coach Cruce's practices were nowhere near the top of that recommendation. He could have done plenty more blocking and tackling and not violated any of those guidelines, which, as I mentioned before, don't have the force of law.

And if his argument's right, that by having to do more than he was doing in the 2015

year, presumably he in previous years was violating the statute and a lot of other high school coaches around the state are violating the statute, and I don't think that's the case. The statute --

THE COURT: Do you think that's true, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Well, Your Honor, I don't think guidelines establish public policy. I think statutes establish public policy. So the statute that establishes that the State of South Carolina is DHEC statute which is in front of you. The guidelines are in accordance with that statute, but I don't -- the public policy is not specific as to guidelines.

It is -- in this State, there will be some policies. Each school will determine the best way to handle concussions and head injuries. And so a public policy is a general concept of -- our State believes that it's good to avoid concussions, and that's what that statute represents, and the other DHEC statute which requires reporting of them.

It's something much more broad than guidelines. I don't think the guidelines are really relevant.

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, if I may. The statute is very precise in what it requires in terms of protocol for training about concussions and educating and for treating them when they're suspected. It has nothing to do with the amount of blocking or tackling in practice.

Violating this statute and this public policy would be saying, all right. You look woozy. Get back in there, though, because you've got to get to be a better football player.

THE COURT: Do you have -- do you, as a school district, have guidelines and procedures based upon model guidelines referenced in subsection A of the statute?

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, I do not know the answer to that question.

THE COURT: Do you know, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Well, I think it's the coach who's in charge of policies. And it says each school will develop -- I think that would be the head coach who is in charge of deciding how do we comply with the public policy of this State, which is to have less concussions.

MR. LAMBERT: But, fundamentally, you can comply with the statute and have more blocking

and tackling.

THE COURT: So what does DHEC say is a model policy on its website? What is a model policy?

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, we have not pulled the model policy. The model policy --

THE COURT: What are the model policies? If you're alleging that he's violating this, what are the model policies, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: The model policy is the policy he puts in place as the head coach, where he says, we are going to have less hitting. We're doing an offense. We're going to avoid blocking and tackling. That's what he does at his school.

THE COURT: The statute says DHEC has model policies on their website and then a local school district shall develop guidelines and procedures. So how am I supposed to determine what the public policy is if you don't tell me what it is?

Because I think Mr. Lambert is right. Because if he's changed his policy -- your client changed his policy in a particular school year because he was concerned, then the previous school years he was violating that same policy unless the

policy changed.

It's not up to your client to develop public policy. He can develop his own guidelines for his team, correct? But he can't develop public policy and the statute is clear. He can't develop public policy for the school district.

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, he cannot do that, Your Honor, but I don't think that the public policy is the guidelines. I think the public policy is the statute itself which says, we don't like concussions. So it's not that he --

THE COURT: Well, I don't think anybody in this room likes concussions, but, I mean, that's the issue. The problem is, the issue is that I have to establish whether or not your client was terminated in violation of the public -- because he violated public policy.

You can't tell me what the public policy is. Is it 90 minutes of contact? 30 minutes of contact? And at what point was he not violating the public policy previously because he realized that perhaps he was injuring the students before?

MS. BLOODGOOD: And I understand that argument, Your Honor. I just think that the public

policy is broader than that, and it's not that specific as 90 minutes and 30 minutes.

The statute says, put some model policies into effect, but the overall idea of the statute is it is against the public policy of the State of South Carolina to allow schools to put children in a position where there's going to be concussions or head injuries.

THE COURT: So Principal Steele then is telling him to violate public policy.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes, by telling him that he had to hit more --

THE COURT: So tell me how I can determine -- I just need to see it in black and white.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yeah.

THE COURT: Okay? And maybe I'm missing the point because I don't understand the blocking. But it seems pretty simple to me. If there's a policy -- a public policy that is defined by the statute, I need to be able to look at it; otherwise, it's just -- it's just a hole. It's just something for us -- some guidelines, which is not a public policy.

MS. BLOODGOOD: No. I don't think the

guideline would be the public policy. I think it is when the legislature passes a law that says, we are concerned about concussions. We want you to develop procedures to avoid concussions and head injuries. That is the general public policy.

I think it is much -- it is just a general public policy. It's not specific.

THE COURT: How many children at Berkeley had concussions?

MS. BLOODGOOD: There were a lot and they had to be documented and they were documented every year. There's another statute that requires you to do that.

THE COURT: Which I think we may be getting far afield of what we need to be looking at; however, I think Mr. Lambert brought up a really good point. Was your client violating public policy prior to the 2015-2016?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No. He was always trying to avoid concussions, but when he changed the way that he was doing the offense on the football, the intent was to even limit it further because there were concussions. There are always concussions when kids play football.

THE COURT: And is it your position now

that Berkeley -- that the new coach at Berkeley is also violating public policy?

MS. BLOODGOOD: I don't know. I'm sure he's trying to limit concussions, but when a principal steps up and says to an employee, I'm going to fire you unless you do something that the coach knew would increase the concussions and make him be in violation of a statute, that's the problem.

THE COURT: Mr. Lambert.

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, I think we've beaten this pretty well now. Simply put, he was never told he had to violate the statute and he admitted that. And even if you get past that he was a contract employee, and even if you get past he wasn't discharged, he still can't overcome that hurdle, which is why we think we're entitled to a directed verdict.

THE COURT: All right. Let me hear from you on the defamation.

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, Your Honor. And I will focus here on another legal issue, and this is whether Mr. Cruce is a limited public figure. I'm sure the Court is generally familiar, but just to remind everyone, generally, defamation has six

elements in a private figure case, but certain individuals have to prove more than the average person, and that's someone who qualifies as a public figure or official.

You know, public officials generally are always required to prove actual malice under New York Times v. Sullivan; public figures who are widely known across the country always have to do it; and then you get into the category of a limited public figure, which is what Mr. Cruce is.

A limited public figure, according to Erickson v. Jones Street Publishers, which is 368 S.C. 444 from 2006, the Supreme Court defines this, quoting the US Supreme Court, is an individual who voluntarily injects himself or is drawn into a particular public controversy and thereby becomes a public figure for a limited range of issues. In either case, such persons assume special prominence for the resolution of public question.

Our Supreme Court went on to give five factors the Court should consider when determining if someone is a limited public figure. I'm going to walk through these briefly and tie it to the evidence that you've heard.

The Plaintiff had access to channels of

effective communication. We heard that Coach Cruce had a radio --

THE COURT: Let me stop you there.

Do you agree your client is a limited public figure?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Absolutely not, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, the reason she can't agree to that is because under Section 15-78-60, subsection 17, which is part of the Tort Claims Act, it bars any claim against a public entity requiring proof of actual malice.

If he's a limited public figure, this case is barred, his claim is barred, and it must be dismissed. So that's why this is going to be a fight over this particular question.

So number one in these factors -- I'll just call it the Erickson factors since that's the case they're coming from -- the plaintiff had access to channels of effective communication. He had a radio show. He was frequently quoted in newspaper articles about his team.

Exhibit 27, Your Honor, is 197 news articles from the *Post* and *Courier*, the *Berkeley*

Independent and then the -- there was one more Berkeley paper in there and I'm forgetting the name of it at the moment. The ...

THE COURT: Mr. Lambert, just because there is an article doesn't mean that he instigated those articles.

MR. LAMBERT: Correct. But his --

THE COURT: We can write articles about whatever, but it doesn't -- doesn't he have to have instigated something or ...

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, Your Honor, and I'll get to that, but I think with respect to these articles, some of them he's not quoted, like the *Post* and *Courier* summaries of this week and local area football.

But in a lot of the *Berkeley Independent* articles, he is giving quotes to the reporter. If he didn't want to have any connection with those articles, he didn't have to speak to the reporter, but he did. He wanted to talk about his team, and you'd expect a coach to do that.

THE COURT: In those articles, he spoke to the reporters -- because I'm quoted a lot. I don't speak to reporters, but somebody can sit in a public courtroom and quote me as to what I say, but

it doesn't mean that I've spoken to the reporters. They're just free to be in the public arena.

MR. LAMBERT: Correct, they are. And I think we're getting a little far afield, but I think someone who is a judge probably qualifies as a public official under Supreme Court precedent.

And a football coach -- now, there are cases, and there's not one in South Carolina that does it, but there are cases around the country that hold any public employee is a public official who must prove actual malice.

So you could take --

THE COURT: And the reason why I say -- and I haven't had an opportunity to look through 27 to see, and so that's why I'm just asking you to parse that out as to, are they articles about -- that Coach Cruce was -- I don't need to see them all.

MR. LAMBERT: Certainly. But this is a sampling of headlines. Cruce new coach at Berkeley. Cruce era begins at Berkeley. Stags keep winning. Stags making summer progress. Berkeley has experience to win Region 8, 3A.

THE COURT: Those would be about him without him being involved in the article, correct?

MR. LAMBERT: They could, but if you look through these, in a large number --

THE COURT: But that's important to make a distinction.

MR. LAMBERT: It is. It is, Your Honor. And in many of these articles, particularly the *Berkeley Independent* ones, he is quoted that -- most of them are written by a gentleman named Dan Brown, who clearly had the sports beat for the *Berkeley Independent* for these five years or so.

He's giving him quotes and, clearly, speaking to him, or at least to reporters, because if you read it, they're clearly the kind of quotes a coach gives after a game: We're proud of our team; we played well; it was a tough loss this week; we turned the ball over too much.

Second, he's voluntarily assumed the role of special prominence in the public controversy. He voluntarily took the role as coach of the Berkeley High School football team, which as a lot of the testimony drew out, is a significant role in this particular community.

He's not a limited public figure in Columbia or in Greenville, Your Honor. We're talking about in this community, in this region.

He also is voluntarily injecting himself into this in speaking to a reporter from the *Kansas City Star*. I mean, that's a state, you know, over by the Mississippi River in a different time zone where he's giving quotes about this; I'm not going to punt. My chips are all in. This could be a career-ending decision.

So he didn't have to return a call. I'm assuming, and giving him the benefit, the reporter called him rather than he's calling the reporter, which would be a whole other level.

The third factor is he sought to influence the resolution of the outcome of the controversy. He was very outspoken on this new philosophy and the use of data. There is an article from the -- from the *Berkeley Independent* talking about his analytics. There's a Kansas City article talking about his analytics, where he's pushing this new strategy, where he's trying -- saying, people aren't going to like it, but this is where they are, where we're going, and they need to get used to it.

Number four is the controversy existed prior to the publication of the defamatory statement. His tenure as the coach at Berkeley

and, particularly, the controversy of the 2015 season clearly predated any of the allegedly defamatory statements.

And five is, he retained the public figure status at the time of the alleged defamation. The alleged defamation is coming at the time, or within a month or less, of him being removed as the football coach. That would say he's still a limited public figure in the midst of this controversy.

There are cases from around the country that hold coaches as limited public figures, including some cases that do that with high school coaches. There is not one, as I acknowledged to Judge Nicholson at the summary judgment hearing, a case from South Carolina on this point, one way or the other, but the factors are here and point to him being a limited public figure.

And there are other cases from other jurisdictions, including Georgia and Texas and even New York and Connecticut. So we're covering wide ranges here, where coaches in high school sports are limited public figures. So you're on very solid ground to reach that conclusion.

And I probably should have mentioned

this up top: This question of, is he a limited public figure? It is a question of law, Your Honor, for you. It's not one that can ultimately go to the jury.

So that's why he's a limited public figure. That requires him under New York Times v Sullivan to prove actual malice. The Tort Claims Act bars that. And there is, in fact, a court of appeals case called Gause v Doe, 317 S.C. 39 Court of Appeals for 1994.

It's a Myrtle Beach police officer who filed a defamation claim after he was fired for allegedly raping someone in the back of his patrol car. That case was dismissed because he was a public official, had to prove actual malice, and his defamation claim was, therefore, barred.

That case is on all fours, if you switch out police officer and what he allegedly did with football coach and what allegedly happened with Coach Cruce, and that case should control the outcome of this one, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Ms. Bloodgood.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you, Your Honor. I think we need to back up a little bit. This is a very novel argument, but as Mr. Lambert said, there

certainly is no law in South Carolina that would find a football coach to be a limited public official.

And that's because -- back up. Private individuals are more vulnerable to injury than State people, like a police officer. And, therefore, their protection is greater. It is only when you have a person who is a public figure who has special prominence in the resolution of public questions, and that's the key.

THE COURT: But if he's not a public figure, what is he?

MS. BLOODGOOD: The issue, Your Honor, is that it's not a matter of public question or public issue here. It has to be connected with a matter of public issue. Public issue is defined in Time, Inc. v Johnston case, 448 F.2d 378 4th Circuit *(1971)* as something that involves the resolution of a serious social or governmental problem.

The offensive strategy that the high school coach at Berkeley High School takes is not a serious social or governmental problem as a matter of law; and, therefore, since it is not a public issue, he cannot be a limited public figure

speaking on a public issue.

Football -- how a football coach coaches his team is not a public issue. It is not a serious social or governmental issue.

So they're ignoring that whole piece of the puzzle and trying to say that, forget that it's this tiny little issue that is of no consequence to anyone, but we are going to say he's a limited public official.

If that were the case, every single football coach in this state on any single day when they were playing a football game would be a limited public official, which means that you could defame them and that they would have to show malice in order to prevail. And that's just not what the cases say.

So the facts in this case are, besides the most crucial point, is that offensive strategy of Berkeley High School is not a serious social or governmental issue that he was talking about. so he -- so this whole thing fails.

But he says, he didn't get the press, his team got the press. He said he talked to the press because he's the coach. And he said the people didn't know his wife when she walked through

the stands. He said the *Post* and *Courier* covers all of the Berkeley County High School teams, and there are seven of them.

And, Your Honor, there's no press here today. There was no press here yesterday. This is not a man who is a limited public figure. As he said, he is a football coach. The cases in the country that talk about limited public figure, because that is a subset of public official.

So a limited public official, the cases in sports are -- the one in Texas is Vanderberg v Newsweek, Inc., 507 F.2d 1024. That was a college track coach at the University of Texas. The case that was cited, Time, Inc. v Johnston, is a professional basketball player with the Philadelphia Warriors.

These were people who were in either professional or college athletics and then they are -- they are in the newspapers a lot and talking about a particular issue that affects their profession.

The one in the Supreme Court, United States is Curtis v -- Curtis Publishing Company v Butts, 388 U.S. 130 (1967) talked about a well-known college football coach at the University

of Georgia.

There is not a single case in South Carolina that would extend itself to say that a football coach in a high school, in a county where there's seven high schools, is a limited public figure because there is no public issue involved that he is talking about.

The five requirements don't -- they don't apply, even if -- assuming -- and really -- assuming that this was an issue of social and governmental significance, then he -- of course, before the game and after the game, he's going to talk to the newspapers. He's talking about his team. He -- there's no special prominence.

And the most important thing on the second requirement, there's no public controversy. It's -- winning or losing a football game, I'm sorry, is not a matter of public controversy. Whether Cane Bay wins or Berkeley High School wins, to say that you're going to extend the definition of public controversy so that it's one in Cane Bay and it's a public controversy in Berkeley High School, it doesn't make any sense.

That's not what the law is. The law is that generally individuals cannot be defamed

easily, and the exception is if you're a public official and you're talking about something that is of social or governmental significance.

And then there's another exception that if it is social and governmental significance, then you could be a limited public official. But you cannot ignore the requirement that this has to be something that the public is so interested in, that you put yourself in a position where you're actually going to have to show actual malice.

So it's an interesting argument, but it really is -- it's just not applicable to the facts in this case. I don't -- the -- there have been very, very few limited public officials ever found anywhere in the country.

So I think that based on the Time, Inc. v Johnston case, since -- you could say that a football team, whether they win or lose, is an important issue in Berkeley County on any given Friday night, but it is not -- as a matter of law, it is not a serious social or governmental problem.

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, if I may.

THE COURT: Hold on one second.

MR. LAMBERT: Let's clear up one easy thing first: If this is a novel issue in South

Carolina, it's an issue that has to be decided. The fact that it's novel doesn't mean you can't decide it and that you can't answer it for the defendant. So that -- just to put that aside.

It has to be a matter of a public controversy or public issue: Well, a couple of responses.

One, Mr. Cruce says it can't be sports, they're not big enough. Well, the U.S. Supreme Court in the Curtis case she cited about the Georgia coach clearly took sports in that context to be something that can create a public controversy, as do all the other cases that she said are distinguishable. So they can be.

And what you heard here from witnesses is that football in this community is a serious public matter. I mean, Coach Cruce's wife referred to it like coaching the Philadelphia Eagles, like being an NFL team. It's a big deal here.

And a coach, and particularly in a community of this size, has got far greater access to the media than the beat cop did in Myrtle Beach from the Gause case.

All football coaches are public figures, they are limited public figures. It's an

argument that if you do this, every --

THE COURT: Do you?

MR. LAMBERT: No, Your Honor. It is case specific, and it's dependent. I grew up in Columbia. I went to A.C. Flora. We weren't very good and no one really cared if we won or lost on Friday night.

Our coach, a guy named Robin Bacon, probably wasn't a limited public figure because really no one cared. I mean, it was nice to win. Don't get us wrong. But we didn't live and die by wins the way you heard that this community does.

The coach up at -- Dorman's pretty good. That coach, you might have evidence it is, but a coach in a 1A school that typically goes one and nine, they may not care enough to make him one. Part of that is, what does the community do, and then what is that person's role, the coach's role in that?

THE COURT: The defamatory statements, were they made as a result of his coaching or as a result of his teaching, or does that even matter?

MR. LAMBERT: The result -- that matters, Your Honor, because -- well. Okay. It matters unless --

THE COURT: These cases that you've provided, the cases I've researched says there's -- you could be a limited public figure from things. So, an example, there was a case in Nevada that said that high school football coaches could be limited public official figures for their coaching.

MR. LAMBERT: Yes.

THE COURT: But it would not go to their private life.

MR. LAMBERT: Exactly.

THE COURT: And so I think that -- so my question was to flesh out if -- so even assuming that's your argument, does the statement -- are the statements that are made, are they related to the coaching? Are they related to teaching? Or does that even matter in this analysis?

MR. LAMBERT: Okay. I will answer it in two parts; and the first one is that it does not matter if you follow the line of cases that say that every public employee is a public official. Because, in that case, whether a teacher or as a coach, he's a public employee, he's a public official, and all public officials must prove actual malice.

THE COURT: Do you agree with that

statement, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor. Every public --

THE COURT: Just asking?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Absolutely not.

MR. LAMBERT: Public official, public figure, limited public figure.

THE COURT: I was trying to find some common ground ...

MR. LAMBERT: So if he's not a public official, all of whom must prove actual malice, and he is going to be a limited public figure, it then does matter because he is not going to -- the driver's ed teacher at Berkeley High School is not going to be a limited public figure. I don't think the driver's ed class gets people really worked up about anything.

The football team, on the other hand, is a different story. Well, everything unless -- the football -- and his role as athletic director, he was both. And while they're different, they both go to sports.

And what you'll see in here are articles where Coach Cruce, as the athletic director, is doing things like creating the

Berkeley High School Hall of Fame. And that's getting publicity in town and people are getting inducted. So --

THE COURT: And because of that, then he rises to a limited public official?

MR. LAMBERT: That alone is not. I think, what it's hard to do in the context of limited public figure is separate his coach hat and his AD hat because they're so intertwined in what he's doing and how people view him.

He's the head of the football team and the athletics program, and that's the lens through which you have to see him.

Clearly, the January 7th e-mail relating to eligibility, the one from Chris Stevens and what's in the files, deals with him and his sports hat. And I don't see how the statement in the *Post* and *Courier,* Cruce out as coach, AD at Berkeley, doesn't also relate to that when the headline of the article itself is, he's out as the coach and the AD.

So the statements, I think, have to -- clearly, go to him and his sports hat as the coach and as the AD. So we can put the teacher hat aside and it's -- it's -- he is not -- excuse me, he is

someone who has access to the media in a way that the average person doesn't.

The reason a private figure does not have to prove actual malice is because they don't have a way to speak for themselves and get their side of the story out to the public the way someone who is a public figure does.

Well, Coach Cruce had a way to get his story out. He did it in the *Berkeley Independent* and in the *Kansas City Star*. He's not like every other person on the street or any other person in the stands at that football game.

The last two points that I would make is this: The issue here is the football coach in Moncks Corner, but if Mr. Cruce is right and this issue is about concussions, then it would seem that that certainly does rise to the public controversy and interest, given how important he has been arguing it was.

And, lastly, there may not have been a reporter sitting back there today, Your Honor, but there was an article in the *Post* and *Courier* Saturday morning that this case was going to trial, and there are very few cases in common pleas that make a major newspaper when they're getting ready

to go to trial.

So I think that is yet one more example -- and you can, obviously, take judicial notice that a newspaper article was published.

It's just one more example of the fact that Coach Cruce is not like most plaintiffs and has far more notoriety and access to media than a typical defamation plaintiff.

THE COURT: All right. Ms. Bloodgood.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Your Honor, the contention that a public -- that you should --

THE COURT: Tell me -- and so let's do it this way --

MS. BLOODGOOD: Okay.

THE COURT: -- because I'm going -- I pulled your Complaint and I'm looking at your pretrial brief. What statements exactly are you alleging are defamatory?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Two things that are defamatory are their actions, their silence when they terminated him from the coach, from the AD, transferred him, and demoted him, and they never said a reason why, which resulted in all sorts of inferences that he was unfit for his job and that he had done something very wrong.

He was working with children. He was a coach. And, all of a sudden, 26 years, he is out of work. He has -- he has been fired suddenly as a coach at the same time as --

THE COURT: Let me ask you this: So the lack of a statement you're alleging is defamation?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes, Your Honor. The way that it was handled, defamation -- it went by innuendo. When you take an act which sends a message that somebody has done something wrong and that message is false, that is defamation.

When you fire somebody -- for instance, Your Honor, if you fire somebody and you have the police come in and escort them out, you have defamed that person because the inference is that that person has done something very wrong.

THE COURT: So how do I -- do you have a case or some indication somewhere for me to -- that silence is a statement? Doesn't it have to be a statement?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: It can be a nonverbal assertion?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Defamation by innuendo;

yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Do you have a case on that?

MS. BLOODGOOD: I will get you a case on defamation by innuendo, but it is a -- when -- there are cases when somebody is terminated and somebody is -- for instance, police come in -- you always tell somebody, don't bring the police. Don't embarrass them. Don't -- because the inference is that they've done something wrong and that would be defamation.

So when you fire somebody as a coach, but also -- here's the problem. Also, they fired him as the athletic director the same day when he hasn't done anything wrong as the athletic director.

And then they fire him as -- or they transfer him to a middle school, and they give him a different teaching position. What he said was, he was immediately shunned; his friends didn't talk to him, the coaches; he couldn't get a job.

The inference out there by them refusing to say, oh, by the way, he was a good athletic director and there's nothing wrong with his teaching, through their silence, they inferred that he had done something wrong. That is one

basis of our defamation claim.

THE COURT: So you have to show fault. What should they have done to absolve fault?

MS. BLOODGOOD: They should have -- well, there was no reason. The testimony was that there were other coaches who had been fired as head coach and still stayed as AD and still stayed as a teacher.

THE COURT: But we're concerned about your client.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes. They should have -- there's two things they could have done. They could have kept him in the position that he -- that there was no fault and that he was doing a good job in.

There was no need to move him from all -- if they had just said, we're getting rid of a head coach, then there would have been no defamation because he still would have been the AD. He would have had his respect. He would have had a half a year to look for a job.

Instead, they move him immediately out of all three with silence and there's -- every -- all of a sudden people say, what's gone on? Why is he being taken out of the class in this situation?

It's the way that they handled it.

THE COURT: Well, the former superintendent said that she saw this as an opportunity in a school that had a need.

MS. BLOODGOOD: And she said there was no opening in that school also. The jury could find that she pushed -- that she moved him -- he had a good ADEPT score. She also testified he was meeting goals as a teacher. There was no reason to move him.

THE COURT: So the silence is the defamation. You said there were two. What was the other defamatory statement?

MS. BLOODGOOD: The other one is the defamatory e-mail that Chris Stevens sent out right after the coach left, and that e-mail was sent to a lot of people who did not need to know. They were not head coaches.

They had no right to the information in the e-mail which inferred that there were things missing in the files, that Coach Cruce had not maintained the files, that he was incompetent in his position as athletic director, and the information in that e-mail was false.

Coach Cruce testified that, a, it

shouldn't have gone to all those people, some of whom he didn't know, but, b, there were lots -- there was lots of information in that e-mail that was just false. And it was accusing him of not having information that didn't need to be in the file anyway and it shouldn't have been in the file.

So that was -- after they fired him, then they send another e-mail that makes him even look worse by saying, here's what he did and he's a liability to the school. The word, liability, is in there.

So those are the -- those are the basis for the defamation.

THE COURT: What exhibit number was that, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Excuse me?

THE COURT: What exhibit number was that?

MS. BLOODGOOD: That is ...

MR. MORGAN: Number 13, Your Honor.

MR. LAMBERT: Number 13.

THE COURT: Could I see 13?

MR. MORGAN: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You may continue.

MS. BLOODGOOD: You had asked me

earlier what could they have done. Not only could they have just kept him in his other two positions, but if they were going to move him, they could have made a statement and said, we're not moving you because you're a bad teacher; or we're not moving you because you're a bad athletic director; or you haven't done anything that's egregious. But, instead, there's testimony that the principal said he was terminated for cause.

THE COURT: Anything further?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

MR. LAMBERT: May I?

THE COURT: Sure.

MR. LAMBERT: We keep hearing, it implies he's done something wrong. Your Honor, he was sent to a middle school to work with younger children. If there was something he had done wrong with students, he never would have been sent to another school. He would have been kicked out of the school district entirety, so there's no way that can be the implication.

So to take these -- number one was the silence. I am not aware of a case -- it doesn't mean it doesn't exist, Your Honor, but I am not aware of a case that says silence alone can be

defamatory and defamation by innuendo.

There is generally --

THE COURT: Ms. Bloodgood is going to give us one.

MR. LAMBERT: I look forward to seeing it because I don't know that, and my impression was that you make a statement and something is missing or there's an implication in the statement that is an innuendo of something that's defamatory.

What they could have done differently, they could have made a statement that you're a good teacher, you're a good AD, but you're no longer the head coach. There cannot be a judicially created rule in defamation that says that employer has to explain why someone is transferred or demoted or fired.

Generally, companies and employers don't walk to talk about it because they don't want to have to say anything about it for fear of creating more of a fuss that's there. If courts start requiring an employer to say, well, you were good about this, but we had to let you go, not only does it pinpoint exactly what the flaw was, but now we're going to have a lot of litigation over, well, was the statement right? Did it say too much? Did

it not say enough?

I think Superintendent Blackburn explained why the transfer was appropriate; to give the athletic department a fresh start.

Second, as to the Chris Stevens e-mail, which was Exhibit 13, you have -- Mr. Cruce testified that everyone on there looked like a coach. Now, he didn't know all of them because some of them were volunteer coaches, which is somewhat of a concern that the athletic director doesn't know everyone who's working with his kids, but Mr. Stevens testified that he went into the office with two other people, they reviewed it and that this is what they found.

Now, finally, we kept hearing that he was terminated for cause. He wasn't terminated, just so that we don't let that slip away.

And one final point, Your Honor, if people really care why Mr. Cruce is being transferred, that only goes back to the limited public figure argument of the fact that people in the community care about this individual more than they care about others.

Generally, if a teacher gets transferred, most folks aren't going to know about

it or aren't going to care unless they've got a child affected by it. If people cared about the fact that Mr. Cruce was transferred, that suggests he's got a profile in this community that is far more public than everyone else.

THE COURT: All right. My clerk is printing off the South Carolina defamation by innuendo case. So as soon as it's printed, we will read it.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Your Honor.

THE COURT: Brief rebuttal?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes, I do. I'm not saying an employer has to always explain their actions, but when they act in a manner that infers wrongdoing, that's defamation by innuendo.

And I know -- I said, silence, but silence -- and I'll quote Samuel Clement on this, among other common lies, we have the silent lie, the deception which one conveys by simply keeping still and concealing the truth.

Their actions, by keeping still, by not saying --

THE COURT: I don't know that the law imposes a duty to quell everybody's innuendo. What other people assume from what happened is not the

employer's responsibility if they haven't said anything.

MS. BLOODGOOD: If the actions or the silence of the employer infer wrongdoing or infer a false statement, if they say something that defames the person, then it's actionable.

THE COURT: Okay. Tell me what it is that you believe could -- that the school district did that could have been inferred. Just because he didn't like where he ended up, that he perceived it to be a demotion, I don't think that's innuendo.

MS. BLOODGOOD: It's not where he ended up. It's that he is simultaneously fired as head coach, fired as athletic director, and moved from a high school, where he's always been, to a middle school which sends a signal, you cannot coach high school football anymore.

And it did. As he testified, it absolutely ruined his career. He was off bounds because everyone inferred there is something wrong here. He has done something wrong. Why would you take somebody, take them out as a coach, take them out as athletic director and get him out of the high school where he's spent his whole life and move him somewhere? There is something wrong with

what he is doing; that was the inference.

He didn't realize how serious -- he testified he didn't realize how serious it was in the beginning until he was -- nobody would talk to him. He was just off -- off limits.

And so that's the defamation. A jury -- I think a jury could find, based on the shunning, the fact that there were different reasons after the fact about why he was moved, there were inconsistencies that -- and, in fact, both Brenda Blackburn and Steven Steele said, yes, people could infer that there was -- that something was wrong by the way that he was, all of a sudden, taken out of all of these positions.

That -- so that is the defamation. And when I say, silence, I mean that the actions coupled with no reason for them infer, just like an action of taking -- escorting you out of the workplace with a police officers.

THE COURT: So you're saying that there were no statements, there was only action.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Correct. It was their actions that -- that inferred the wrongdoing on his part.

THE COURT: And, again, I'm just

reviewing this, but -- and it's a 4th Circuit opinion. It says there has to be -- there has to be some statement made in order for there to be defamation by innuendo. There still has to be some sort of statement made.

All right. So I will -- anything further?

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, I'm just looking at the case that was brought out. It's Fountain v First Reliant Bank; it's either headnote 6 and 7, which is at pages 441 and 442 --

THE COURT: I have it.

MR. LAMBERT: You've got it? Perfect.

THE COURT: I gave it to you.

MR. LAMBERT: The -- your esteemed deputy did. Do you have a copy?

THE COURT: Do you think that my deputy -- I gave it to you and provided it next to you, Mr. Lambert. That's where it came from. As brilliant as my deputy is, I do not believe he has a Westlaw account.

MR. LAMBERT: That would be unique. No, I appreciate the case. And if you have not read it, I will then hold off and let you read it for yourself.

THE COURT: All right. Anything further? I'm going to take just a few minutes to read it, because I will tell you, Ms. Bloodgood, I always love to learn something new, and this is the first time that I've heard that term.

And so I am going to review that and all of the arguments and issue my ruling. Since it's your burden, I will give you one last statement.

MR. LAMBERT: Thank you for listening, Your Honor. I think you've heard plenty from us.

THE COURT: All right. And, Ms. Bloodgood, because I have hit you with lots of questions, I'll give you the final statement to the Court.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Well, Your Honor, the defamation claim is based on the actions and the lack of actions by the school district. It is -- it is a communication, one way or the other. You cannot act in a manner that sends a false message about someone.

I have a stack of defamation cases here that I can --

THE COURT: Well, let me just ask you, if they had sent him to a middle school and he

coached a JV football team, would that have satisfied his defamation by innuendo argument?

MS. BLOODGOOD: If they had sent -- that's why I asked the principal -- if they had sent him to a high school, it would have absolutely helped his reputation.

THE COURT: A high school with no coaching, you would think that would not be defamation by innuendo?

MS. BLOODGOOD: I think that would be less because it would be sending a message that he's not -- it's not -- well, no, I think that would still hurt his coaching if they're getting him out of a coaching situation, yes.

THE COURT: It's probably not a relevant legal analysis to try to figure out where we are.

All right. I will be at ease probably about 15 minutes.

(A recess transpired.)

THE COURT: We had an in-chambers conference and I indicated to counsel that the Court was inclined to grant the motion for directed verdict as to the wrongful termination.

Ms. Bloodgood, I'm happy to hear any

further arguments or statements you wish to place on the record regarding the Court's indication that it would be granting that motion.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Your Honor, I would just like to incorporate all of my prior arguments and register my objection to the grant of directed verdict as to that claim.

THE COURT: And, at this time, the Court is granting the defendant's motion to -- motion for directed verdict as to the wrongful termination claim. Most importantly, there was no testimony indicating that he was terminated as a result of any public policy issue.

Note your exception to my ruling.

And, once again, Ms. Bloodgood, just so I'm abundantly clear as to the defamation, it is your position that Plaintiff's 13, which is the e-mail from Mr. Stevens to the other individuals, is defamation; is that correct?

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: And because -- explain to me how that is defamation.

MS. BLOODGOOD: That e-mail is defamatory because it was sent to people who were assistant coaches with no need to know, indicating

that some people had gone into his office and had gone through his files and found that there were remiss or missing documents, and that the e-mails -- that the documents and their files could be a liability to the school, inferring that he was unfit for his position and that he had been incompetent in the job that he was supposed to do as AD, athletic director.

THE COURT: Anything further on that issue, Mr. Lambert?

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, the e-mail of January 7th, Exhibit 13, plainly just states simple facts. It says, there could be things that are missing. He lists what needs to be in there. There is nothing about this that is defaming Mr. Cruce in any way. And for that reason we believe the directed verdict motion should be granted on that claim, too.

THE COURT: So, again, in chambers I indicated that the Court was finding that Mr. Cruce is not a limited public figure for the purposes of the defamation claim, based upon my analysis of the case law in South Carolina and reviewing the cases that have been presented.

It is a matter of law and the Court

must focus on the nature and the extent of an individual's participation in the particular controversy giving rise to the defamation. Based upon that, I do not find that Mr. Cruce is a limited public figure.

Ms. Bloodgood, as to the second issue that you believe is the defamation, and this is the silent -- the lack of a statement?

MS. BLOODGOOD: It's the inference. There is such a thing as defamation by innuendo, and the fact that Coach Cruce was terminated as head coach, athletic director, transferred to a middle school, and taken out of his classroom as a driver's ed teacher without any explanation, all on the same day gave the inference that he had done something wrong and was unfit for his profession as a high school coach. And that's the basis for that claim of defamation.

THE COURT: Mr. Lambert.

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, Your Honor. I'm looking at the Fountain case you provided us earlier, and this is pages 441 and 442, with headnotes 6 and 7, and the printout on page 5 in the right-hand column.

And this is the quote directly: To

render the defamatory statement actionable, it is not necessary that the false charge be made in a direct, open, and positive manner. A mere insinuation is actionable as a positive assertion if it is false and malicious and the meaning is plain. Statements, therefore, may be either defamatory on their face or defamatory by way of innuendo.

The case talks about statements. Silence is not a statement.

THE COURT: And so I have on the way from my chambers to here -- what is the meaning of statements? I think that's where we come down to. And if we are to follow the Fountain, as Ms. Bloodgood's assertion is, that there was no statement, what is a statement if we are going to follow defamation by innuendo?

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, defamation is classically a -- either libel or slander, the written or spoken word. There have to be words that make a statement. I mean, the fact that I am standing -- we use statement colloquially as, oh, he made a real statement when, you know, he ran out of the room when he heard a baby cry.

So that's not the -- that idea of

statement doesn't fit within this language.

Defamation classically falls into the libel or the slander category, which both involve words. Defamation by innuendo is allowing -- is that your words, whether written or spoken, may imply something that is insulting or attacking on someone's character.

Defamation by innuendo doesn't change to then allow any conduct to become defamation. It's simply put, Your Honor, words.

THE COURT: So conduct can never be a statement?

MR. LAMBERT: Defamation law, as I understand it, involves words, written or spoken. And defamation by innuendo is just saying that it doesn't have to be a direct statement of what is defamatory. You can imply it in your statement, but it doesn't seem to go as far as to say, your conduct is now defamatory. That would open up an entirely new world and create an incredibly novel area of law.

THE COURT: Ms. Bloodgood.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Your Honor, the language is clear in Fountain. It says, to render the defamatory statement actionable, it's not

necessary that the false charge be made in a direct, open, or positive manner. A mere insinuation is actionable. An insinuation is not --

THE COURT: But we have to have a statement first.

MS. BLOODGOOD: A mere insinuation is actionable. An insinuation does not have to be --

THE COURT: An insinuation of what?

MS. BLOODGOOD: The sentence starts, a mere insinuation is actionable as a positive assertion if it is false and malicious.

So the insinuation itself is actionable if it is false and malicious. When I take you out with police, I am insinuating you did something wrong. I can be absolutely silent in that conduct. You do not need a statement. This case says, a mere insinuation -- that's not a statement -- is actionable.

And so that is defamation by innuendo. I insinuate that you have done something wrong because I have taken you out of three positions at once. So I disagree that a statement is necessary.

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, if I may, unless you have a question for Ms. Bloodgood.

THE COURT: I'm just letting it simmer for just a moment, because what you're -- again, this is where I'm struggling, and I told you this is where I'm struggling, what you want the jury to make a finding is the mere -- the fact that your client was sent to a middle school is in itself defamatory.

MS. BLOODGOOD: When he was taken out of his job as a driver's ed teacher at a high school and on the same day fired in two different positions, moved to a middle school when his whole career had been high school football, there's no high school football there, and put in a different position, to the people he left behind, it absolutely insinuated that he had done something wrong.

When you take a teacher out of a classroom in the middle of the year and fire them from two jobs and you don't say why, there is an insinuation that -- it's a positive assertion. It is -- it is action and it is somebody could infer that he's unfit for that job as a driver's ed teacher in the high school. He's unfit for AD. He's unfit for the coach. All of those were false.

MR. LAMBERT: If I may, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I'm letting it simmer.

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: Because I want to get this right.

MR. LAMBERT: As we want you to.

THE COURT: Or least make a really good record.

MR. LAMBERT: We want that, too.

THE COURT: All right. Mr. Lambert.

MR. LAMBERT: Two points, Your Honor. One, the sentence Ms. Bloodgood was reading, a mere insinuation is actionable, you need to read that in the context of the paragraph that precedes it, is to render the defamatory statement actionable. So it's talking about insinuation in the context of a statement that's been made.

Second, as to this idea of you fired him and transferred him and that insulted -- or that defamed him, the logic of that is that every time an employee is transferred, demoted, or fired, the employer has defamed that person. That's the rule that she's asking to you create. And that is not the law. It has never been the law, and it should not be the law.

THE COURT: All right. Last word,

Ms. Bloodgood.

MS. BLOODGOOD: I'm certainly not saying that every termination that someone could look at it and infer that somebody is unfit for their profession, but employers have to be careful. And when they -- when they take actions and don't explain those actions and there is an insinuation created that someone has done something wrong and it hurts their reputation, that is defamation.

THE COURT: All right. So in Fountain, the statement was made concerning the plaintiff's ability to get a loan, and the statement was made that the bank would not give the venture the loan as long as Fountain was involved in the venture.

And so there was an actual statement that -- short of defamation allows a plaintiff to recover injury to a reputation as a result of the defendant's communication to others, and it breaks it down. Slander is spoken defamation and libel is written defamation.

We do not have either a spoken statement, which would be the statement, or a written statement. And so, at this time, I do not find that the silence -- had there been some statement and then -- from which there would be

some insinuation, then the Court would allow.

But, at this time, the transfer of the plaintiff to the middle school is not in itself an actionable statement, and so that will not be going to the jury.

So all that will be going to the jury is the allegations of the statements that are made in the e-mail, which is Exhibit 13. Note your exception to my ruling as well. Thank you.

MR. LAMBERT: That includes our exception, Your Honor?

THE COURT: To?

MR. LAMBERT: To the defamation claim going forward on the e-mail.

THE COURT: On Exhibit 13, yes.

MR. LAMBERT: Thank you.

THE COURT: All right. So now, at the close of the defense case, any motions or matters?

MR. LAMBERT: Your Honor, we would move for a directed verdict, that Exhibit 13 constitutes defamation because Coach Cruce was a limited public figure and because the statement is not defamatory itself.

THE COURT: Okay. And, again -- go ahead.

MR. LAMBERT: And the third reason, that the statement was privileged because everybody who received it was a coach. Three bases for a directed verdict on that claim.

THE COURT: Okay. And, Ms. Bloodgood, we plowed this ground pretty deep today. So is there anything else you want to tell me about Plaintiff's 13?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor. The only other new thing I heard that I didn't argue earlier is that there was testimony that only head coaches received that information, assistant coaches don't. And there were assistant coaches on that e-mail, which is the problem.

THE COURT: That has been addressed in one of the previous arguments. I heard that argument before.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Incorporate all my previous arguments. Thank you, ma'am.

THE COURT: All right. So in ruling on the motion for directed verdict, it's in the light favorable to the nonmoving party. So based upon that and the fact that I haven't heard anything new since my previous ruling, the motion for directed verdict is denied at this time.

MR. LAMBERT: We ask that you would note our exception to that ruling.

THE COURT: I will.

MR. LAMBERT: Thank you very much.

THE COURT: All right. With that being said, Ms. Bloodgood, do you have any additional charges, jury charges?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Do you have any additional jury charges that you wish for the Court to include?

MR. LAMBERT: Not at this point, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. So we'll be working -- we now have almost completed them. So you want to be here about 9:15 in the morning just to go over the verdict form and the charges. I'm happy to do that. I don't typically give you a copy of the charge, but I'm happy to go over with counsel. All right?

Anything that I can do for you this evening, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

MR. LAMBERT: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Lambert, Mr. Morgan?

(The following proceedings were had 9/7/2017, 10:04 a.m., Berkeley County Common Pleas Court in re: Cruce v. Berkeley County School District.)

THE COURT: We had a charge conference. Anything you want to put on the record about that?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor. I think you made the changes. Oh, I'm sorry.

THE COURT: You did want --

MS. BLOODGOOD: There was one change.

THE COURT: There was one change concerning the common law malice.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes, Your Honor. After reviewing your jury charges, I objected because I would like you to have said that when a statement is actual per se, the defendant is presumed to have acted with common law malice and presumed to have suffered general damages, and that's the Castine v Castine case, 403 S.C. 259 Court of Appeals (2013). And I believe that should have been in the jury charges.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you.

MR. MORGAN: Your Honor, we had no objections to the charge that we went through back

in chambers.

THE COURT: And the verdict form, any objection?

MR. MORGAN: No, Your Honor. We've reviewed that and we are in concurrence that it is accurate.

MS. BLOODGOOD: I have no objection to the verdict form, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

And with that we will bring in the jury. Ms. Bloodgood, you are -- you will close first.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: And then, Mr. Morgan, you indicated you are doing the closing?

MR. MORGAN: That's correct, Your Honor.

THE COURT: And then, Ms. Bloodgood, you would have an opportunity for any rebuttal.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you.

THE COURT: Bring in the jury.

(Jury in, 10:01 a.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you did not

comply with my instructions, if you didn't do what I told you to do over the evening hours, please stand.

THE JURY: (Standing)

THE COURT: Thank you. All 14 jurors have indicated that they've followed the Court's instructions over the evening hour.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I indicated to you, we've reached the stage of the trial where you will hear closing arguments on behalf of counsel. In this case, Ms. Bloodgood will go first. She will give her closing argument and then Mr. Morgan will give his closing argument on behalf of his client and then Ms. Bloodgood will have an opportunity for a rebuttal closing argument.

Please remember, what the attorneys tell you in their closing argument is not evidence in this case. It is merely their contention as to what the evidence has shown you.

After you have heard counsel's closing arguments, I will instruct you on the law applicable to this case. You will then retire to consider your verdict, along with all of the exhibits that have been made part of the record in this case.

Please give your strict attention.

Ms. Bloodgood.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you, Your Honor. I will be brief.

In a little while you will go into the jury room and you will make decisions about this case. You have heard the testimony. You will have all the exhibits with you, and I'm not going to go over that with you again except that I do want to leave you with a few thoughts.

It matters how an employer treats an employee. When you terminate someone, evaluate them, transfer them to another position, there are rules and there are procedures.

Coach Cruce -- and there is a resignation letter that you will read, and I think he does a good job of explaining how this hurt him and what it did to his career.

As an employment lawyer, I know how important jobs are. I spend a lot of time at work. You spend a lot of time at work. It becomes part of your personality. And when things happen to you at work, it's as if they happen to you in your family. It's hard. So please read the resignation letter.

You know, there is just no reason to treat an employee badly, even if you want to move them. It's fine to get rid of an employee. And as Blackburn -- Superintendent Blackburn said, even if you have a policy that you're not going to say anything when you get rid of an employee, then don't -- after the fact, do not break that policy and then start sending e-mails or consider the termination one for cause when there's nothing to support that this was a for-cause termination.

In this case, if you think there is a problem with the files in your coach's office -- it's not like he's in jail, you've moved him to another school -- call him and ask him. Don't send out an e-mail to parents and to assistant coaches, which Coach Cruce testified they are not the people who should know what are in those files.

Do not send it to a group of people and put statements in it that are just wrong, saying he should have done this and he should have done that and he should have done that when he testified no. And the person who sent the e-mail was not even certified to know what was in those files and supposed to be in them.

Those people should not have seen that

e-mail. And when they did, what they read was, here's a man who's done this all his life and he didn't even know how to do the files. The files are wrong. They're a liability to the school.

Yes, that changes -- that was the nail in the coffin. That changes the whole situation. Even if the school now can say, well, we're excused because we didn't really say anything. We just fired and fired him and put him in a middle school.

And now they've changed -- they've contacted all the coaches, all the assistant coaches, and then parents saying -- with an e-mail after he's already gone.

Also, you know, nobody wants to file a suit. I can tell you a lawsuit is not a good thing to do. It's aggravating; it's a lot of money; it's a lot of anguish.

In this case, the day after we went to the school -- and you'll see that in the superintendent's letter where she mentions this meeting, and we said, this is wrong; you have made a mistake; please reconsider. That's the day they go into his office and start going through the files.

No. It's just -- you don't treat

employees like that; especially, you know, I really believe that teachers and coaches should be treated with more respect than other employees. I think it's important.

You're sending a wrong message to students when -- and to teachers when you treat them this way when you know -- how hard would it -- I mean, they easily could have picked up the phone and said, Coach, are your -- we're looking for something in the file. Is it supposed to be here?

He could say, no, that doesn't need to be in the file, but no.

Now, even after they sent that e-mail and even after the principal has said -- he testified, it shouldn't have been sent. It should not have been sent. Did anyone go to the trouble of saying, oh, let's send another e-mail? Ignore the last e-mail. We were wrong. That information doesn't need to be in the files. There's no liability to the school. Was that done? No. How hard would that have been? They knew exactly what was going to happen when they sent that e-mail.

Taking no action to fix it, coupled with the other actions where the principal is now calling this a for-cause termination,

Coach Cruce -- you heard that people thought, you know, he can't do his job. We wouldn't want to hire him as an AD. We wouldn't want to hire him as a head football coach. He's shunned. He can't get a job in South Carolina.

When schools don't follow their own rules, people get hurt, and it's really easy to hurt your professional reputation. It's very easy for a supervisor to say something or to send a message that you really can't recover from.

And when an employer chooses to do that, I believe -- and when you go to the employer and say, please fix this mistake, this is wrong, this is really hurting the reputation, my professional reputation, when the employer refuses to do that, that's why you're here.

You are the guardians of the rules. You are the people who our justice system says if something can't be resolved, you're the boss, you decide. And we will respect your verdict, one way or the other. We will respect it.

But in my mind, justice is about accepting responsibility. And how do you value what Coach Cruce has lost monetarily? We've shown you that. We've shown you this damages exhibit. I

don't know if you can see it. I'll put it down there. You can look at it again.

I can tell you without any hesitation that this is real, actual monetary damages that he has suffered as a result of their -- of the school's refusal to fix the way they handled his employment.

It's not going to fix everything because he still has a horrible professional reputation, his family has gone through all of this, but it would send a message and help him get a job again as a head coach. Anything you do would help him get a job.

Your verdict will be a symbol, just like a soldier's salute is a symbol. The Pledge of Allegiance is a symbol. When you walk in -- you know, we stand up when you walk in. These are symbols, and the importance of a jury is that they can send a symbol and say, this is what we think is justice. This is what we think is fair.

It's -- you're sort of a beacon where you can say, wait. Don't do this again. This was wrong. Don't do it to someone else.

So I thank you for your service.

THE COURT: Mr. Morgan.

MR. MORGAN: May it please the Court. Ms. Bloodgood, Mr. and Mrs. Cruce, ladies and gentlemen.

First, I do want to thank you for your service. It's important to both parties. We appreciate the attention that you've given to this case and we, too, are looking for you to exercise your great good common sense as to the evidence that you've heard over the last couple of days.

I will tell you, I'm reminded of a story when I was young kid. I was with my granddaddy and he and I were walking from his car to the movie theater where he was a ticket taker.

And I said to him -- and I was seven years old, I said, granddaddy, how come you're just a ticket taker at a movie theater?

He leaned down to me and said, Rick, son, I'm going to tell you something. There is no man who is too good for any job and there is no job that's beneath any man.

And I didn't understand that, what he told me, when I was a seven-year-old kid until my mother told me that, at one point in time, my granddaddy had his own business and was a very successful businessman and lost everything during

the Depression. But he was not so good that he couldn't be a ticket taker at a movie theater, and told his seven-year-old grandson.

You've heard Mr. Cruce say that he was too good, too good to be a B coach. He could have stayed here in this neck of the woods and taught, stayed in the State retirement system and been a coach. He was just too good to have that and accept that job. My granddaddy had some great wisdom and some great common sense.

We believe the real issue that you're going to have to wrestle with when you go back to that jury room is what was set forth in this e-mail of January 7th. That's the one -- you heard Mr. Stevens, who came here and testified. He's the trainer. And what did you hear Mr. Stevens say?

He had done this before. He knew what he was doing. He had been asked by one of the weight coaches whether or not, for the health and safety and protection of the young men and women, whether someone had the right information in their file. He went to the administration and he went in then and looked at those files.

And what he found was there were some things that he could not find. And I would urge

you, urge you to look very, very, very carefully at the language that he chose to use. He did say -- the words are there, you're going to give them common sense reading.

He said, we went into the former athletic director's office and we found some files that may have been misplaced -- could have been misplaced and could have been out of order. Could have been. Ordinary words. I went to the former athletic director's office. He didn't say anything was wrong. Could have been.

And we want to make sure that there's no liability for anyone. The kids are from the school. All of those are truthful statements. All of those are very true. Nothing false at all.

And then he said, I'm going to go in there the next couple days. Here's a list of things I'm going to do. I'll get back to you.

You got to hear what he had to say. Everybody who got up and testified said that those folks that were on this were coaches, coaches who are charged with the health and welfare of the young people of Berkeley High School. They had a need to know. It was a limited group of folks to whom this went, very limited group.

So what Mr. Stevens does, in good faith, he sends out this e-mail. Do we send e-mails out in the business world today? I would suggest that that's one means of proper communication.

He sent it to people who had an interest in oversight for the young men and women, their health and safety, to make sure that there were records and files. All accurate and truthful statements.

And if there's something that was incorrect or someone who felt that the words that were in this document did something to harm Mr. Cruce, I believe you should have heard it from someone. There's a whole list of people on here.

That witness chair right now is empty. And it was empty because there was no one who felt that this e-mail, that this e-mail and what was in here said or did anything wrong. There's no evidence, nothing, zero, that has been shown that tied anything in this e-mail that impacted Mr. Cruce's ability to get a job in the future.

There has to be some causal connection. That's your common sense. Does this here have any connection at all to whether or not someone in

Goose Creek who offered Mr. Cruce a job, that he was too good to take, impact his ability to earn a living? No. Zero. Nothing.

I would ask you to consider this: No one outside of Berkeley High School coaching staff got this e-mail. It had a very, very important and proper purpose because he was trying to deal with it the best he could.

You saw Mr. Stevens. He didn't have anything against the coach. He was just trying to do his job; fine young man. You had a chance to observe him.

There was also a chance to ask him some questions. And I would suggest to you that there is a reasonable inference that you can draw, that one of the reasons that no questions were asked of him on cross-examination is because everything in here is the truth. The truth.

And there's no evidence at all, zero, absolutely nothing that this document went outside of that small, controlled group of people who were in charge of the health and safety of our students at Berkeley High School.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of my client, what I'm asking you is to return a

verdict for the defendant, and in that verdict, we are asking, because there is no connectivity to anything in that e-mail, nothing at all, that there's no damages.

So we're asking for a complete verdict for the defendant in this case and that you issue no damages.

We thank you, we honor you for your service. We appreciate you being here and we, too, look forward to hear from you when you decide. Thank you very much.

THE COURT: Ms. Bloodgood.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you, Your Honor.

Very briefly because I just heard a few things that I would like to remind you of.

The e-mail, there was testimony that it was wrong. It was not correct. And, also, that only head coaches were the ones that Coach Cruce would ever talk to. They were the only ones who were allowed to see a lot of that student information, not the parent volunteers and not the assistant coaches. And their names were all on that e-mail.

So it didn't go to a limited group. It went to everybody who could possibly know that

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Court of Appeals

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SC Court of Appeals

APPEAL FROM BERKELEY COUNTY
Kristi Lea Harrington, Circuit Court Judge

Appellate Case No. 2018-000791
Case No. 2016-CP-08-0131

Jeffrey Lance Cruce,..... Respondent,

v.

Berkeley County School District,..... Appellant.

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there wasn't a good -- there wasn't silence as to why he was fired.

The district -- the district is not being honest with that. They did not act professionally; they allowed this e-mail to go out which infers wrongdoing on his part and then they don't correct it.

Not only that, as I told you, it was the nail in the coffin. It was the thing that switched everything else. If that e-mail, coupled with the contention later that it was a for-cause termination, that's not silence. That's not something that an employer should say, and that is what changes the case and makes it so hard for him to get a job again.

So you will hear that the e-mail is important; but you heard the testimony and I trust that you will make our own judgment about that, and we will respect that.

THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, I remind you that during this trial, you and I have had certain duties to perform. As the trial judge, it is my responsibility to preside over the trial of this case, and I have the duty to rule on the admissibility of the evidence offered during the

this trial.

You are to consider only the competent evidence before you. If there was any testimony ordered stricken from the record in this case, you must disregard that testimony.

You are to consider only the testimony that has been presented from the witness stand, any exhibits which have been made part of the record in this case, and any stipulations of counsel.

I have the additional duty to charge you the law applicable to this case. As the presiding judge, I am the sole judge of the law in this case, and it is your duty to accept the law and apply the law exactly as I state it to you now.

If you have any idea as to what the law is or what the law ought to be and it does not agree with what I'm about to tell you, you must abandon your own idea because you are sworn to accept the law and apply the law exactly as I state it to you now.

Ladies and gentlemen, I typically do not send a copy of my charge back to you, so please listen very carefully.

In every case tried in this court before a jury, the jury becomes the sole and

exclusive judges of the facts. A trial judge may not make any comment to a trial jury about the facts in this case. You are the sole judges of the facts in this case.

You are not to infer from anything that I have said or done throughout the process of this trial in ruling upon the admissibility of the evidence or anything, or anything that I say now during the course of the instruction, that I have any opinion about the facts in this case. The law does not allow me to have an opinion about the facts in this case. That is solely a matter for you to determine.

As jurors, it is your duty to determine the effect, value, and weight of the evidence presented during this trial. The burden of proof in this case is by a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence simply means the greater weight of the evidence. It is evidence which, as a whole, shows that the facts sought to be proved is more likely true than not true.

This can be illustrated by imagining a set of scales. When this case begins, the scales are even. After all the evidence has been presented, if the scales remain even or if they tip

even slightly in favor of the defendant, the plaintiff has failed to meet the burden of proof and would not be entitled to recover in this case.

If, on the other hand, the scales tip even slightly in favor of the plaintiff, the plaintiff will have met the burden of proof and you should return a verdict for the plaintiff.

The preponderance of the evidence is not determined by the number of witnesses. Instead, it must be determined by the greater weight of all of the evidence.

There are two types of evidence that are generally presented throughout a trial, direct evidence and circumstantial evidence. Direct evidence is the testimony of a person who claims to have actual knowledge of a fact, such as an eyewitness.

It is evidence which immediately establishes the main fact to be proved. Circumstantial evidence is proof of a chain of facts and circumstances indicating the existence of a fact. It is evidence which immediately establishes collateral facts from which the main facts may be inferred.

Circumstantial evidence is based on

inference and not on personal knowledge. It is proof that does not actually establish the facts in question, but it asserts or describes something else from which you may either reasonably infer the truth of that fact or at least reasonably infer an increase in the probability that that fact is true.

For circumstantial evidence to be sufficient to warrant the finding of fact, the circumstances must lead to that fact with reasonable certainty in light of ordinary experience and common sense.

The existence of a fact cannot be based on speculation or surmise. The law makes absolutely no distinction between the weight or value to be given either to direct or circumstantial evidence, nor is a greater degree of certainty required of circumstantial evidence than that of direct evidence.

Necessarily, you must determine the credibility of the witnesses who have testified in this case. Credibility simply means believability. It becomes your duty as jurors to analyze the evidence and evaluate it and determine which evidence convinces you.

In determining the believability of

witnesses who have testified in this case, you may believe one witness over several witnesses or several witnesses over one witness. You may believe a part of the testimony of a witness and reject the remaining part of the testimony of that same witness.

You may believe the testimony of a witness in its entirety or reject the testimony of a witness in its entirety.

You may consider whether the witness has exhibited to you any interest, bias, prejudice, or other motive in this case, and you may also consider the appearance and manner of a witness while that witness was testifying.

During the trial of this case, deposition testimony was read to you. As I indicated to you before, a deposition is a document containing sworn testimony given by a witness outside of court in the presence of lawyers for each party who asked questions of that witness.

This testimony is entitled to the same consideration and is to be judged as to the credibility and weighed by you as any other testimony in this case. It is up to you to determine the effect, value, and weight of the

testimony given in the deposition.

The plaintiff claims that the defendant communicated a defamatory statement about the plaintiff to another person. Libel is a written defamatory statement or one accomplished by actions or conduct. This action is based on the violation of the plaintiff's right to enjoy a good reputation without false and defamatory attacks.

Defamatory language is language that tends to injure or adversely affect the plaintiff's reputation.

In order to recover in this case, the plaintiff must first prove that the defamatory language was communicated by the defendant about the plaintiff. A defamatory statement is one which tends to attack the honesty, integrity, virtue, or reputation of a person and exposes the person to disgrace, public hatred, avoidance, contempt or ridicule.

A defamatory statement does not have to be a direct, open, or positive attack. It may be merely a suggestion or a hint, which is false and malicious, as long as the meaning is plain.

In deciding whether the statement was defamatory, you must give the words their ordinary

and popular meaning. The intent and meaning of the word must be determined from the words themselves and the context in which they were used.

All positive statements must be considered together to determine the statement's true meaning. Individual words should not be singled out as defamatory.

In addition, the statement must be considered in light of the facts known to persons to whom the statement was made and not in light of the facts known to the parties.

Next, the plaintiff must prove that the statement was communicated to someone other than the plaintiff. The plaintiff must also prove that the defendant made a statement knowing or reasonably expecting it to reach a third person.

The plaintiff must prove that the statement made -- was made with common law malice. Common law malice means the defendant acted with ill will towards the plaintiff, or acted recklessly or wantonly with conscious indifference to the plaintiff's rights.

Finally, the plaintiff must prove that his reputation was damaged by the defamatory statement. The plaintiff must prove that the

damages naturally and proximately resulted from the defendant's statement.

Actual damages are damages which compensate the plaintiff for the injury that put the plaintiff in the same position as he was in prior to the defamatory statement as much as is possible.

General damages includes humiliation, hurt feelings, mental suffering, injury to reputation and other types of injury on which you cannot place a monetary value.

The plaintiff must also prove any special damages resulting from the defamatory statement. Special damages are monetary damages with respect to the property, business, profession or occupation of the plaintiff, such as the loss of a job, the loss of customers, or the loss of a business relationship as a result of the injury to the plaintiff's reputation.

A plaintiff is never entitled to recover speculative damages, but if you find the plaintiff is entitled to a verdict for damages, your verdict should include an amount to cover any damages which were proximately caused by the defendant.

Damages not need be proven to a mathematical certainty or be based on evidence and the precise amount of damages the plaintiff has suffered. Instead, the evidence must allow you to determine what amount of damage is fair, just, and reasonable.

When the plaintiff is injured or damaged by the wrongful act of another person, it is the duty of the plaintiff to reasonably try to avoid and lessen the damages.

Those damages which may be avoided by the use of reasonable efforts, care, and prudence by the plaintiff cannot be the proximate result of the defendant's wrongful act. Therefore, the plaintiff cannot recover for damages which reasonably might have been avoided.

The efforts required by the plaintiff must be determined by the rules of common sense and fair dealing and what a person of ordinary reason and prudence would do under the same circumstances. The plaintiff is not required to use unreasonable efforts or great expense to avoid and lessen the damages.

The defendant has the burden of proving a failure to lessen damages on the part of the

plaintiff by a preponderance or greater weight of the evidence.

A plaintiff's duty to mitigate applies to special damages, not to general damages.

The defendant claims that the statements were substantially true. Truth is a complete defense to an act -- to an action for defamation.

In order to assert this defense, the defendant must prove that the statement was substantially true. A statement is not defamatory if it is substantially true. Even if the defendant made the statement for no good purpose, was inspired by ill will toward the plaintiff, and made the statement solely for the purpose of harming the plaintiff, if the statement is true, the plaintiff cannot recover for defamation.

Even if you find that the defendant's statement was defamatory, the defendant claims that it was made under a qualified privilege. In order to prove that a qualified privilege exists, the defendant must prove by a preponderance or greater weight of the evidence that the defendant made the statement in good faith.

Under South Carolina law, a

communication made to or between employees in good faith and in the ordinary and natural course of business is not actionable as defamation.

The defendant must also prove that there was an interest to be upheld and that the statement was made solely to uphold the interest of the defendant or a third party.

In addition, the defendant must prove that the statement was made at the proper time.

Finally, the defendant must prove that the statement was communicated in a proper manner and only to proper parties.

In reaching your verdict, you should not consider whether any party in this case was or was not covered by insurance. As you may know, some plaintiffs are covered and some are not and some have various forms of partial coverage. The same is true of defendants.

The law does not allow the parties to present any evidence about insurance, or lack of insurance, or amount of insurance, and there is no way that you can accurately determine whether any party in this case has insurance coverage, or if they have it, how much insurance they have.

The issue of insurance,

Madame Foreperson, should not be discussed at all in the jury room.

More importantly, insurance, or lack of insurance, has no bearing on any verdict that you render.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm now going to go over the verdict form with you. Please understand there's absolutely no significance in the way that I have crafted this verdict form. It's simply I have to put something on the paper first, so you are to draw no conclusion or inference from the way that things appear on the verdict form.

Madame Foreperson, you are responsible for completing this verdict form. It must be the unanimous decision of the jury, meaning all 12 of you must agree to this verdict form.

Once you have completed the verdict form, you will sign this verdict form and date it. After you have completed it, you will knock on the jury room door, indicating to the bailiff that you have reached your verdict.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the State of South Carolina, County of Berkeley, Jeffrey Lance Cruce, Plaintiff, V Berkeley County School

District, Defendant.

Question number one: Do you find the plaintiff has proven by preponderance of the evidence that the defendant, Berkeley County School District, made a false and defamatory statement about the plaintiff, Jeffrey Lance Cruce?

If you answer yes, Madame Foreperson, and, again, this is your responsibility to complete, you would go to question two. If the answer is no, you would stop your deliberations.

Moving to question two: Do you find the plaintiff has proven by preponderance of the evidence that the defendant communicated this statement to a third party, knowing or reasonably expecting to it to reach a third party?

If you answer yes, you would go to question three. If you answer no, you would stop your deliberations.

Do you find that the plaintiff has proven by preponderance of the evidence that the defendant made the statement with common law malice?

If you answer yes, you go to question four. If you answer no, you would stop your deliberations.

Do you find the plaintiff has proven by preponderance of the evidence that the plaintiff suffered injuries as a result of the defendant's statements?

If you answer yes, you go to question five. If you answer no, you would stop your deliberations.

Do you find that the defendant has proven the defense of truth?

If you answer yes, you stop your deliberations. If you answer no, you go to question six.

Question six: Do you find that the defendant has proven the defense of qualified privilege?

If you answer yes, you stop your deliberations. If you answer no, you go to question seven.

Question seven: Please state the amount of damages sustained by the plaintiff, if any.

Madame Foreperson, you will write the actual numeric amount in that blank. Once again, it must be the unanimous decision of the jury, and you would sign and date the verdict form.

Ladies and gentlemen, is there any member of the first 12 who, for whatever reason, feel that you cannot begin and complete your deliberations in this matter? If you cannot begin and complete your deliberations, please stand at this time.

Thank you. All 12 jurors have indicated that they are able to begin and complete deliberations.

To my two alternates, at this time you have completed your service to this case, but I will have you remain with us until the first 12 have indicated that they have begun their deliberations.

To all of the jurors, this is the last time that I'm going to say this to you: Do not begin your deliberations. Do not discuss the case amongst yourselves. We are gathering the exhibits and the verdict form.

Once those are brought into the jury room for you, the bailiff will indicate to you that you may begin your deliberation.

Please take your notepads with you and all of your other belongings. The first 12 will go into the jury deliberation room and the two

alternates will be kept separately.

Some admonition to you: Do not discuss this case with anyone, and that includes your other alternate. Thank you.

Did you have a question?

A JUROR: Comment. My first name is without an E.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.

All right. Anything else? Thank you.

Please be excused.

(Jury out, 10:34 a.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Be seated.

Outside the presence of the jury, any additions, corrections to the charge as read?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

MR. MORGAN: Nothing from the defendant, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. And if you would gather -- we're making the change to the foreperson's spelling of her name to reflect the correct spelling.

Are all the exhibits ready to go back, Madame Court Reporter?

THE COURT REPORTER: Yes, Judge.

THE COURT: Anything further before

we're at ease?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

MR. MORGAN: Nothing from the defendant.

THE COURT: We will be at ease. So my first question is always, if the jury asks for any portion of the charge, do you have any objection to sending the entire charge back if they ask for a copy of the charge?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, I don't have an objection.

MR. MORGAN: The entire charge is fine, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. If they ask for anything less than the entire charge, I will ask you how you wish to proceed.

MS. BLOODGOOD: Thank you.

MR. MORGAN: Thank you.

THE COURT: But a lot times the first question is, can we have a copy of your charges? And then I just send 12 copies of the charge. Just so you know, my law clerk is up here. She is modifying the charge as read. So it's the charge as read, not necessarily the charge, so changing words and stuff like that. So it is the actual

charge that I read. All right?

And with that, Ms. Bloodgood, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Lambert, I said on numerous occasions, thank you again for your professionalism and your courtesy to the Court. It's been a pleasure to try this case. It was -- you were all very prepared.

Mr. and Mrs. Cruce, it was a pleasure having you in the courtroom; albeit, I understand this was not the reason you wanted to be here, but thank you again. You have been zealously represented on behalf of Ms. Bloodgood. So I wish you the best -- regardless of what the outcome is, I wish you the best in the future.

And on behalf of Berkeley County School District, same to you.

All right. We're at ease.

(Jury deliberating, 10:50 a.m.)

(A recess transpired.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Be seated.

So the jury indicated they have not come to an agreement and they need further instruction. I will bring them in and give them the Allen charge.

(Jury in, 4:34 p.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have indicated to the Court that you have been unable to agree on a verdict in this case. As I instructed you earlier, the verdict of the jury must be unanimous. All of you must agree to the verdict.

When a matter is in dispute, it isn't always easy for even two people to agree. So when 12 people must agree, it becomes even more difficult.

In most cases, absolute certainty cannot be reached or expected; however, you have a duty to make every reasonable effort to reach a unanimous verdict. In doing this, you should consult with one another, express your own views, and listen to the opinion of your fellow jurors. Tell each other how you feel and why you feel that way. Discuss your differences with open minds.

Although the verdict of the jury must be unanimous, every one you have the right to your own opinion. The verdict you agree to must be your own verdict, the result of your own conviction, and you should not give up your firmly held belief merely to be in agreement with your fellow jurors.

The majority should consider the minority's opinion and the minority should consider the majority's opinion. You should carefully consider and respect the opinions of each other and reevaluate your position for reasonableness, correctness, and impartiality.

You must lay aside any outside matters and re-examine the questions before you based upon the law and the evidence in this case.

If you do not agree to a verdict in this case, I must declare a mistrial. In that case, it doesn't mean that anybody wins. It just means that at some future time, I will try this case with some other jury sitting exactly where you're sitting.

The same participants will come in and the same lawyers will ask, basically, the same questions and give, basically, the same answers, and we will go through this whole process again.

You were selected in the same manner and from the same source as any future jury will be. There is no reason for me to suppose that this case will ever be submitted to 12 more intelligent, impartial, conscientious jurors that sit before me here today.

I ask that you return to your deliberations.

Madame Foreperson, you are excused.

Please rise for the jury.

(Jury out, 4:38 p.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. Any objection, correction to the charge as read by the plaintiff?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

MR. MORGAN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. We'll be at ease.

(A recess transpired.)

THE COURT: I understand we have reached a verdict. Again, it's been a long afternoon. Thank you for everybody's patience. We've had several notes, they've all been marked. I have no idea what the verdict is, but, again, thank you for your courtesy and professionalism.

Let's bring in the jury.

(Jury in, 5:20 p.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

Madame Foreperson, if you'll hand the verdict form to the bailiff. Thank you.

Thank you. Please be seated.

THE CLERK: In the State of South Carolina, the County of Berkeley, in the Court of Common Pleas for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, case number 2016-CP-08-0131, Jeffrey Lance Cruce, Plaintiff, V The Berkeley County School District, Defendant; do you find that plaintiff has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant, Berkeley County School District, made a false and defamatory statement against -- about the plaintiff, Jeffrey Lance Cruce?

Yes.

Do you find that the plaintiff has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant communicated this statement to a third party knowing or reasonably expecting it to reach a third person?

Yes.

Do you find that the plaintiff has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant made the statement with common law malice?

Yes.

Do you find that the plaintiff has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that the

plaintiff suffered injuries as a result of the defendant's statement?

Yes.

Do you find that the defendant has proven the defense of truth?

No.

Do you find that the defendant has proven the defense of qualified privilege?

No.

Please state the amount of damages sustained by the plaintiff, if any.

$200,000 damages.

And this is signed by our foreperson, Ms. Eager.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, if I have accurately published your verdict, please indicate by raising your right hand at this time.

THE JURY: (Raised hands.)

THE CLERK: Thank you.

THE COURT: The record should reflect that all 12 jurors raised their right hand.

Anything further required of the jury from the plaintiff?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: From the defense?

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, Your Honor. Would you poll the jury, please?

THE COURT: All right. Madame Clerk, please poll the jury.

And, ladies and gentlemen, this happens in almost, if not all, cases and please do not think this is anything out of the ordinary. The clerk is going to tell you what questions to answer.

Madame Clerk.

THE CLERK: Yes, Your Honor.

Beginning with our foreperson. Juror Number 147, is this your verdict?

JUROR NO. 147: It is.

THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?

JUROR NO. 147: It is.

THE CLERK: Juror 29.

JUROR NO. 29: Yes.

THE CLERK: Is this your verdict?

JUROR NO. 29: Yes.

THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?

JUROR NO. 29: Yes, it is.

THE CLERK: Juror Number 36.

JUROR NO. 36: Yes.

THE CLERK: Is this your verdict?

JUROR NO. 36: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 36: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 23, is this your verdict?
JUROR NO. 23: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 23: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 19, is this your verdict?
JUROR NO. 19: Yes, it is.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 19: Yes.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 92, is this your verdict?
JUROR NO. 92: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 92: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 68, is this your verdict?
JUROR NO. 68: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 68: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 46, is this your verdict?

JUROR NO. 46: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 46: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 181, is this your verdict?
JUROR NO. 181: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 181: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 116, is this your verdict?
JUROR NO. 116: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 116: Yes, ma'am.
THE CLERK: Juror Number 38, is this your verdict?
JUROR NO. 38: Yes.
THE CLERK: Is this still your verdict?
JUROR NO. 38: Yes.
THE CLERK: Thank you.
Your Honor, the jury has been polled and the verdict stands.
THE COURT: All right.
THE CLERK: I missed you? I'm so sorry.
JUROR NO. 43: But my answer was yes to

both.

THE COURT: Thank you. And your juror number, sir?

JUROR NO. 43: 43.

THE COURT: Thank you. Anything further?

MR. LAMBERT: No, Your Honor. At this time, we'll have a motion after the jury is released.

THE COURT: Anything further required of this jury?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, this completes your service to this case. Please go to your jury room. I will be there in just a few moments to personally thank you for your service to Berkeley County.

Please stand for the jury.

(Jury out, 5:26 p.m.)

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. Outside of the presence of the jury, anything further, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: No, Your Honor.

MR. LAMBERT: Yes, Your Honor. We would move for a judgment not withstanding the

verdict under Rule 50(b), for a new trial under Rule 59 -- the remittitur under Rule 59. Do you want me to do those now or after you've talked to the jury?

THE COURT: Well, I'm going to release the jury. Due to the lateness of the hour, and the fact that we are closed tomorrow, I will give you -- Under the rules, you have ten days. I will allow you -- and, actually, do you know your schedule next week, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: I have a mediation on Wednesday. If things are going forward, yes, Wednesday, otherwise, I'm good.

THE COURT: All right. So what we can do -- I can do it a couple of different ways. We can go ahead and set a date perhaps two or three weeks out, given the nature of the hurricane, or you can go ahead -- I'll allow you ten days from today's date -- or from tomorrow. Actually, I'll give you until -- because the courthouse is closed Friday, Monday here in Berkeley, unknown on Tuesday.

So beginning Tuesday, Tuesday will be day one unless the courthouse is closed, to file -- to file your response of all posttrial motions.

And, Ms. Bloodgood, we can, at that point, once you receive it, then we'll have a conference call so you can tell me how much time you need to respond, depending upon the hurricane, and when we want to set it if I want to hear it. All right?

THE COURT: How does that sound?

MR. LAMBERT: That sounds perfect, Your Honor.

THE COURT: How does that sound, Ms. Bloodgood?

MS. BLOODGOOD: That's good. Thank you.

THE COURT: And, Mrs. and Mrs. Cruce, you will not need to be here for any posttrial motions. All right? So good luck to you both.

Attorneys, I'm going to go release the jury. If you'll stay for just a few moments, I won't keep you long. I know you need to get on the road. You are free to go. Good luck to you both. Thank you.

(These proceedings were concluded at 5:28 p.m., 9/7/2017.)

2011 - 2012
CONTINUING CONTRACT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF BERKELEY

CONTRACT FOR
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

This agreement is entered into by and between the Board of Trustees of Berkeley County School District, hereinafter referred to as the Employer, and Jeffrey Cruce, hereinafter referred to as the Employee. This contract is issued as a one year CONTINUING contract, which is subject to the renewal provisions of S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2004).

The employee shall maintain throughout the life of this contract the required qualifications of a teacher, including a valid South Carolina Teaching Credential, as well as the "highly qualified" certification to perform his or her teaching assignment, as that term is defined in the No Child Left Behind Act and all South Carolina State Board of Education implementing rules and regulations. Proof of these qualifications shall be filed by the Employee at the School District Office. Failure to maintain such prerequisite qualifications during the contract period shall constitute grounds for termination of this contract.

The Employee agrees to render acceptable service for 190 days for the 2011-2012 school year, to perform all the duties imposed on a teacher by the District and the laws of South Carolina, to comply with all District policies and regulations, and to attend required school and District meetings or activities. The administration may assign reasonable extracurricular activities to the Employee.

The District agrees to pay the Employee according to the salary schedule adopted by the Board. This salary schedule will be made available as soon as practicable. Loss or reduction in any amount of anticipated or appropriated state, local or federal funding may, at the discretion of the District, require a pro-rata reduction in salary; a reduction in the term of this contract and pro-rate reduction in salary; i.e., a furlough consistent with State law; or a reduction in contract days in accordance with State law; or a termination of this agreement. Furthermore, any decline in student enrollment, elimination or change in course programming, or temporary closing of school or District operations because of emergency circumstances may require a pro-rata reduction in term and/or salary. Any such actions will be based on the recommendation of the Superintendent and must be approved by the Board. Any position eliminations will be handled in accordance with Board Policy GBKA (Reduction in Force).

If during the term of this agreement, it is found that any part of this contract is illegal under federal or state law, the remainder of the agreement not affected by such ruling shall remain in force and effect.

This agreement is not valid unless authorized by the Board and signed by the District Superintendent or Designee and signed by the Employee. The original must be returned to the Human Resources Department in the School District Office on or before May 2, 2011. Any request to be released from this contract after May 2, 2011 will be handled according to policy GBQ.

This offer of employment is subject to receipt of a criminal record report from SLED, which reveals no good and just cause for its withdrawal. S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2004).

Signed: _____
Employee

Date: 4/15/11

Signed: Rodney Thompson
Superintendent

Date: April 15, 2011

The Employee's assignment for the 2011-2012 contract term is CANE BAY HIGH; however, it is understood that this assignment is tentative and may be changed by the administration upon notice to and consultation with the affected Employee.

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT 1

Return signed and dated original to Human Resources

2012 - 2013
CONTINUING CONTRACT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF BERKELEY

CONTRACT FOR
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

This agreement is entered into by and between the Board of Trustees of Berkeley County School District, hereinafter referred to as the Employer, and **Jeffrey Cruce**, hereinafter referred to as the Employee. This contract is issued as a one year **CONTINUING** contract, which is subject to the renewal provisions of S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2004).

The employee shall maintain throughout the life of this contract the required qualifications of a teacher, including a valid South Carolina Teaching Credential, as well as the "highly qualified" certification to perform his or her teaching assignment, as that term is defined in the No Child Left Behind Act and all South Carolina State Board of Education implementing rules and regulations. Proof of these qualifications shall be filed by the Employee at the School District Office. Failure to maintain such prerequisite qualifications during the contract period shall constitute grounds for termination of this contract.

The Employee agrees to render acceptable service for **190** days for the **2012-2013** school year, to perform all the duties imposed on a teacher by the District and the laws of South Carolina, to comply with all District policies and regulations, and to attend required school and District meetings or activities. The administration may assign reasonable extracurricular activities to the Employee.

The District agrees to pay the Employee according to the salary schedule adopted by the Board. This salary schedule will be made available as soon as practicable. Loss or reduction in any amount of anticipated or appropriated state, local or federal funding may, at the discretion of the District, require a pro-rata reduction in salary; a reduction in the term of this contract and pro-rate reduction in salary, i.e., a furlough consistent with State law; **or a reduction in contract days in accordance with State law;** or a termination of this agreement. Furthermore, any decline in student enrollment, elimination or change in course programming, or temporary closing of school or District operations because of emergency circumstances may require a pro-rata reduction in term and/or salary. Any such actions will be based on the recommendation of the Superintendent and must be approved by the Board. Any position eliminations will be handled in accordance with Board Policy GBKA (Reduction in Force).

If during the term of this agreement, it is found that any part of this contract is illegal under federal or state law, the remainder of the agreement not affected by such ruling shall remain in force and effect.

This agreement is not valid unless authorized by the Board and signed by the District Superintendent or Designee and signed by the Employee. The original must be returned to the Human Resources Department in the School District Office on or before April 16, 2012. Any request to be released from this contract after April 16, 2012 will be handled according to policy GBO.

This offer of employment is subject to receipt of a criminal record report from SLED, which reveals no good and just cause for its withdrawal. S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2004).

Signed: _____ *Employee*
Date: 4/4/12

Signed: Rodney Thompson *Superintendent*
Date: April 06, 2012

The Employee's assignment for the **2012-2013** contract term is **BERKELEY HIGH**; however, it is understood that this assignment is tentative and may be changed by the administration upon notice to and consultation with the affected Employee.

Return signed and dated original to Human Resources

APP. 0529

BCSD0115

2013 - 2014
CONTINUING CONTRACT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF BERKELEY

CONTRACT FOR
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

This agreement is entered into by and between the Board of Trustees of Berkeley County School District, hereinafter referred to as the Employer, and Jeffrey Cruce, hereinafter referred to as the Employee. This contract is issued as a one year CONTINUING contract, which is subject to the renewal provisions of S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2012).

The employee shall maintain throughout the life of this contract the required qualifications of a teacher, including a valid South Carolina Teaching Credential, as well as the "highly qualified" certification to perform his or her teaching assignment, as that term is defined in the No Child Left Behind Act and all South Carolina State Board of Education implementing rules and regulations. Proof of these qualifications shall be filed by the Employee at the School District Office. Failure to maintain such prerequisite qualifications during the contract period shall constitute grounds for termination of this contract.

The Employee agrees to render acceptable service for 190 days for the 2013-2014 school year, to perform all the duties imposed on a teacher by the District and the laws of South Carolina, to comply with all District policies and regulations, and to attend required school and District meetings or activities. The administration may assign reasonable extracurricular activities to the Employee.

The District agrees to pay the Employee according to the salary schedule adopted by the Board. This salary schedule will be made available as soon as practicable. Loss or reduction in any amount of anticipated or appropriated state, local or federal funding may, at the discretion of the District, require a pro-rata reduction in salary; a reduction in the term of this contract and pro-rata reduction in salary, i.e., a furlough consistent with State law; or a reduction in contract days in accordance with State law; or a termination of this agreement. Furthermore, any decline in student enrollment, elimination or change in course programming, or temporary closing of school or District operations because of emergency circumstances may require a pro-rata reduction in term and/or salary. Any such actions will be based on the recommendation of the Superintendent and must be approved by the Board. Any position eliminations will be handled in accordance with Board Policy GBKA (Reduction in Force).

If during the term of this agreement, it is found that any part of this contract is illegal under federal or state law, the remainder of the agreement not affected by such ruling shall remain in force and effect.

This agreement is not valid unless authorized by the Board and signed by the District Superintendent or Designee and signed by the Employee. The original must be returned to the Human Resources Department in the School District Office on or before April 26, 2013. Any request to be released from this contract after April 26, 2013 will be handled according to policy GBO.

This offer of employment is subject to receipt of a criminal record report from SLED, which reveals no good and just cause for its withdrawal. S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2012).

Signed: _____
Employee

Date: 4/15/13

Signed: _____
Superintendent

Date: April 12, 2013

The Employee's assignment for the 2013-2014 contract term is BERKELEY HIGH; however, it is understood that this assignment is tentative and may be changed by the administration upon notice to and consultation with the affected Employee.

Return signed and dated original to Human Resources

2014-2015
CONTINUING CONTRACT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF BERKELEY

CONTRACT FOR
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

This agreement is entered into by and between the Board of Trustees of Berkeley County School District, hereinafter referred to as the Employer, and Jeffrey Cruce, hereinafter referred to as the Employee. This contract is issued as a one year CONTINUING contract, which is subject to the renewal provisions of S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2012).

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This offer of employment is subject to receipt of a criminal record report from SLED, which reveals no good and just cause for its withdrawal. S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2012).

Signed: _____
Employee

Date: 4/21/14

Signed: Rodney Thompson
Superintendent

Date: April 11, 2014

The Employee's assignment for the 2014-2015 contract term is BERKELEY HIGH; however, it is understood that this assignment is tentative and may be changed by the administration upon notice to and consultation with the affected Employee.

Return signed and dated original to Human Resources

APP. 0531

BCSD0120

2015-2016
CONTINUING CONTRACT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF BERKELEY

CONTRACT FOR
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

This agreement is entered into by and between the Board of Trustees of Berkeley County School District, hereinafter referred to as the Employer; and Jeffrey Cruce, hereinafter referred to as the Employee. This contract is issued as a one year CONTINUING contract, which is subject to the renewal provisions of S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2012).

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The Employee agrees to render acceptable service for 190 days for the 2015-2016 school year, to perform all the duties imposed on a teacher by the District and the laws of South Carolina, to comply with all District policies and regulations, and to attend required school and District meetings or activities. The administration may assign reasonable extracurricular activities to the Employee.

The District agrees to pay the Employee according to the salary schedule adopted by the Board. This salary schedule will be made available as soon as practicable. Loss or reduction in any amount of anticipated or appropriated state, local or federal funding may, at the discretion of the District, require a pro-rata reduction in salary; a reduction in the term of this contract and pro-rate reduction in salary, i.e., a furlough consistent with State law; or a reduction in contract days in accordance with State law; or a termination of this agreement. Furthermore, any decline in student enrollment, elimination or change in course programming, or temporary closing of school or District operations because of emergency circumstances may require a pro-rata reduction in term and/or salary. Any such actions will be based on the recommendation of the Superintendent and must be approved by the Board. Any position eliminations will be handled in accordance with Board Policy GBKA (Reduction in Force).

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This offer of employment is subject to receipt of a criminal record report from SLED, which reveals no good and just cause for its withdrawal. S.C. Code Ann. 59-26-40 (Revised 2012).

Signed: _____
Employee

Date: 4/13/15

Signed: Rodney Thompson
Superintendent

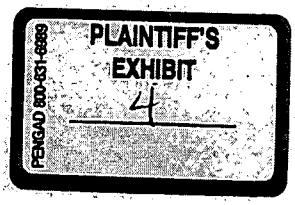
Date: April 15, 2015

The Employee's assignment for the 2015-2016 contract term is BERKELEY HIGH; however, it is understood that this assignment is tentative and may be changed by the administration upon notice to and consultation with the affected Employee.

Return signed and dated original to Human Resources

Berkeley County School District

JOB DESCRIPTION



TITLE: School Athletic Director

FLSA: Exempt

GENERAL SUMMARY

Under general supervision assists in ensuring that the district **Vision, Mission and Goals** are achieved and under general supervision develops, maintains, and provides a quality athletic program so that each enrolled student has an opportunity to participate in an extra-curricular athletic activity that will foster physical skills, sense of work and competence, knowledge and understanding of the sport and the principles of fair play; reports to the Principal.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Plans, organizes and administers the overall program of extra-curricular athletics, both intramural and interscholastic, for the school;

Supervises assigned coaches; manages such activities as the scheduling, planning, and coordination of work among the athletic department's staff;

Hires officials, obtains security personnel as required, and assists with the proper supervision of home games; attends all home athletic events;

Plans and prepares a proposed athletic budget for each ensuing school year. Ensures appropriate accounting for all athletic funds;

Arranges transportation for athletic contest participants; arranges the provision of meals for athletes and coaches when necessary during team travel;

Ensures that the sports program complies with the rules and regulations of the school, District, and the South Carolina High School League; complies with all legal requirements of district athletic programs; communicates to subordinate staff all policies, rules, procedures, and requirements as they pertain to the athletic department;

Requisitions, in cooperation with appropriate staff members and in accordance with proper bid processes, supplies, uniforms, and equipment for athletic programs; supervise the cleaning, storage, and care for all athletic equipment;

Arranges all details of visiting teams' needs, including lodging, meals, towels, gymnasium services, security, and field assistance as appropriate;

Makes all necessary arrangements for the use of non-school playing fields and facilities;

Arranges practice schedules for the coaches, with their input, on the fields and in the gymnasium;

Works to accommodate the needs of the media and the sports program through media exposure;

Administers the insurance program covering school athletes and works with the school secretary or athletic trainer for the processing of reports and claims;

Maintains student records of all award winners, including athletic scholarships; plans and supervises an annual recognition program for school athletes;

Utilizes interpersonal relations to deal effectively with administrators, teachers, parents, community members, co-workers, coaching staff, and students;

Prepares and/or reviews various records and forms such as maintenance reports, invoices, work orders, purchase orders, incident reports, budget information, job descriptions, athletic award plans, etc.;

Provides appropriate in-service training and mentoring for all coaches; and

Performs other related duties as required.

JOB SPECIFICATIONS

Education and Experience:

Job requires a Master's Degree in Administration or equivalent and must hold a valid South Carolina teaching credential at middle or secondary level. Minimum 5 years experience as a Head Coach in a major sport; or any equivalent combination of training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities. Teaching assignment required.

Knowledge:

Job requires knowledge of the policies, procedures and activities of the school district which pertain to the specific duties and responsibilities of the position; thorough knowledge and understanding of district athletic and extra-curricular programs; knowledge of the records, forms and reports which must be prepared and maintained; knowledge of proper maintenance of equipment, materials, and supplies used in daily activities for athletic and extra-curricular programs; knowledge of academic and physical eligibility requirements of each sport; possesses knowledge to develop appropriate rules and regulations of the various sports and the conduct of athletes; and knowledge of a variety of sports, athletic events, training methods, and coaching techniques.

Skills/Effort:

Job requires ability to organize and administer all aspects of a school's athletic program; ability to provide instruction to others through explanation, demonstration and/or supervised practice; possesses skill and ability in organizing, planning, and coordinating the activities of groups toward identified objectives; ability to prepare detailed reports and schedules as required; ability to prepare a budget and monitor expenditures; ability to communicate effectively with parents, students, teachers, district administrators, and other persons of varied backgrounds; ability to provide training, instruction, and guidance to coaches and athletes; ability to operate general office equipment in the performance of daily activities.

Working Conditions:

Working conditions are in both office and outdoor environments with some exposure to various environmental conditions. Job requires ability to work under a degree of stress related to duties that require constant attention to detail and working with students. Physical demands may require the lifting or moving of items weighing up to 35 pounds. Occasional local or out-of-state travel is required; some overnight travel may be required. Job requires the operation of standard office equipment and athletic equipment. Berkeley County School District is a smoke free district.

Responsibility:

Responsible for preparing and managing the school's athletic budget
Supervises the school's athletic staff

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

This job description is not intended as a complete listing of job duties. The incumbent is responsible for the performance of other related duties as assigned/required.

SIGNATURES:

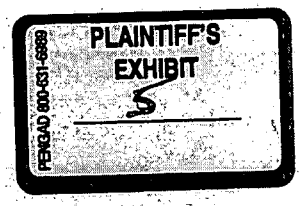
_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

BERKELEY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

JOB DESCRIPTION



TITLE: Teacher

FLSA: Exempt

GENERAL SUMMARY

Under general supervision assists in ensuring that the district **Vision, Mission and Goals** are achieved and under general supervision assists students in learning subject matter and/or skills that will contribute to their development as mature, able, and responsible men and women. The teacher reports to the school Principal.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Cooperates in developing a program of continuous progress consistent with district goals and objectives to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of pupils;

Keeps abreast of changes and district policies and students' needs and interests;

Establishes clear and appropriate objectives for all classroom activities and communicates these objectives to students;

Employs instructional methods and materials that are most appropriate for meeting stated objectives;

Assesses the accomplishments of students on a regular basis and provides progress reports as required;

Analyzes progress of individual students on a regular basis and seeks appropriate assistance as needed;

Cooperates with other members of the staff in planning instructional goals, objectives, and methods;

Creates a classroom environment that is conducive to learning and appropriate to the maturity and interests of pupils;

Plans and supervises purposeful assignments for teacher aide(s) and/or volunteers and evaluates their performance;

Provides adequate plans for substitute teachers and evaluates their performance;

Seeks the cooperation and assistance of parents through oral or written communication and/or home visits;

Makes provisions for being available to students and parents for education related purposes when required or requested to do so under reasonable terms;

Maintains accurate, complete, and correct records as required by law, district policies, and administrative regulations;

Takes all necessary and reasonable precautions to protect students and to properly care for all property, equipment, materials, and facilities;

Assists in upholding and enforcing school rules, administrative regulations, and board policies;

Is punctual and responsible in performing all duties and activities as assigned;

Assists the administration in implementing all policies and/or rules governing student life, conduct and behavior in a fair and just manner;

Provides for his/her own professional growth through an on-going program of reading, workshops, seminars, conferences, and/or advanced course work at institutions of higher learning;

Participates in school or district staff development programs as assigned by principal or superintendent;

Attends staff meetings, serves on staff committees as requested, and accepts a share of responsibility for co-curricular or other activities as assigned by principal or superintendent;

Recognizes and follows the appropriate procedures in the "chain of command" as designated by board policies and/or administrative procedures; and

Perform other related duties as required.

JOB SPECIFICATIONS

Education and Experience:

Education and experience as required by state certification authorities

Knowledge:

Job requires knowledge of the policies, procedures and activities of the school district which pertain to the specific duties and responsibilities of the position; knowledge in the methods for developing lesson plans and materials, and classroom activities which stimulate learning; knowledge of the records, forms and reports which must be prepared and maintained; knowledge of proper maintenance of equipment, materials and supplies used in daily activities; knowledge of counseling methods necessary for handling student academic and adjustment problems; and knowledge of the materials and information which must be prepared for classroom instructional activities.

Skills/Effort:

Job requires the ability to provide instruction to students through explanation, demonstration and/or supervised practice, ability to supervise students and maintain order in various classroom and instructional activities and situations; ability to operate general office equipment in the performance of daily activities; ability to prepare lesson plans, tests, and instructional materials for classroom activities; ability to identify student adjustment and/or academic problems, provide counseling and/or recommend appropriate remedial action to parents; ability to communicate effectively with students and their parents, district staff, and all other groups involved in the activities of the job.

Working Conditions:

Requires ability to work under a degree of stress related to duties that require constant attention and working with students. Physical demands are restricted to classroom work requiring lifting/moving of items up to 35 pounds. Occasional local travel is required; no overnight travel is required. Job requires the operation of standard office equipment. Berkeley County School District is a smoke free district.

Responsibility:

Responsible for classroom materials and supplies budget
Supervises students in classroom
Supervises instructional aides and volunteers assigned

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

This job description is not intended as a complete listing of job duties. The incumbent is responsible for the performance of other related duties as assigned/required.

SIGNATURES:

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Revised 7-22-10

(10)

Berkeley High School
Athletic
Annual Review
2015-2016

Name of Coach Jeff Cruse Sport Football / AD

Head ✓ Assistant ____ Volunteer ____

CODE (Evaluator must check one item)
E – Exceeds Standards
S – Satisfactory, Meet Standards
NI – Needs Improvement, Does not meet minimum standards of position

Work Characteristics	E	S	NI	Comments
A. Productivity: Uses time well, stays on task, efficient and productive				
B. Quality of work: Completes task in an accurate, well done manner				
C. Attitude: Cooperates, helps and interacts well with other coaches, supervisors, and athletes associated with the job to achieve common goals (teamwork, tactful, courteous, etc)				
D. Dependability: Attendance				
Punctuality				
E. Adaptability: Complies with regulations and adjusts to changes in procedures set by BCSD School District, Berkeley High School and South Carolina High School League				
F. Appearance: Complies with appropriate dress				
G. Initiative: Assumes Responsibility: Is willing to be responsible for carrying out a task. Does not have to be constantly reminded to get work done.				
Alert to Improvements: Completes job assignments and suggests methods to improve job activities.				
Displays Self-Motivation and Discipline: Does not require constant and regular follow-up to see that jobs are being completed. Completes routine and special assigned tasks with minimum supervision.				

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT 7

APP. 0537

BCSD0027

H. Professionalism: Displays the behavior generally associated with the assigned position. Works effectively and cooperatively with others to improve job knowledge and performance.					

Job Dimensions

I. Job Knowledge: Demonstrates awareness and understanding of all related matters required for successful job performance.					
J. Job Competencies: Demonstrates the skills necessary to perform the essential functions as defined in the job description.					

Goals:

1. Analitics
2. Evals for Athletic Dept.
3. Increase parent involvemint in booster Club

Essential Needs to Complete These Goals:

1. Data through Stats, participation, workouts, memberships
2. Coaches to increase professional Knowledge
3. membership

Comments: _____

Employee's Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____

Pre. 7/30/15 7/30/15

Pre. 7/30/15 7/30/15

BCSD0028

APP. 0538

BERKELEY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Division of Personnel Services

To: Jeffrey Cruce, Cane Bay High School

Subject: 2007- 08 School Year Reassignment

Date: January 18, 2008

Dear Mr. Cruce:

As per policy GBM - Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers, transfers can be made on a voluntary or involuntary basis.

Since the policy requirements and procedures have been met, I have approved your tentative reassignment from Hanahan High School (Athletic Director/Head Football Coach/Driver's Education Teacher – 190 days) to Cane Bay High School (Athletic Director/Head Football Coach/Driver's Education Teacher – 190 days). Within your school, the principal/supervisor can make appropriate reassignments.

This reassignment letter is being sent to you instead of a new contract since you are employed by the Berkeley County School District and assigned to a particular school/department.

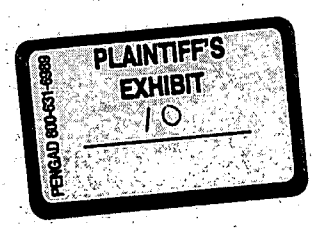
If you need further assistance, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Willis Sanders

Willis Sanders, Assistant Superintendent
Personnel Services

Cc: Rodney Thompson, Hanahan High School
Cassandra Jennings, Cane Bay High School
File



P.O. Box 608 • Moncks Corner, South Carolina 29461 • 843-899-8600 • FAX 843-899-8715

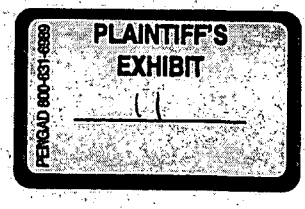
APP. 0539

BCSD0092

Charles Harrison

From: Jeff Cruce
Sent: Friday, December 11, 2015 11:04 AM
To: Charles Harrison
Subject: Coaches evaluation

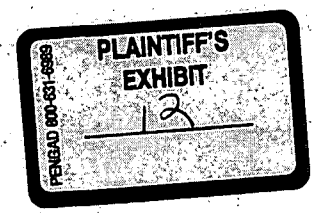
Do you have question concerning the evaluations for the athletic department? One of the coaches said you were asking about them.
Jeff



Berkeley County School District

Archie Franchini
Deputy Superintendent

December18, 2015



Mr. Jeffrey Cruce
12 Brigadier Dr.
Charleston, SC 29407

Dear Mr. Cruce:

This is to follow up our conference on December 16, 2015, during which we advised you that you are being reassigned, effective January 4, 2016, from your teaching position, which includes athletic director, football, and weight room responsibilities at Berkeley High School, to a position as a guidance counselor at Sedgefield Middle School for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year. Also present during our conference was Mr. Steven Steele, Principal of Berkeley High School. The reasons for the reassignment are failure to meet the goals agreed upon by you and Mr. Steele on July 30, 2015. Specifically, these were analytics, evaluations of the athletic department coaches and to increase the parent involvement in the athletic booster club. Mr. Steele stated that you had not met your goals and, therefore, he decided that he wanted to move in a different direction with the football program and athletic department.

As discussed, the administration determined that your reassignment was necessary and in the best interest of the school and District based on our determination that you have impaired your ability to be effective as the Athletic Director and head football coach at Berkeley High School.

As discussed, your salary will be maintained at its present level for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year, with the understanding that you will perform work for any of the remaining 55 supplemental days that you have not yet worked for the 2015-16 school year. You can work out those details with your new supervisor. However, you will not be asked to perform any additional coaching responsibilities for the 2015-16 school year. Your salary during any subsequent school years you are employed with the District will be commensurate with the position and number of contract days to which you are assigned.

229 E. Main Street
(843) 899-8600

PO Box 608
(843) 899-8719

Moncks Corner, SC 29461
Fax (843) 899-8780

Please contact me if you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance to you in your transition.

Sincerely,

Archie Franchini

Cc: Brenda B. Blackburn
Steven Steele
Dr. Glenda Levine
Personnel File

Steven Steele

From: Chris Stevens
Sent: Thursday, January 07, 2016 12:04 PM
To: Aimee Whittaker; Anthony Judy; Brett Fields; Brian Canady; Brian Kane; Bryan Demonte; Butch Svagerko; William Chassereau; Gary Christensen; Cole Faulkner; Con Salisbury; Courtney Salisbury; Courtney Simmons; Thomas Cox; David Brabham; Charles Finch; George Whittaker; Jay Guerry; Joe Harnage; Kevin Jenkins; Kevin Wadford; Samuel Lawyer; Lee Zakis; Lee Zakis; Matt Deacon; Melissa Hicks; Michael Burris (mburris.coach@gmail.com); Michael Szews; Mike Ward; Miller White; Melissa Norvell; Crystal Peace; Phillip Culbertson; Renee Tedder; Richard Jackson; Anthony Rivers; Robert Stone; Russell Austin; Ryan Wiggins; Scott Stein; thornal@bymcasports.com; Joseph Wallace
Cc: Charles Harrison; Steven Steele; Thomas Gallus
Subject: Student Athlete Eligibility and Medical Files

Today, January 7th 2016, myself, coach Ward, and Mr. Gallus went into the athletic directors office to check on the status of the student files left by our previous athletic director. After spending some time looking through files it has come to my attention that there could be some documents that could be misplaced and others that are out of order. From a liability stand point with competing sports and athletes it is necessary that all of the files be present to safeguard the athletes as well as to maintain the proper care for those athletes if something were to happen.

I will be in the AD's office during the next few day to make sure the correct files are in place for competing athletes and those weightlifting after school to make sure EVERY child has the correct paperwork on file.

I would ask if you have athletes competing and/or conditioning at the present time, this includes weightlifting, that you send me a copy of that roster ASAP so that I can check your student-athletes off the "no-fly" list. ALL students MUST have the following files in order to participate in scholastic sports:

- Risk Acknowledgment and Consent to Participate form
- Pre-participation Physical Examination form (signed by a doctor)
- Proper understanding of HIPAA and FERPA rights
- Emergency Insurance Information and Consent to Treat form
- ANY special accommodations such as asthma, allergies etc. must have a written Doctor's note filed and must have necessary treatment (inhaler, Epi-pen) present at all times.
- Copies of Birth Certificate and Social Security Cards.

I will update everyone again next week once everything has been checked off. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25
"Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize."

Chris Stevens ATC, SCAT
Sports Medicine Instructor and Head Athletic Trainer

APP. 0543

BCSD0011

Berkeley High School
(803) 530-8291 *cell*
(843) 899-8800 ext. 2064 *office*
stevenschris@bcsdschools.net

BERKELEY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Brenda B. Blackburn, Superintendent

January 8, 2016

Mr. Jeffrey Cruce
12 Brigadier Drive
Charleston, SC 29407

Dear Mr. Cruce:

This is to follow up our conference on January 6, 2016, during which I met with you and your attorney regarding your request that the administration reconsider the decision to remove you as head football coach and athletic director at Berkeley High School and reassign you to a guidance position at Sedgefield Middle School for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year. Also present was Archie Franchini, Deputy Superintendent, and the District's attorney. While you had previously filed a grievance, you confirmed that you had withdrawn your grievance.

By letter dated December 18, 2015, Mr. Franchini advised you that the administration determined that your reassignment was necessary and in the best interest of the school and District based on the determination that you have impaired your ability to be effective as the Athletic Director and head football coach at Berkeley High School. Mr. Franchini stated that during their conference with you on December 16, Steven Steele, Principal of Berkeley High School, advised you that your reassignment was based on your failure to meet the goals agreed upon by you and Mr. Steele on July 30, 2015. Specifically, the goals were analytics, evaluations of the athletic department coaches and to increase the parent involvement in the athletic booster club. Mr. Steele stated that you had not met your goals and, therefore, he decided that he wanted to move in a different direction with the football program and athletic department.

In your meeting with me on January 6, your attorney stated that two of the reasons stated for your reassignment were not legitimate, and that you believed the reference to "analytics" was the real reason you were being reassigned. Your attorney stated that your position was that what Mr. Steele meant by the term "analytics" was that you were not "hitting enough," referring to physical contact among the players. Your attorney further stated that you reported to Charlie Davis, Coordinator of Pupil Services, that Mr. Steele told you the community wanted more hitting and that you were not doing enough hitting. In her letter, your attorney stated that "it is outrageous in this day in time a high school coach is being fired for trying to protect students from concussions and being retaliated against by a principal for abiding by the NFHS guidelines."

Initially, with respect to what Mr. Steele meant by "analytics," Mr. Steele stated that he was referring to the use of data to improve performance, and more specifically your stated philosophy to never punt on fourth down. Mr. Steele stated that his reference to "analytics" included absolutely no reference to not hitting enough, and that his decision was in no way based on the amount of hitting. Two articles from September 2015 that were shared with me from the Post and Courier and the Kansas City Star attribute comments to you about your football philosophy where you stated that you would never punt again. Comments were attributed to you in connection with your "no punting" philosophy that you stated such things as, "You can't worry about your job. It's a philosophy." Another comment was "And I've told my assistant coaches this: This could be a career-ending decision that I've made. But I feel so strongly about it. I know it's gonna work." Further, Charlie Davis has informed me that you did not make any reports or complaints to him that Mr. Steele was requiring you to hit more or that Mr. Steele was directing you to violate the National Federation of State High School Associations rules regarding contact in practice. For these reasons, I have no basis to substantiate that Mr. Steele's decision had anything to do with whether or not your players were hitting enough. I can assure you that I would not uphold the decision on that basis.

With respect to the other two goals Mr. Steele reported you did not meet, the second goal was to conduct evaluations of the athletic department coaches. Your attorney indicated that you had evaluations (which essentially consisted of goal sheets) for the coaches and that they were available on your desk. However, your attorney acknowledged you did nothing further with the documents and that they were not typical evaluation documents. Your attorney also stated that Mr. Steele had never evaluated you, but a review of your personnel file includes annual goals based evaluations for you for all the years you were at Berkeley High School.

The third goal was to increase the parent involvement in the athletic booster club. The records reflect that membership in the Berkeley High School athletic booster club has steadily declined during the years you have been the head football coach and athletic director.

In summary, based on my review of the matter, I support the administration's determination that reassignment was necessary and in the best interest of the school and District based on the determination that you have impaired your ability to be effective as the Athletic Director and head football coach at Berkeley High School, and thus I uphold the decision to reassign you to a guidance position. I also want to confirm that I have no basis to substantiate that the decision was based on the players not hitting enough and my decision to uphold it is certainly not based on that fact.

As you were previously advised, your salary will be maintained at its present level for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year, with the understanding that you will perform work for any of the remaining 55 supplemental days that you have not yet worked for the 2015-16 school year. You can work out those details with your new supervisor.

Your attorney expressed your concerns that you were being set up to fail in your assignment to a guidance position. You confirmed that you were only certified in drivers' education and guidance, so the teaching options were limited. I have made arrangements, however, for Patricia Weeg, Director of Counseling Services, to meet with you on January 13 and 14 and provide you with extensive training and support to bring you up to date on the latest issues in guidance. You

will be notified of the time and location by either Ms. Weeg or Ms. Shameka Washington. I am hopeful this support will make your transition go more smoothly. I can assure you that we want you to be successful.

Please contact me or your supervisor, Ms. Shameka Washington, if you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance to you in your transition.

Sincerely,

Brenda Blackburn

Brenda Blackburn
Superintendent

cc: Kathryn Long Mahoney, Esquire
Archie Franchini, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Glenda Levine, Chief Human Resource Officer
Steven Steele, Berkeley High School Principal

May 26, 2016

Dr. Glenda Levine
Chief Human Resource Officer
Berkeley County School District
229 East Main Street
Moncks Corner, SC 29461

Dear Dr. Levine:

I am writing to provide you with formal notice of my resignation, effective July 1. I request that a copy of this letter be placed in my official BCSD personnel file.

Dr. Levine, my resignation has been forced upon me as a result of my December 2016 demotion to middle school guidance counselor from my position as Head Football Coach and Athletic Director at Berkeley High School. After faithfully serving this district as a football coach and athletic director for 25 years, I must resign in order to work again in my chosen field. I realize I cannot recover professionally if I remain an employee of BCSD. My dismissal has been publicly and professionally humiliating. My demotion will decrease my annual income by more than $35,000. Although the administration at Sedgefield Middle School and the guidance department in particular have been supportive and kind to me, the BCSD's decision to place me in a position for which I have no experience is clearly intended to "encourage" my resignation. In short, my resignation is nothing less than constructive discharge.

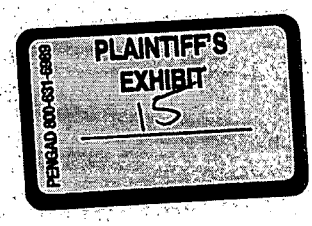
Over the past few months it has become apparent to me that I have been "blacklisted" within the school district. Even my attempts to secure a volunteer football coaching position were unsuccessful. I was instructed by Charlie Davis a full two weeks after I inquired and well after spring practice had begun that the district would allow me to volunteer as a football coach as long as I completed paperwork required for a volunteer coach – something that employees of the school district are not required to complete. Clearly, I cannot remain successful in my field if I remain employed by the BCSD. My wife and I must sell our home, restructure our personal finances and relocate out of state if I am to rebuild my career.

BCSD is tarnished and dishonored as an organization for having supported and facilitated the painful and undeserved destruction of my career after my dedication and years of committed service.

Sincerely,

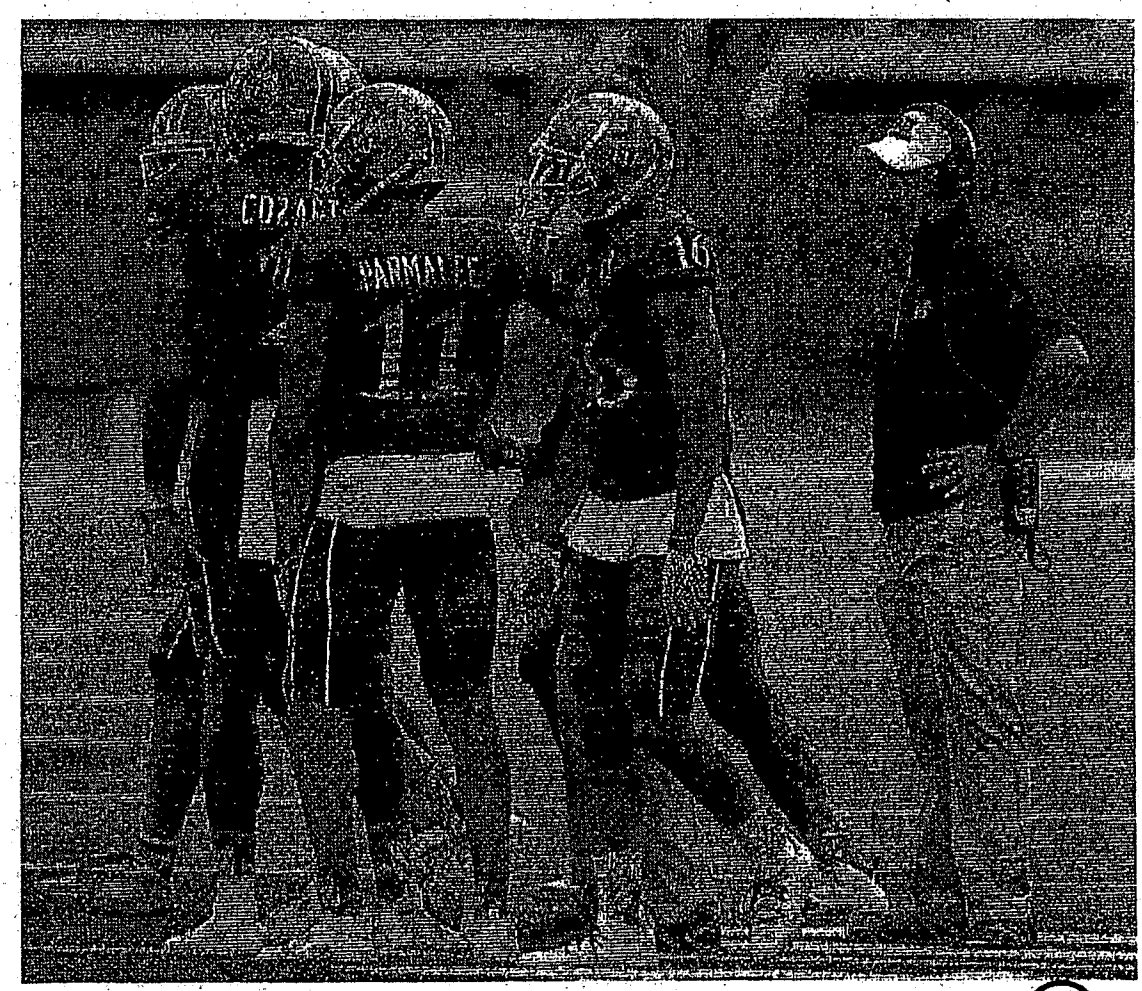
Jeff Cruce

Cc: Brenda Blackburn, Superintendent



COLLEGE SPORTS SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 2:03 PM

Numbers back it up, so why don't college football coaches go for it more on fourth down?



BY RUSTIN DODD
rdodd@kcstar.com

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT
PENGAD 800-631-6989

On the day Jeff Cruce told his principal about his grand plans for Berkeley High football, the conversation was met with immediate skepticism. The plan was an unorthodox one, to be sure, and Steven Steele, the principal at Berkeley, wondered if his head coach should reconsider. The Berkeley High football team had finished 8-5 in 2014, advancing to the third round of the state playoffs in South Carolina. Why would Cruce want to mess with success?

Cruce, a 53-year-old football man and a former offensive lineman at Clemson, remained undeterred. For three decades, he had been coaching in and around high school football. And after his fourth season at Berkeley, he was ready to try something drastic.

"I will never punt again," Cruce says.

Cruce is an inquisitive man by nature, he says, He is "an analytics guy." He soaked up the book "Moneyball" when it came out. He devours academic research papers that traffic in football questions. He is also a self-proclaimed disciple of Kevin Kelley, the famous Arkansas high school coach who has come to be known by a simple moniker.

"The Coach Who Never Punts."

Kelley, the head coach at Pulaski Academy in Little Rock since 2003, has won four state titles using his radical brand of football. You've probably heard the story: Kelley's teams never punt — save for the most extreme situations. They always onside kick. And they generally treat football games like one never-ending, hair-ablaze two-minute drill. Kelley's strategies — and their subsequent success — have made him a cult figure in football circles.

He is a constant media curiosity — commanding recent profiles from HBO's "Real Sports," the Washington Post, Sports Illustrated and pretty much every publication that enjoys weird sports stories. He is adored on the Internet. (Twitter is obsessed with many things, but it LOVES coaches who never punt.) And he has become a fascination in the upper echelon of football. Earlier this year, according to the Post, Kelley scored a one-on-one meeting with former Chiefs general manager Scott Pioli, who now works for the Atlanta Falcons.

But for all the attention, Kelley has remained something of a loner — a one-man revolution against the punting fascists of the football world. That could be changing — albeit by a sample size of one or two adventurous coaches like Cruce.

"I love the philosophy — love it," says Cruce, who is four games into his Kelley experiment. "I can see the fruits of the labor."

Years of empirical data and scholarly studies say that Kelley is no quack. The simple math supports his thesis. But still, a system as extreme as Kelley's has found little traction at the highest levels of college football.

"I know what the percentages say," says West Virginia coach Dana Holgorsen, one of the more progressive offensive minds in college football. "But you got to base it on how your team is playing, and the confidence with which they're playing as well."

OK, stop. Expand your mind for a moment. Let your curiosity wander. What if a downtrodden college football program decided to follow Kelley's ideas? What if a team with a woeful defense and a promising offense decided to forget about conventional wisdom? What if a school like say — Kansas — decided it had nothing to lose. What would that look like?

Well, the Internet would certainly love it. That's a guarantee. But the numbers say it might even be the right call.

"You can't have fear about doing it," Cruce says. "You can't worry about your job. It's a philosophy. When you do it, you're either all in or not."

For the last 120 years, football coaches have more or less abided by the same set of rules when it comes to punting. If it is fourth down, and you are out of field-goal range, you kick the ball back to the other team and wage a war of field position.

The rules are flexible, of course, and over the last 25 years, more coaches have used modern statistics to calculate the risks and rewards of going for it. But relatively speaking, coaches have remained a conservative lot. During the last two seasons, just one Big 12 football program attempted more than 50 fourth-down conversion attempts. That team was Baylor, coached by Art Briles, a former high school coach who actually admits he's become more prone to punt as his program has become a conference power.

"I've probably actually gotten a little bit more conservative," Briles says.

For years, though, advanced studies have argued for football coaches to be more daring. In an academic study published in 2005, an economics professor from the University of California analyzed NFL teams' fourth-down decisions. David Romer, the professor, found that teams just didn't go for it enough. The teams' decisions were "far more conservative than the ones that would maximize their chances of winning," Romer wrote. Kelley, the coach at Pulaski, has done his own research and read other studies. He thinks about the decision as a simple math equation.

In Kelley's system, each yard line of the field is assigned an expected point total for an offense, ranging from 0.5 points to six points, based on years of data. In other words: How often should a team expect points from this spot on the field? From that number, you subtract the opponent's expected points should they take over on downs at that same spot. Kelley also factors in the probability of a conversion, the expected punt length and the expected punt return. The equation is complicated, but the results are easily digestible.

Consider this extreme example, one Kelley has used often: It's fourth and seven from your own 5. If Pulaski fails to convert, the opponent has a 92 percent chance to score a touchdown from the 5. If Pulaski punts, the opponent will likely take over around the 40-yard line and still has a 77 percent chance to score. Kelley's teams, meanwhile, have a 50 percent chance at converting the fourth down. The decision, for him, is obvious.

"Just because that's the way it has always been done," Kelley told The Star in 2010, explaining the numbers. "(That) doesn't mean it's the best chance to win."

The percentages change at the college and NFL levels, where punters are stronger and more skilled. But the thrust of the argument remains. If the numbers offer a competitive advantage, why wouldn't a school with nothing to lose take a chance?

Here is one example: A week ago Saturday, Kansas suffered a 55-23 loss to Memphis at Memorial Stadium in Lawrence. The Jayhawks dropped to 0-2 entering a bye week, on pace to become the first winless team in a power-five conference since Washington in 2008. During the Memphis loss, both teams had 15 possessions. Memphis averaged 3.6 points per possession; Kansas averaged 1.5. In

a game in which each team followed the conventions of football, the Jayhawks were doomed. Each Kansas punt meant the equivalent of at least a field goal for Memphis.

Was there another option? In four quarters, Kansas punted seven times — in situations ranging from fourth and 23 at its own 35, to fourth and five from the 30, to fourth and 13 from the Memphis 48. The Jayhawks went for it just once — on fourth and five in the final minute. The conversion attempt failed.

Kansas coach David Beaty is something of a numbers guy. He talks about what the "data" says during news conferences. He has implemented a meticulous system to keep players healthy and fresh. He profiles as something of a risk-taker, but against Memphis, there were few occasions where any conventional coach would have gone for it on fourth down.

KU offensive coordinator Rob Likens, meanwhile, also says he is wired to be naturally aggressive, especially on fourth and short.

"A lot of that is how good you are on the offensive line," Likens says. "Do you feel like you can push them off the ball for a yard? Field position plays a huge part in your thinking process in that deal. And also how well your defense is playing.

"But once you cross the 50-yard line, man. To me, it's whatever the head coach says. But I'm ready to go."

We will learn more about Beaty's aggressiveness as the year wears on. But it's safe to say he won't be instituting Kelley's system anytime soon. He is not alone. Coaches, experts say, are like most human beings — conditioned to think about the effects of possible failure more than the possible gain. And in this case, the possible failure is about more than turning the ball over on downs.

During the last two seasons, just four Big 12 programs averaged 20 fourth-down conversion attempts per year. The most conservative of the conservative is Kansas State's Bill Snyder, whose teams went for it 23 times over the last two seasons. The counter-argument: K-State converted 15 of those 23 attempts for an impressive 65 percent success rate. The Wildcats played in a bowl game for a fifth straight season.

"(We) go for it if you can make it, and if you can't, don't do it, I guess," Snyder says, laughing as he explains his philosophy. "I don't know. Every game is a little bit different."

Snyder says he likes to factor in opposing defenses and how his team matches up in certain packages or play calls. He is also a believer in the value of field position.

"I've normally been reasonably conservative in regards to that," he says. "I'm not a big fan of going for it when you're coming off your own end of the field."

Sometimes, of course, there are no optimal choices. During the 2013 and 2014 seasons, the Kansas program was relatively aggressive under Charlie Weis and then interim coach Clint Bowen. In those two seasons, they went for it 48 times, the second-most in the Big 12. They were successful just 11 times.

Still, Kelley and his followers believe a competitive advantage exists, suspended somewhere between the boundaries of bravery and foolishness. It's up to coaches to tap into it.

Four games into his Kelley experiment, Jeff Cruce has seen mixed results. His football team at Berkeley is just 1-3, but his up-tempo offense is thriving. The Berkeley High Stags are averaging close to 94 plays, an unheard of number in a 48-minute game. They are also piling up close to 500 yards of offense.

"It's all because we don't punt," Cruce says. "You get that extra down. The thought process is that every down is a first down. That's the way we preach it to our kids."

Cruce says his defense is struggling, but this was expected — and part of the reason he committed to the no-punts philosophy. If your strength is offense, Cruce reasons, you might as well try to keep the ball in your playmakers' hands. There has been a learning curve. For now, Berkeley is refraining from onside kicking after touchdowns. Maybe next year, Cruce says.

There is, however, a new energy around the program. His players bought into the system immediately, he says, taking to the aggressive mindset. There is something about that extra down that fosters confidence, he says. In truth, one of the biggest challenges has been convincing his assistant coaches. Some habits die hard.

"It's like a poker player," Cruce says. "I have taken all of my chips and I have placed them in the middle of the table. And I've told my assistant coaches this: This could be a career-ending decision that I've made. But I feel so strongly about it. I know it's gonna work."

Cruce is admittedly new to the system, but he also believes it could work at a higher level. Maybe someday, a Division I college program will give it a shot. Maybe someday, a school will take a look at Kelley himself. A few moments later, though, Cruce pauses.

"Call me in six months," he says. "I'll let you know what I think then."

To reach Rustin Dodd, call 816-234-4937 or send email to rdodd@kcstar.com. Follow him on Twitter: @rustindodd.

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COMMENTS

Coach Cruce Meetings

- July 30th Meet with Coach Cruce about upcoming season and what we could do to help. At this time he told me that he would not be putting this year and then explained why he would not be punting. I asked him if he was fully prepared for the reaction and he said he was committed to it and didn't care what people would think. He informed me that it didn't matter where he was on the field he was not punting. At that point I asked him if understood that by doing this that it would be make or break for him and he replied he want worried. At that point I told him I would support him as coach since it was his decision and he had to live with the results.
- September 8th I meet with Coach Cruce about the record of 1-2 and my concerns about the team giving up 70 points. He told me that it was mental mistakes and that he was not expecting that result versus Summerville. I asked him if he needed anything from me and he told me no.
- September 16th morning; I meet with Coach Cruce with Charlie Harrison in attendance about several issues including asking from emails in regards to the school board and the company not having our state championship signs on it. We also discussed a concern about football player's horse playing in front of the old gym after practice unsupervised. (A general meeting was help with all coached including Coach Cruce about athletes being supervised after price till their rides picked them up) (an agenda and sign in sheet is available from the meeting where this was discussed). The next item was the football team where our record was now 1-3 and for a second week in a row we had given up 70 points. I asked him again what we could do to help and he replied nothing. He then went on to explain how it was based on 10 one play touchdowns. He also in discussions reaffirmed that the loses had nothing to do with his no punting policy. Then he brought up about a donor giving money for a new scoreboard and I replied I don't understand why others who have made it have not given money also like that person.
- September 16th midday; I was notified that the community was organizing a protest against Coach Cruce about the record and the no punting policy. I asked Charlie Harrison to help me talk with some leaders of the community to help calm the situation. I decided we need to notify Coach Cruce of this and the fact that people where spreading this information via social media. So Mr Harrison and I walked out to the game field where Coach Cruce was to tell him what was going on and to ask him to not to speak with reporters about it. Once we started talking with him he became defensive and argumentative with me because Mr Harrison was with me. I asked Mr Harrison to please leave so that Coach Cruce would calm down and listen to me. Coach Cruce then told me that I offended him in our earlier meeting by having Mr Harrison in the meeting. That he thought it would just be us and that he thought I was wrong to have Mr Harrison with me. I told Mr Cruce that Mr Harrison came with me on my request so that we would all be on the same page in regards to the protest situation since Mr Harrison and I would be meeting with local leaders to calm it down. After a few more minutes of talking Mr Cruce said he was sorry and that he would apologize to Mr Harrison for acting rude to him which he did later in the day. The next conversation was about his feelings about what was going on where he informed me he didn't care what people thought that he was not changing and he would hope that I would not ask him to change. I told him he choose this course and that my job was to protect the students and the school from a protest during a game.

APP 0557

- September 16th afternoon; I went to coach Cruces office to inform him that several newspapers now had wind of the protest and were spread information about it via social media. When I went to talk with him Mr Charlie Davis was in his office. At that point I discussed the situation with Mr Davis and Coach Cruce and what we were doing about it.
- September 17th. I was standing in front of the flagpole with Office Judy and Mr Polk when Coach Cruce approached me about singing some items. As I was signing them he asked me how I was doing and I informed him not well since I was still dealing with the protest situation. HE then asked me if it was just the black community or the white community. I informed him it was the entire community of Moncks Corner involved and that we were doing our best to calm everyone down. At that point he walked away
- September 24, 2015. Meet with Coach Cruce briefly in my office about security meeting at 1 about game night security. Told him I was meeting with Tim Knight and Lt Roach about our plans for the night and that we will be placing an officer near him after the game to make sure fans do not bother him and offered a planned clothes officer to be near his wife during the game. He informed me that his wife was not coming on Charlie Davis advice and he thanked me for the officer. I then told him that I would place an officer near his wife the rest of the season and he said they won't need it because tomorrow night will be the tipping point where they will start winning. I told him winning solves everything and that if he needed anything to let me known.
- Oct 29th Coach Cruce called about getting the football players out of class 20 minutes early today. I asked why and he said so they could take pictures. I told him no because of testing and other academic events going on around the school. He seemed upset that I had told him know and then he said to me "do you think they will be teaching to the bell?" my response was that they are required to just like he is in his classes.

Cruce out as coach, AD at Berkeley

CRUCE, from C1

has been a coach within the district for 25 years, 20 as a head coach. Cruce posted a 25-32 record at Berkeley, guiding the 2014 Stags to the Region 8-AAA championship with an 8-5 record. That was Berkeley's only winning season under Cruce, and the Stags finished 3-7 this season.

Cruce also served as the head coach at Cane Bay High School (2008-2010) and Hanahan High School (1995-2007), experiencing his greatest success at Hanahan. At Hanahan, Cruce was 112-44 with 10 consecutive winning seasons. He began his first two seasons but guided the Hawks to a 106-28 record over his last 10 seasons.

Cruce helped to start the new program at Cane Bay in 2008.

posting a 14-20 record in the school's first three seasons of varsity play.

Prior to coming to Berkeley County, Cruce was the head coach for three seasons at Wade Hampton High School in Varnville — posting a record of 7-25. He also spent five seasons as an assistant at Berkeley before moving on to Hanahan. His career coaching record as a head coach is 158-221.

Attempts by The Post and Courier to reach Cruce for comment were unsuccessful.

The opening at Berkeley long considered one of the top coaching jobs in South Carolina, is sure to draw statewide interest from coaches. Early speculation as to coaches interested in the position include Timberland head coach Art Craig, Marlboro County head coach

Dean Boyd, former Berkeley varsity player and current West Ashley assistant Will Lampkin.

The position of athletic director will also be open for applications. It is believed the two positions at Berkeley will be separated.

The Berkeley opening is one of two in the Lowcountry to date.

At Summerville, a permanent replacement for legendary head coach John McKissick will be named sometime in the spring, if not sooner.

Former assistant Joe Call served as the interim head coach during the 2015 season, and will again be a strong candidate for the permanent job.

Sources indicate the job opening will be posted and applications will be accepted before interviewing candidates for the permanent position.

Cruce out as coach, AD at Berkeley

BY DAVID SPUTO
Post and Courier

The Berkeley County School District announced on Wednesday that Berkeley High School head football coach and athletic director Jeff Cruce will be reassigned to another position within the district and will no longer serve as the school's football coach and athletic director.

"We appreciate the work coach Cruce put in with our students and wish him much success in his future endeavors with BCSD," said Steven Steele, principal at Berkeley High School. "Cruce has been at Berkeley for [illegible] years, but

Please see CRUCE, Page C4

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT 23
PENDAD 800-631-6989

Ex-Berkeley coach Cruce files lawsuit

BY JEFF HARTSELL
jhartsell@postandcourier.com

Former Berkeley High School football coach Jeff Cruce has filed a wrongful termination complaint against the Berkeley County School District, claiming he was fired for not making his players better in practice.

Cruce, who was a Berkeley coach and athletic director for Dec. 16, 2015, [illegible] the Stags [illegible] year [illegible] season in which [illegible] the coach made headlines for his [illegible] physical [illegible] for putting more mouth-down [illegible]

Cruce [illegible] seasons winning [illegible] a region championship in 2014, and had worked for the school district since 1992.

The suit alleges that Cruce was fired because Berkeley principal Steven Steele did not approve of Coach Cruce's coaching philosophy, which included less hitting in practice.

Steele said Saturday that he could not comment.

The suit alleges a strained relationship between Cruce and Steele and says that Cruce filed a grievance against the principal in 2015.

Cruce claims in the suit that Steele fired him after that 2015 grievance, but the coach was reinstated by then-Superintendent Rodney Thompson.

The suit claims that the reason Coach Cruce was terminated in 2015 was because Steele wanted to alter the style of coaching from football programs with more emphasis on practice drills and more hitting in practice to lessen player injuries and fatigue in football players.

In 2015, the suit says, Cruce decided to limit full-contact hitting to one practice per week.

Please see CRUCE, Page C6

Online

For more high school sports coverage, go to hsprepzone.com.

Ex-Berkeley head football coach Cruce files lawsuit

CRUCE from C1

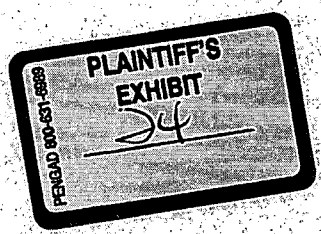
The suit claims that after the season was over, Steele told Cruce, "The community does not think you hit enough in practice, and I agree."

The suit says, "Despite 19 high school football players' deaths this year and the widespread national attention given to head injuries and concussions among high school players, Steele has criticized the football team's weekday practices for not involving full pads and more hitting."

And the suit claims, Coach Cruce was fired "for his progressive coaching approach to player safety."

The lawsuit does not cite a specific amount in damages, but claims that Cruce has suffered damages in the form of severe psychological harm, emotional distress, anxiety, pain and suffering, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment, embarrassment, humiliation, physical injuries and injury to his personal and professional reputation.

David Shelton contributed to this report.



Steven Steele

From: Derrick Major <mrmajor76@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2015 4:23 PM
To: Steven Steele
Subject: Change has to come

Coach Steele I hate to be emalling you like this but I feel I have to say something. It is hurting me to my heart to see how far our football program has fallen at Berkeley. There is no sense of pride anymore with the program. And it happened as soon as Jeff Cruce took over the program. You coached at the school so you have no choice but to understand where I am coming from. By no means am I starting the "Hire Jerry Brown" campaign. But this is unacceptable that this guy has destroyed in four years what it took two great coaches (Gerald Moody and Jerry Brown) to build. The worst thing about this whole situation is that I'm hearing people in the community talking about boycotting the games. That would be hurtful to the kids if they ever found that out. It will be the saddest day of my life if things come to that. Kim Mclaren and Charlie Davis help destroy our once proud program. But it seems to me that ever since Cane Bay came along they really don't care about other programs in the county. But that's for another discussion. But something needs to change. Berkeley has never been happy with just winning a weak region. He may be fooling the higher ups but he's not fooling me.

Sent from my iPad

Steven Steele

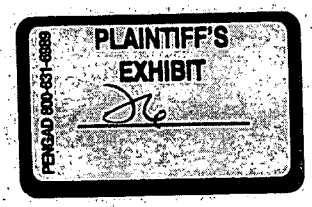
From:	kim Collins <kimcollins93@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Saturday, September 12, 2015 12:40 AM
To:	Steven Steele
Subject:	BHS Varsity Coach

Hi Mr. Steele,

I am a C/O 93 graduate of BHS and I am writing you to tell you how completely and utterly shocked and appalled at our current varsity football coach. Coach Cruze needs to be let go from the BHS program. This is the 2nd week of high school football and BOTH weeks, BHS has been beaten by 70+ points!! That is unacceptable!! This is an embarrassment to our school, our county and ESPECIALLY these young boys giving their ALL on that field!!! THEY are doing their absolute best and they deserve a COACH that can and WILL give HIS best to these young athletes!! WE the people of Berkeley COUNTY and the students of BHS and the PARENTS of these students/players/band members/chorus and faculty DESERVE BETTER!!!! WE deserve a COACH that knows how and is WILLING to give his ALL in return. And unfortunately, Coach Cruze is NOT that person!!!! Berkeley has some good talent on the Varsity team, and I would love to see that talent go on to possible college football like we've had in previous years! If our program doesn't turn around VERY QUICKLY, the players may miss out on an opportunity because scouts aren't going to come looking at players on a team that are repeatedly getting beat by 70+ points! And THAT is NOT FAIR to the athletes that are giving their all and have the potential to go further in life and possibly have a career in football!

Sincerely,

Kim Collins
BHS C/O 93
#STAGS



DEFENDANTS' COMPOSITE TRIAL EXHIBIT

NEWS ARTICLES

Tab	Date	Publication	Title
1	5/4/2011	Post & Courier	*Cruce New Coach at Berkeley*
2	5/9/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce Era Begins at Berkeley*
3	5/16/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Schools Kick Off Spring Practice*
4	5/17/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Usher in New Era of Football*
5	5/23/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Air Berkeley: New Look Stags Take Flight*
6	5/24/2011	Post & Courier	*Letters to the Editor*
7	5/26/2011	Post & Courier	*Zehr to Coach Cane Bay Football*
8	6/27/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Hit High Gear in Summer Workouts?*
9	7/18/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Countdown to Kickoff*
10	7/24/2011	Post & Courier	*One on One with Jeff Cruce*
11	7/29/2011	Post & Courier	*Old, New Faces on Sidelines*
12	7/30/2011	Post & Courier	*"It's Dangerous Out There." Heat v. Football*
13	8/1/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Opens Courtain on Jeff Cruce Era*
14	8/12/2011	Post & Courier	*2011 Top 10*
15	8/15/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley to Create Sports Hall of Fame*
16	8/15/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce Era Debuts Friday*
17	8/18/2011	Post & Courier	*Bluffton the Clear Favorite in Reagion 7-AAA*
18	8/23/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Set to Work on Knight Moves*
19	8/29/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Stratford Blanks Berkeley 28-0*
20	9/1/2011	Post & Courier	*523 Berkeley Games and Counting*
21	9/2/2011	Post & Courier	*Summerville Geared to Face Rival Berkeley*
22	9/6/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley and Timberland a Healthy Rivalry*
23	9/9/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Green Wave Washes Out Stags 13-0*
24	9/16/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Capture First Win for Cruce*
25	9/19/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Top Manning for First Win of Cruce Era*
26	10/17/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Keep Winning*
27	10/21/2011	Post & Courier	*Berkeley's Patience Paying Off*
28	10/22/2011	Post & Courier	*Bluffton Romps to Region 7-AAA Title*
29	10/25/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Cobras Whip Lake Marion; Rival Berkeley Looms*
30	10/25/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Hanley to Peak at Cordesville Meeting*
31	10/27/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Cane Bay Charms Stags*
32	10/27/2011	Post & Courier	*Pick Six: High School Predictions*
33	10/28/2011	Post & Courier	*Enos Carries Cane Bay*
34	10/31/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Cane Bay Tops Stags, Earn Second Seed*
35	11/2/2011	Post & Courier	*North-South Will Have Lowcountry Flavor*
36	11/6/2011	Berkeley Independent	*Cobras Roll on in Class AAA Playoffs*
37	11/7/2011	Berkeley Independent	*South All Start Selections Announced*
38	11/11/2011	Post & Courier	*Cane Bay's Enos, Who Moved from Linebacker to Running Back as Freshman, Leads the Area with 1,665 Yards Rushing*
39	11/25/2011	Post & Courier	*Croghan's Maturity Fuels Bishop England*
40	12/9/2011	Post & Courier	*Hilton "One of the Best"*
41	12/11/2011	Post & Courier	*North Continues Dominance Over South in All-Star Game*
42	1/16/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Weight Training Program Available for All Athletes*
43	1/23/2012	Berkeley Independent	*BHS Hall of Fame Accpeting Nominations*
44	2/15/2012	Post & Courier	*Class AAA Votes to Form Two Divisions*
45	7/1/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Making Summer Progress*
46	7/1/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Church Helps Stags Beat the Heat*
47	8/5/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Finding Mudville: Talking Sports*
48	8/11/2012	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
49	8/16/2012	Post & Courier	*Berkeley has Experience to Win 8-AAA*
50	8/24/2012	Post & Courier	*Stags Take on Knights in Season Opener*
51	8/24/2012	Post & Courier	*Footballalways Matters Here; Friday Night Tradition Still Magical Around Lowcountry*

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52	8/31/2012	Post & Courier	*Old Rivals Meet Again Summerville, Berkeley Each Looking to Avoid 0-2 Start*
53	9/4/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Drowned by Green Wave 36-12*
54	9/16/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce Expects Tough Battle with Wolves*
55	9/20/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Stuns Timberland, 21-20*
56	9/21/2012	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
57	9/22/2012	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
58	9/26/2012	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
59	10/5/2012	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
60	10/16/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Face Win or Go Home Scenario for Playoffs*
61	10/26/2012	Post & Courier	*Stags Roll Into Playoffs Berth*
62	11/3/2012	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Advances in AAA Playoffs*
63	11/9/2012	Post & Courier	*Cruce has Berkeley on a Roll; Stags Running on all Cylinders Heading Into Today's Playoff Game*
64	11/13/2012	Berkeley Independent	*Braves Skin Stgs 41-14 to End Berkeley Run*
65	1/12/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Unhappy with Cruce*
66	1/12/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Reader Supports Cruce*
67	1/13/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce Critic Responds*
68	4/16/2013	Berkeley Independent	*BHS Hall of Fame Golf Tourney April 25*
69	5/14/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Good Weather Shines on Spring Football Practice*
70	5/28/2013	Berkeley Independent	*The Team We've Been Waiting for'*
71	8/4/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Sigs Eager to Silence Critics*
72	8/19/2013	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Looking to Overtake Hanahan in Region 8-AAA*
73	8/20/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Its's Showtime: Timberland and Cross Kickoff Friday*
74	8/27/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Take Clean Slate to Stratford*
75	8/29/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Knights Outlast Berkeley, 29-10*
76	8/30/2013	Post & Courier	*Showdowns Loom in Berkeley County*
77	9/6/2013	Post & Courier	*Will Third Year be the Charm for Cruce?*
78	9/7/2013	Post & Courier	*Summerville Rides Big Plays to Victory*
79	9/10/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Big Plays Bite Stags*
80	9/17/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Tops Cane Bay for First Win*
81	9/27/2013	Post & Courier	*Friday's Key Matchups*
82	9/28/2013	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Tops Timberland*
83	10/1/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Rack Wolves 31-12*
84	10/4/2013	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Blisters Trojans in Region 8-AAA Opener*
85	10/11/2013	Post & Courier	*Friday's Key Matchups*
86	10/12/2013	Post & Courier	*Corralled Hawks Shut Out Stags, Improve to 7-0*
87	10/15/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Hanahan Manhandles Stags 36-0*
88	10/22/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Reign on Stall Parade*
89	10/31/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Down Hilton Head, Secure Third Seed in 8AAA*
90	11/2/2012	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Rolls Past Hilton Head*
91	11/6/2013	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Clinch Third Seed in 8AAA*
92	11/8/2013	Post & Courier	*Friday's Key Matchups*
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94	2/18/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Hall of Frame Announces Scholarships for Senior Boy and Girl*
95	3/25/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Hall of Frame Inductees Announced*
96	5/8/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Look to Take Next Step in Spring Practice*
97	6/1/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Spring Game Gives Coaches an Early Look*
98	6/2/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Volunteer Assistant Coaches*
99	6/23/2014	Post & Courier	*Ban on Parent-Coaches Would Devastate Teams*
100	7/30/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce: Battle Brewing in Region 8AAA*
101	8/5/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Countdown to Kickoff*
102	8/6/2014	Berkeley Independent	*BHS Scrimmage Cancelled After Wando Football Team Stricken with Staph Infection*

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103	8/8/2014	Post & Courier	*Armadillos, Colonial Lake and True Blue Fans*
104	8/14/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Feel the Need for Speed*
105	8/16/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags to Run and Gun Against Johnsonville*
106	8/17/2014	Post & Courier	*Wave, Gators Headline Lowcountry's Top 10 List*
107	8/21/2014	Post & Courier	*Size, Experience Are Key for Stags Success*
108	8/21/2014	Post & Courier	*Berkeley*
109	8/23/2014	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Rallies to Beach Class AA Flashes*
110	8/26/2014	Post & Courier	*Stags Seek to End Losing Skid Against Knights*
111	8/28/2014	Post & Courier	*High School Football Predictions: Week 1*
112	8/29/2014	Post & Courier	*Friday's Key Matchups*
113	9/4/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Look to Ride Green Wave*
114	9/5/2014	Post & Courier	*Key Matchups*
115	9/11/2014	Post & Courier	*High School Football Predictions: Week 3*
116	9/26/2014	Post & Courier	*Friday's Key Football Matchups*
117	10/7/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Look to Continue Road Rule Against Hilton Head*
118	10/10/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags 2-0 After 42-26 Clipping of Seahawks*
119	10/11/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Charge Into Region 7AAA Title Hunt*
120	10/15/2014	Post & Courier	*Wando Prepares for Volleyball Playoffs*
121	10/17/2014	Post & Courier	*Friday's Key Football Matchups*
122	10/17/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Blown Away: Stags Spank Bruins41-15*
123	10/18/2014	Post & Courier	*Stags Blast Bruins*
124	10/24/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Rout Stall 48/-0, Region Championship Showdown Next*
125	10/27/2014	Berkeley Independent	*JV and B-Team Stags Enjoying Banner Seasons*
126	10/30/2014	Berkeley Independent	*REGION CHAMPS! Stags Down Hanahan 24-17 to Capture Region 8AAA Crown*
127	10/31/2014	Post & Courier	*Friday's Key Football Matchups*
128	11/1/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Playoff Brackets Set: Stags Host Greenville Berea*
129	11/1/2014	Post & Courier	*Berkeley's Back; Stags Clip Hawks to Win Region 8-AAA Title*
130	11/4/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce Era Offically Begins*
131	11/5/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stag Nation Calls for Blue Out Friday Night Against Visiting Dreher*
132	11/7/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Six Straight: Stags Give Dreher Playoff Blues 35-28*
133	11/7/2014	Post & Courier	*Brekeley's Dressis Stags Steady Hand*
134	11/8/2017	Post & Courier	*Dress Late TD Lifts Stags to Win*
135	11/13/2014	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
136	11/14/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Joseph Dress Scores Two TD's to Lead Stags to 28-21 Playoff Wiin*
137	11/15/2014	Post & Courier	*Dress Late Score Propels Berkeley*
138	11/17/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Fan Proud of Rgion 8AAA Title*
139	11/18/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags' Best Game Required to Advance Against Hartsville*
140	11/21/2014	Berkeley Independent	*Stags' Cinderella Run Ends with 55-0 Loss to Hartsville*
141	11/22/2014	Post & Courier	*Hartsville Rolls Over Berkeley*
142	11/26/2014	Post & Courier	*With Two Teams Left, An Early Peek at 15*
143	2/21/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Middle School Weight Training Program Pays Dividends*
144	3/21/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Athletic Directors Cruce, Craig and McDowell Honored*
145	4/27/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Five-class Football Coming with SCHSL Reclassification*
146	5/29/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Takes First Steps Toward Region Title Defense*
147	6/15/2015	Post & Courier	*A Quick Peek at Prep Football Season*
148	7/20/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Win Stratford's 7-on-7 Tournment*
149	7/27/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Practice Set to Begin for Area Football Teams*
150	7/31/2015	Post & Courier	*5 Things to Watch This High School Football Season*
151	8/9/2015	Berkeley Independent	*One Classification One State Champ with New SCHSL Alignment*
152	8/17/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Score Fast to Thump James Island 14-6 in Sertoma*
153	8/20/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Win High-Octane Nail-Biter 40-34*
154	8/20/2015	Post & Courier	*Stags Look to Hit the Big Time*
155	8/20/2015	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Stags*

Tab	Date	Publication	Title
156	8/21/2015	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
157	8/22/2015	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Survives Its First Test*
158	8/28/2015	Post & Courier	*High School Football Predictions: Week 1*
159	8/28/2015	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
160	8/28/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Hammer Time: Knights Pound Stags 47-24*
161	8/29/2015	Post & Courier	*Knights Hurdle Stags; White Accounts for Five Touchdowns to Lead Stratford*
162	9/4/2015	Post & Courier	*High School Football: Friday's Key Matchups*
163	9/4/2015	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
164	9/5/2015	Post & Courier	*Call Gets First Win at Summerville as Green Wave Roll Past Berkeley*
165	9/8/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Green Wave Roll Over Stags*
166	9/25/2015	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
167	9/25/2015	Post & Courier	*No Headline in Original*
168	9/29/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Takes Timberland*
169	10/7/2015	Post & Courier	*High Schools Shuffle*
170	10/12/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Battles Back*
171	10/13/2015	Post & Courier	*Hilton Head Blasts Berkeley in Offensive Shootout*
172	10/16/2015	Post & Courier	*Stags QB Douglas Hones His Skills Between the Hedges*
173	10/20/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Quarterback Darius Douglas Hones His Skills 'Between the Hedges'*
174	10/24/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Defense, Defense, Defense*
175	11/6/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Game Over.*
176	11/17/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Stags Wrap Up Their Season*
177	12/15/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce Cruises*
178	12/16/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Jeff Cruce Let Go as Head Coach for Berkeley High Stags*
179	12/17/2015	Berkeley Independent	*Cruce Hires Attorney*
180	12/17/2015	Post & Courier	*Cruce Out As Coach, AD at Berkeley*
181	12/19/2015	Post & Courier	*Ousted Berkeley Football Coach Cruce Plans to Fight Dismissal*
182	1/21/2016	Berkeley Independent	*Jeff Cruce Files Formal Compalint Against Berkeley Schools*
183	1/22/2016	Berkeley Observer	*Berkeley High's Former Head Football Coach Sues BCBD for Wrongful Termination*
184	1/24/2016	Post & Courier	*Ex-Berkeley Coach Cruce Files Lawsuit*
185	2/2/2016	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Names AD; Search for Coach Underway*
186	2/3/2016	Berkeley Observer	*Charlie Harrison Names New Athletics Director for Berkeley High, Search Continues for Head Coach*
187	2/29/2016	Berkeley Independent	*BHS Narrows Field for Football Coach*
188	3/2/2016	Post & Courier	*North-South All-Star Classic Caps Wrestling Season*
189	3/21/2016	Berkeley Independent	*Berkeley Still Without Football Coach*
190	3/24/2016	Post & Courier	*Ex-Stags Coach to Start Program at SCISA School After Denied Berkeley*
191	4/8/2016	Post & Courier	*Berkeley Names New Football Coach*
192	7/30/2016	Post & Courier	*New Coach, Attitude at Berkeley*
193	8/19/2016	Post & Courier	*Fifty Years Later, Berkeley Gets Second Shot at Daniel*
194	12/21/2016	Berkeley Independent	*He's a Born Leader: From One Leader to Another*
195	7/3/2017	Berkeley Independent	*Former Stags Standout Holds 19 Offers*
196	7/13/2017	Post & Courier	*Former County Football Standout Holds 19 Offers; Former Football Defensive Back Holds 19 Offers*

Cruce new coach at Berkeley

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

May 4, 2011 Wednesday, Final Edition

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Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

For Jeff Cruce, taking the Berkeley head football coaching job was all about family.

Cruce's first coaching job in the Lowcountry was at Berkeley High School. He came to Moncks Corner in 1994 and was an assistant coach on Jerry Brown's staff.

"So this is a homecoming," said Cruce, who has spent the last three seasons at Cane Bay. "I left there, so it's just like going home to be with family. I'm excited about the opportunity. In my opinion, the Berkeley job is one of the top 10 in the state."

Cruce replaces Brown, who was named the athletic director at Fairfield Central last month. Brown coached the Stags for 18 years and led them to three state championships.

The 49-year-old Cruce, who will also serve as the Stags' athletic

director, said the return to Moncks Corner will allow him to spend more time with his wife, Wendy.

"She works for Santee Cooper in Moncks Corner, so this will allow me to see her a couple more times a week than I usually would," Cruce said. "I had to make a family decision. My children are grown, and my daughter (Heyward) is getting married Saturday. The timing is a little stressful with spring practice, but I can't neglect what's best for my family."

Cruce coached running backs, quarterbacks and linebackers at Berkeley and helped develop such players as quarterback Dontae Addison, running back Rusty Williams and linebacker Derrick Dingle. The trio helped lead the Stags to a state championship in 1994.

Cruce was named head coach at Hanahan in 1995 and coached the

Hawks for 13 years. He took over a struggling football program and turned it into one of the most successful Class AA programs in the state,

winning 10 straight region championships and 112 games after going winless in his first season.

Cruce's best season came in 1997, when Hanahan reached the second round of the playoffs.

The Hawks went 11-1 and allowed only one touchdown the entire season.

Cruce was named the Cane Bay coach in 2008, the year the school opened its doors. He compiled a 14-20 record, including 7-5 last fall.

"I'm excited about this opportunity," Cruce said. "I will be replacing a legend and want to continue what Jerry and Gerald Moody did. They say you don't want to replace a legend, but it makes it a lot easier when that legend is your best friend."

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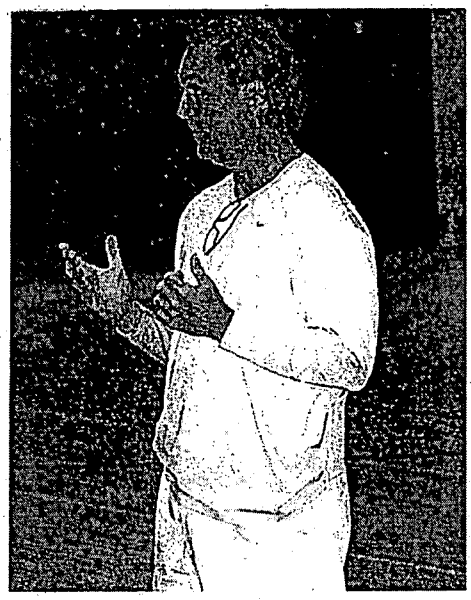
http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/cruce-era-begins-at-berkeley/article_35c1b856-d949-5ffe-b7ed-2255276265f0.html

Cruce era begins at Berkeley

Dan Brown May 9, 2011



Berkeley football coach and athletic director Jeff Cruce speaks with his new team for the first time last Wednesday, explaining the rich tradition of Berkeley football.

Two generations of coaching stood in the center of the Berkeley gym floor on the morning of May 4, the departing generation in the form of coach Jerry Brown and the new generation in the man he introduced to succeed him, Jeff Cruce.

"I feel very good about where this football program is headed and the man we've chosen to lead it," Brown told his former team as he introduced their new leader. "Coach Cruce will motivate and inspire each and every one of you to continue the great things we have accomplished here."

Cruce, the new head coach and athletic director at Berkeley High School, met his team for the first time last week and wasted little time in explaining what to expect in the coming weeks of spring practice, over the summer, and into the football season next fall.

"We are going to be a defensive-minded team," he said. "When people talk about Berkeley football they're going to talk about how physical you are. We will be a hitting team. Our offense will score points, but we will win games with our defense."

Cruce steps in as the next generation of BHS football coaches. From Gerald Moody to Jerry Brown, Cruce doesn't expect to miss a step in continuing a rich tradition.

"There is a great tradition here," he said, pointing at the five state championship banners hanging from the gymnasium rafters. "I'm aware of it and I want you to be aware of it, too. We intend to hang another banner up there, and with this being a young team, I expect to see multiple banners hanging there."

Moody won 269 games at the Stags' helm over two stints totaling 36 years. Brown netted 175 of his 237 career wins during his 18-year tenure at Berkeley. Cruce said it's not just football banners he expects to see hanging from the rafters.

"I'm also the athletic director here as well and I expect you football players who play in other sports to instill the same discipline, work ethic and commitment to your other sports as you do to football," he said. "We want banners from other sports hanging up there as well."

Cruce told Berkeley players that they should appreciate the opportunity presented to them, to be able to strap on the blue and gold every Friday night and play in front of loyal fans and the community of Moncks Corner. That opportunity is something his players must earn.

"It's not your right to play here," Cruce said. "It's a privilege. Do the right thing and be in the right place at the right time. It's a privilege for me to be here. This is one of the Top 10 coaching jobs in the state. There are few places that support you like this community supports you on Friday nights."

Cruce called himself a younger version of Coach Brown and hopes to continue the legacy created by both Brown and Moody before him.

Cruce is a coach who believes in the power of practice.

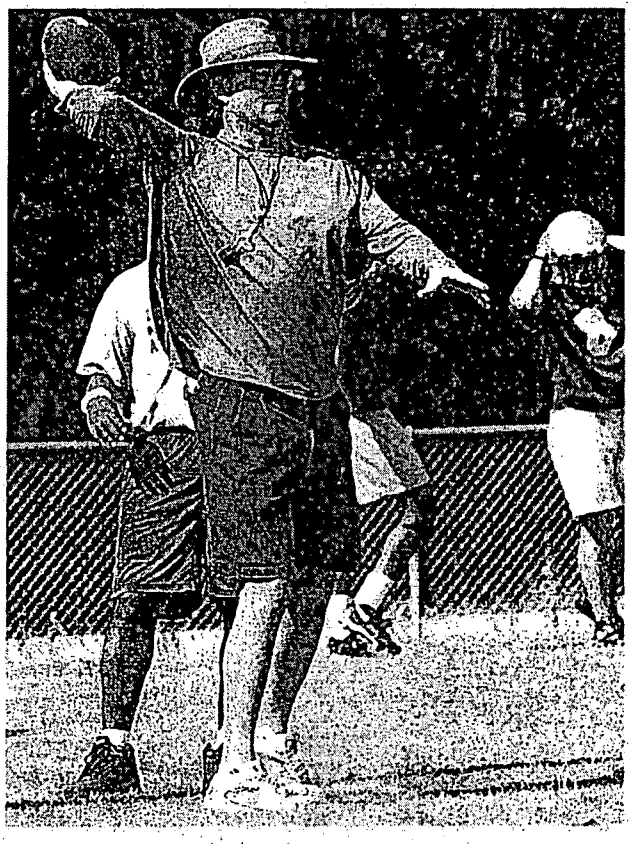
"I love practice," he said. "I am a practice kind of guy. Where we learn and where we prove ourselves is on the practice field. The game is merely the test of what we've learned in practice. You want to show me what you have and what you can do, you show me in practice."

The Stags tee it up for the first time in 2011 on Aug. 26 against Stratford.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/schools-kick-off-spring-practice/article_40efe085-286f-5b35-aa88-6a79a427dc50.html

Schools kick off spring practice

Dan Brown May 16, 2011



BHS Coach Jeff Cruce got his first look at his new team with spring practice workouts last week. The Stags cap off spring practice with its annual Blue and Gold game on Friday.

Area football teams wrap up their practice sessions for the spring, capping off the two-week sessions with spring football games on Friday.

Cross will kick off its annual Blue and White game at 1 p.m. on Friday. Timberland follows with its Green and Orange game at 2 p.m. and Berkeley caps the action with its Blue and Gold game at 6 p.m.

Spring practices began last week, gearing up for a summer of workouts and scrimmages in preparation for the start of the 2011 season come August. Coaches got their first look at returning players and started the meticulous process of gleaning through the masses to start piecing together the puzzle that will result in their 2011 teams.

For new Stags coach Jeff Cruce, the past two weeks had been as much about getting to know his new team as teaching new offensive and defensive schemes.

"It's been good to get out here," he said. "We're young. We're athletic. We've got a lot to learn and we're working on getting to know each other."

At Timberland, Art Craig looks to field one of the deepest and most experienced teams he's had in years returning 17 starters to the fold.

Cross High School's Shaun Wright had to share the first week of his spring practice with the track team, as many of his players were still competing in the spring track season, gearing up for the state track meet as the practice sessions began.

For more coverage of spring football, see Sports.

Stags usher in new era of football

Dan Brown May 17, 2011

Berkeley linemen hit the tackling dummies during spring practice drills last week.

With the start of spring practice this week the Berkeley Stags ushered in a new football era with the arrival of new coach and athletic director Jeff Cruce.

Cruce came home to Berkeley after three years at Cane Bay to replace departing coach and AD Jerry Brown, who left to become athletic director at Fairfield Central.

"I'm a practice kind of guy," Cruce told his team during their first meeting the week before. "I love practice. Where we learn and where we prove ourselves is on the practice field. The game is merely the test of what we've learned in practice.

"You want to show me what you have and what you can do, you show me in practice."

Under pristine blue skies and balmy 80-degree weather last week, Cruce ran his team through opening drills.

"It's been good to get out here," he said. "We're young. We're athletic. We've got a lot to learn and we're working on getting to know each other. They have a new system to learn, but it's been exciting and I'm looking forward to summer workouts to get ready for next fall."

The Stags annual Blue and Gold game is slated for Friday night at 6 p.m. Admission is $3 at the main gate only.

Air Berkeley: New look Stags take flight

Dan Brown May 23, 2011

New coach. New offense.

It took 10 plays to see just how much change Berkeley football fans can expect when the 2011 season begins on Aug. 26, against Stratford.

The Jeff Cruce run and gun offense threw the football more in the first five minutes of its Blue and Gold spring game than Jerry Brown-directed teams have over the last five years. Brown's trademark was the signature Berkeley running back seen in the likes of Rusty Williams, and Andre and Bruce Ellington.

Cruce's trademark will be the new signature Berkeley quarterback, and a trio of young arms are ready to take up the new standard.

Cruce rotated quarterbacks Matthew Harkness, Devin Kilgore and Connor Teague under center during Friday night's Blue and Gold game, and not only do they demonstrate shotgun arms, they're all young.

"You can't learn a new offensive scheme in 10 days," Cruce said. "We have a lot to work on over the summer, but I liked what I saw over the past couple weeks."

Key plays included a pair of touchdown passes by Harkness, a 30-yard scoring strike to Dionte Harley and a second toss to Leo Rivers; a seven-yard TD run by Asante Dantzler and Tyler Bartley's 45-yard interception return for a score.

For the Stags, it's time to hit the weight room over the summer. "We hit the weights and start building strength," Cruce told his team after the offense squeaked out a 35-34 win over the defense. "From here on out it's all about preparing for Stratford."

Cruce said his team would participate in all the summer camps and passing leagues.

"We have the rest of the summer to learn a new offense," he said. "We're young and we have a lot of work to do. We have to get in shape."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Internet shopping OPINION

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

May 24, 2011 Tuesday, Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OPINION; Pg. A8

Length: 1263 words

Byline: COMPILED BY THE POST AND COURIER

Body

I admit it - I'm an occasional Internet shopper, and never once has S.C. tax collection by the seller entered into my decision. It's only when I have to figure up for my annual "gift" of the taxes to the state that I even think about it. I frequently shop Amazon, and I care not where they ship the item from as it arrives in about the same amount of time regardless if it's coming from California, Texas or Georgia. I only consider the deal I'm getting.

The primary consideration after the item cost is the shipping expense and whether it's more than the gas I would have to pay to drive to Rivers Avenue, and how many stores I would have to search to find out the item is not even available locally; my time has value, too. Quite often, some of my favorite on-line market places have special promotions for free shipping. Grab that deal!

I feel that the most severe consequence we would suffer with the initial action of our S.C. legislators would be in the future. Their decision to renege on a deal made in good faith by a previous administration would make any company considering locating in South Carolina question whether agreements made would be honored for the long haul.

Should any agreement made only extend to the end of the term of the administration and legislative body in office at the time of the deal? In this situation, the loss of construction jobs, 1,200 potential jobs with Amazon, ancillary companies such as shipping and the spending all these would generate would mean a big hit for our tax coffers.

Now we want a "do over." But is our image is already tarnished?

S.M. Salmon

Runnymede Lane

Summerville

Credit alert

In the April 24 story titled "State must heed national credit alarm," S.C. Treasurer Curtis Loftis Jr. has it exactly right with respect to the state pension fund's unfunded liability and our nation's recently received Standard and Poor's (S&P) "negative" credit outlook. Strong steps are needed in both cases to prevent larger debt problems and potential downgrades.

Fortunately for Charlestonians, S&P recently reaffirmed its rating of Charleston's general obligation bonds as AAA Stable. That gives Charleston a better credit rating than either the state (S&P AA+ Stable) or the United States (S&P AAA Negative). In fairness, Moody's gives South Carolina the same AAA rating that S&P gives Charleston. Charleston is the only city in South Carolina with a AAA Stable rating from S&P. But, whereas both S&P and Moody's commented negatively on South Carolina's pension debt problem, S&P has no such reservations about Charleston, which has:

--Strong per capita income levels that continue to measure above county, state, and national averages;

--Exceptional and consistent financial performance, supported by good embedded financial management policies and procedures, and strong historical fund balance levels;

--Moderate overall debt burden, coupled with very rapid amortization and manageable additional capital needs.

Importantly, while Charleston's municipal employees are part of the state's pension system (and thus part of that problem), Charleston has a fully funded retirement health care plan - i.e., no unfunded liability, a rarity in municipal government.

Mayor Riley, his administration and City Council get very high marks for keeping a rapidly growing city attractive to both residents and visitors while being stellar financial managers. I sleep better for it.

William B. Hewitt

Prioleau Street

Charleston

Glaring omission

As I read the commentary of Imam Mohamed Melhem of the Central Mosque of Charleston in the May 4 edition, I was struck more by what he did not say than by what he did. He expressed, on behalf of faithful Muslims who adhere to the "beautiful teaching of both the Qur'an and Muhammad," his satisfaction over the news of Osama bin Laden's death because bin Laden "caused the deaths of countless Muslims worldwide."

Yet he failed to express any grief over the deaths of hundreds of innocent persons belonging to other religious sects. What about the Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucianists - anyone who perished due to the horrific deeds of the Monster bin Laden?

Bin Laden's sins go much further than having killed Muslims and betraying the true values of Islam.

Brenda Lewellyn

Brevard Court

Summerville

Executing a plan

Now that Osama bin Laden is dead, I want to thank the many people who made this happen. Let us not forget that intelligence gathering that led to Bin Laden's demise was gathered under policies of George W. Bush. The execution of the plan was performed magnificently by U.S. Special Forces and the CIA.

Yet the same media that spewed vile commentary towards Bush for eight years about his treatment of terrorists (I mean criminals) now praise Obama for the killing of bin Laden. President Bush never once strayed from the course or worried about re-election. He made gutsy calls every day after 9/11.

The majority of the left-leaning media are rejoicing over President Obama's "gutsy" call, but it seems they are more excited about his prospects for re-election than the actual killing of bin Laden. I think that "gutsy" call was all about weighing the chance of failure against that of success. Thank God none of our troops were injured and it was a success. I believe that if there had been failure, the media would have resorted to their "blame Bush, the CIA and the military" tactics.

President Obama made the call, but many years of intel, planning and Bush's policies actually led to the death of the mass murderer and terrorist Osama bin Laden.

Sam Trippi

Beauregard Road

Summerville

Unit citation

I recently learned from a Korean veterans magazine that the Republic of Korea presidential unit citation, issued by the government of South Korea to both Korean military and foreign units, was retroactively authorized to every unit of the U.S. Army which had been deployed to Korea between 1950 and 1954.

An Air Force military policeman and I had been assigned to a "classified mission" in 1953. We carried "65 lbs. of personal bags and four boxes of radio equipment approximately 200 lbs."

I wrote the U.S. Air Force records section at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, and was totally unprepared for the reply: "After a thorough review of your official military personnel record (MPR) and provided documentation, we were able to verify entitlement to the Republic of Korea Presidential Citation for extraordinary heroism." I never considered myself a hero much less an "extraordinary" hero. I hope that other Korean War veterans will research their eligibility and contact the proper authorities.

Larry E. Kinard

SSgt., U.S. Air Force (Retired)

Saddle Trail

Summerville

Berkeley legend

On May 3 Berkeley High School named Jeff Cruce athletic director and head football coach, replacing Jerry Brown. After 18 years on the job, Coach Brown seemed to have an equal number who supported him and who did not. After that many years as a coach you're going to have friends as well as foes.

I personally did not agree with everything that happened during those 18 years, but I do know this: Coach Brown knew the game of football very well. The Wizard of Westend, as I called him, never had a losing season at Berkeley. We all know about the three state championships and the near misses on other title runs.

As a coach, Jerry Brown leaves a legacy for Coach Cruce to follow. I hope in the near future we honor him for the job he did. The 2011 season is just around the corner, so let's all support Coach Cruce the way we do best, by filling up the stands dressed in blue and gold.

Brian L. Chandler

Gum Avenue

Moncks Corner

APP. 0579

Load-Date: May 24, 2011

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Zehr to coach Cane Bay football

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

May 26, 2011 Thursday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C6

Length: 226 words

Byline: Staff report

Body

Russell Zehr was named the new football coach at Cane Bay High School. He replaces Jeff Cruce, who took the job at Berkeley.

Zehr, a native on Pendleton. has nearly 20 years experience and was the Cobras' defensive coordinator before landing the top job. He also coached tennis and varsity basketball at the school.

"It's obvious Russell has a genuine passion and commitment, not only to Cane Bay High, but to the student athletes he works with," said Charlie Davis, athletic director for the Berkeley County School District. "He's played a role in successful programs that have garnered state championships In the past. What's more, he's a wonderful role model for our students."

"It is a great honor to be selected to lead this football program into the future" Zehr said. "We have worked extremely hard over the past three years to build this program, and I am grateful that Dr. Westberry and the district had faith in our coaching team to continue that success."

Zehr has worn many hats throughout his coaching career, including varsity football, basketball, track, tennis and golf. In 2003, he was named the Region 1-A coach of the year for his leadership in varsity basketball at Ninety Six High School.

He spent more than a decade as the assistant football coach there, and was instrumental in helping the team win two state championships (2000 and '01.)

Load-Date: May 26, 2011

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One-on-One with Jerry Brown

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

May 29, 2011 Sunday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C2

Length: 622 words

Byline: PHIL BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Jerry Brown is leaving Berkeley High School after leading its football team to three state championships in 18 years. He said leaving the Moncks Corner school to become athletic director at Fairfield Central was the toughest decision of his life. Brown talked about his career, his players and his philosophy on life when he went One-on-One with The Post and Courier's Phil Bowman:

How and why did you choose to become a football coach?

"My high school coach, Joe Tuberville, 41 years ago pulled up beside me in Winnsboro and asked if I wanted to help him coach at Spring Valley, which in 1970 they were just building. I thought that was the greatest thing in the world. I thought he had just given me a million dollars. I always enjoyed football. Even in the sixth, seventh grades, I would draw up plays and dream up schemes. Football was all I knew. It was the main part of my life back then. I never looked back and here we are 40 years later."

What's the best thing about being a high school football coach?

"The lasting eternal effect you have on young people. I am a father to the ones who don't have a father. That touches your soul. I've had players come up to me years later, not just the ones who played in college, the ones with a business, with tons of money and a good family and say, 'Coach, all I did was use the things you used to teach us. I used the things I learned from you.'"

What's the most challenging thing about being a high school football coach?

"Probably the same as being the most rewarding; being the only father some of them knew. That means they didn't have discipline, work ethic, respect, commitment and sacrifice built into their lives. Our society has become very self-centered and there's a sense of entitlement. It's hard to overcome what those kids have learned through society, through a home without a father."

Who is the best player you coached at Berkeley?

"At Berkeley, it has to be the three 3s; three guys who wore the No. 3 jersey. It started with Rusty Williams and continued with Andre Ellington and Bruce Ellington. As far as the best athlete, it would have to be Bruce

because he could play multiple positions. Andre was a great running back and very much parallel to Rusty. Bruce, of course, was the best athlete because he played basketball and baseball. He could have done golf or been an All-American swimmer."

How hard was it to decide to leave Berkeley High School and Moncks Corner?

"It's the hardest decision I'll have to make in my lifetime. My mind tells me one thing. My body tells me one thing. But my heart is in Moncks Corner. Nobody will probably love a place so much and leave it. But I have to factor in my family and grandkids and don't want to be two hours away when they graduate from high school and these types of things. Time goes by quickly. I could stay here two or three more years and keep on winning and having fun. But that's not the life of a Christian.

I feel like God has new challenges for me at Fairfield Central, and, as a Christian, I am ready to accept them. I don't know if I will miss football, but the experience of being Coach Brown at Berkeley High School in Moncks Corner is an experience that no one has an idea of how precious it is."

What advice do you have for new Berkeley football coach Jeff Cruce?

"Winning is just a byproduct and not to make winning too important. Look at the kids not as what they can do for you, but look at their souls and see what you can do as a father figure for them. See them through a father's eyes and not a head coach's eyes. Create a balance. As far as the community goes, be a part of it. Live and die with the community. Experience the Moncks Corner experience. At the same time, I would tell him to be Jeff Cruce."

Load-Date: June 1, 2011

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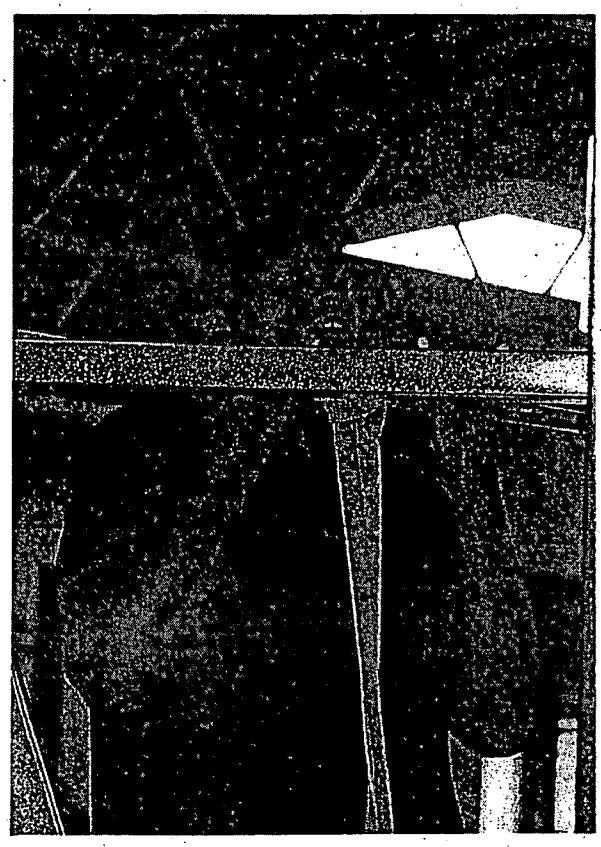
http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-hit-high-gear-in-summer-workouts/article_d7553c67-d36a-5300-96d0-b7e04d129b3e.html

Stags hit high gear in summer workouts?

Dan Brown Jun 27, 2011



Stags lineman Juwuan Jefferson does chin ups during Berkeley football summer workouts.

The Berkeley football team has hit the weights hard this summer in preparation for the start of the 2011 season in August, and it's not just the football team that has benefited from the summer weight program.

"We opened the weight lifting up to all Berkeley athletes," said BHS football coach and athletic director Jeff Cruce. "The weight training program is something that can benefit all sports, not just football."

About 200 students from both the middle school and high school have been working out in the weight room since school let out in May.

"This is an example the football team can set," Cruce said. "These athletes are also multi-sport athletes so that work ethic can transfer to other sports like basketball and baseball."

Cruce added that instilling the weight-training work ethic in the younger athletes prepares them not just for their respective sports but builds toward the future of BHS football as well.

"I've said since I got here that I'm a weight training and practice kind of guy," he said. "It's in the weight room and on the practice field where we learn and where we prove ourselves. The game is merely the test of what we've learned in practice. You want to show me what you have and what you can do, you show me in practice.?"What you show me in practice begins in the weight room."

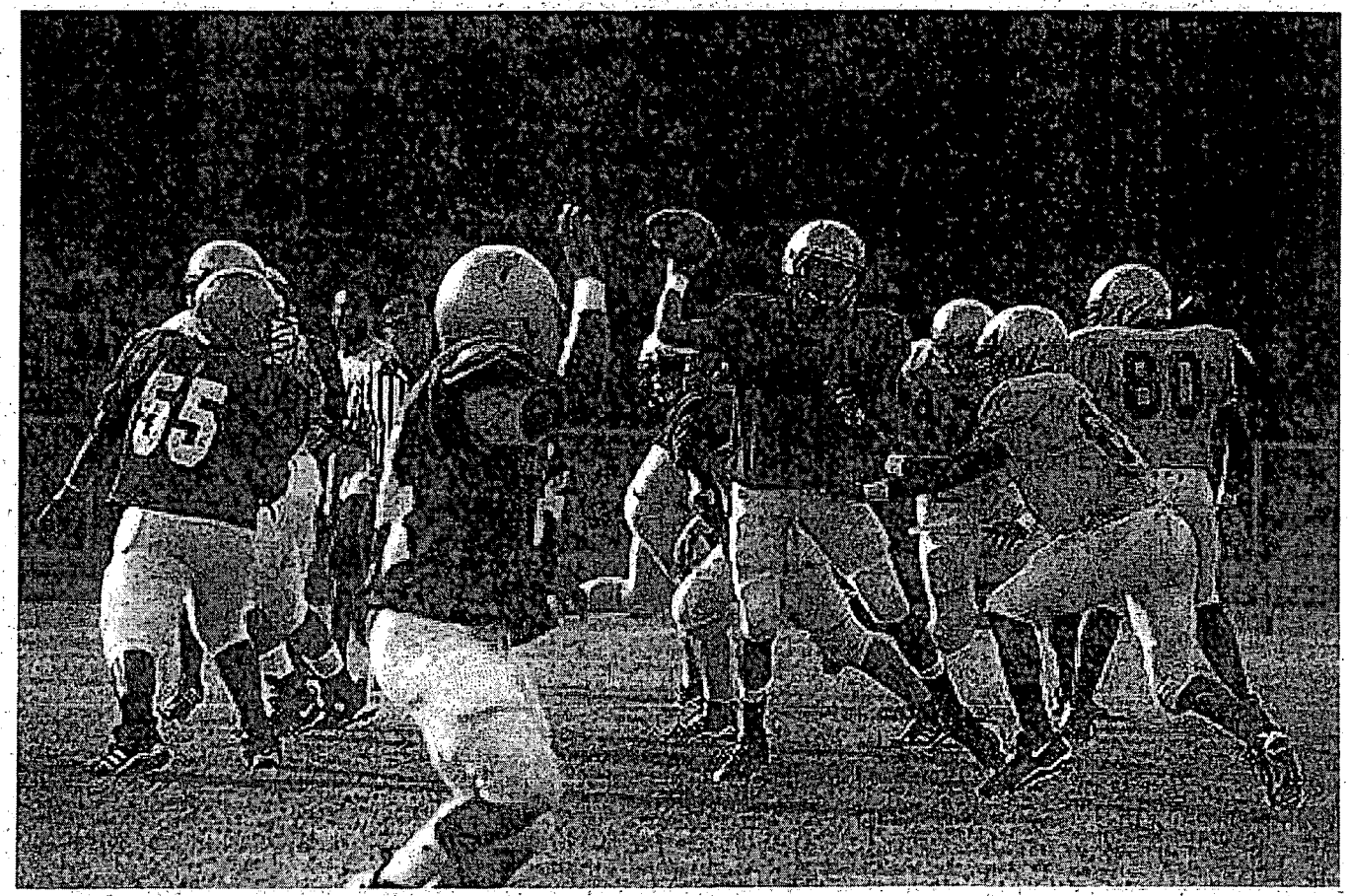
The Stags participated in the Fort Dorchester Passing League last week and kick off their 2011 season in the Berkeley County Jamboree and Sertoma Classic in August. Berkeley's regular season schedule begins Aug. 26 against traditional Class AAAA rival Stratford.

"I told the kids to hit the weights and start building strength," Cruce said. "From here on out it's all about preparing for Stratford."

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/countdown-to-kickoff/article_23d233b0-9642-5fd2-954e-bec866034913.html

Countdown to Kickoff

Dan Brown Jul 18, 2011



Berkeley quarterback Matthew Harkness looks for an open receiver during the school's Blue and Gold spring game. Following the game, new BHS coach Jeff Cruce said it was time for his squad to hit the weights over the summer. Cruce and the Stags will begin practicing again later this month.

One-on-One with Jeff Cruce

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

July 24, 2011 Sunday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C2

Length: 839 words

Byline: PHIL BOWMAN, One-on-Onepbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Jeff Cruce came to South Carolina to play football at Clemson and was on the 1981 national championship team. He's been in the Lowcountry since the early 1990s, and is now the new head coach at Berkeley High School, where he got his start as an assistant in the Palmetto State. The Post and Courier's Phil Bowman

recently went One-on-One with Cruce:

You are succeeding two legends at Berkeley: Gerald Moody and Jerry Brown. How do you top what they accomplished?

"I don't think you do. Jerry left me with this comment: 'Don't let them forget about the tradition.' That's what I've been doing since I got there.

I have reminded the kids daily that the tradition is on them. What they

accomplish is on them."

Berkeley went from 1996 to 2009 without a state championship. When will the Stags win their next state title?

"We're young and got a lot of young players, so the expectation of this town is sooner than later. We're hoping that it's sooner than later. I don't think there's any town that can compare to Moncks Corner when it comes to high school football. This is the most football-crazy town I've been in. That's why I'm here. They love their football and they love their athletics."

As the Berkeley athletic director, what do you want to improve?

"My goal is to make all the sports relevant, not just the football program. Football sells itself, but sometimes I think the minor sports don't get the recognition or respect they deserve. I hope as the athletic director that I can change that."

Who was the most influential person in your life growing up?

"My mom, Patty. My mom and dad got divorced when I was real young, so she raised three children by herself. She was a strong-willed woman. I can tell you a story: My mom graduated from high school when she was 15 years old

and was enrolled at the University of Texas when she was 16. She was a psychology major, so she could mess with your head."

Where did you go to high school and how good of a football player were you?

"I came from Florida, so football was big. I came from a town that was similar to Summerville - Lake City. Football was big. I was blessed. I was a big kid, so I got 14 different scholarship offers when I was being recruited. I guess I was above average as a high school football player because I played Division I in college."

Why did you choose Clemson?

"That was easy. I chose Clemson because of Danny Ford and Chuck Reedy. Chuck Reedy recruited me and has since become a good friend and mentor to me. He's at Goose Creek now and we talk all the time. I really enjoyed Chuck and the recruiting process. Danny was like a dad to me."

Everyone in your situation has a Danny Ford story.

"The best story I can tell about Danny was when I was finished as a player and was a graduate assistant. I was at a coaches' meeting. Something was brought up about a player getting in trouble in a dorm. Coach Ford stopped the meeting and turned to me and asked me, 'Jeff is that true? Did you all do that in the dorm when you lived there?' I was kind of between a rock and a hard place, and I sort of stuttered. Later on, he called me in and said, 'Look, you're not a player anymore. You're not on scholarship. You're a coach. You have to make a decision: Do you want to be a coach because you can't be a player anymore?' He helped me grow up and be a young man. He influenced that decision about being a coach. There's a lot of stories I could tell you about coach Ford, but to me that was the biggest one."

When you coached at Hanahan, you were a vocal critic of Bishop England, saying the school had an unfair advantage because it recruited and had an unlimited area to draw students. But later you changed your stand. What happened?

"Coach Paul Runey. I apologized to him one time and told him I wished I'd never done that. When you're in the situation and you're being competitive, I felt there were some unfair advantages in certain things. There are still some unfair advantages, but the bottom line is Bishop England does a great job with its kids. So that needed to be said. I shouldn't have done that because in the long run, I was hurting kids. I didn't look at the big picture."

Have you ever considered coaching at the college level?

I have had opportunities when coach Ford was at Arkansas and some other times. But the bottom line is I had young kids and didn't want to do the recruiting. Now, my kids are 23 and 24 years old. But I'm very happy in the Lowcountry. It is a great place to live and a great place to coach. I think I'm going to be happy being a high school coach the rest of my life."

What's the most satisfying part of your job?

"Just making sure kids start at ground zero, grow up and become something, A guy like Lionel Richardson. He played for me at Hanahan, played at Clemson and works at Santee Cooper as an engineer. I had the opportunity to golf with him and a couple of other players of mine. That was just a neat time and how proud I was to see all three of those guys successful. They still wanted to be part of my life. That's what makes it great."

Load-Date: July 25, 2011

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Old, new faces on sidelines - Correction Appended

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

July 29, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

Correction Appended

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C1

Length: 336 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

"Being a new coach is great," he said. "But being the new coach and landing your dream job is even greater. It's not very often that someone gets their dream job."

Cruce is among six Lowcountry coaches to begin the season at a new school. Russell Zehr replaces Cruce at Cane Bay. Earl Brown Jr. is the new coach at Burke, and Randy Hilyer is now in charge at James Island. Mathis Burnette is the new coach at Woodland, while Tom Wood replaces Dirk Thomas at Garrett. Thomas resigned to become baseball coach at Wando.

Cruce, who has been a high school coach for more than two decades, is at the helm of one of the most high-profile jobs in the state. The Stags won three state titles under Cruce's predecessor, Jerry Brown, and expectations are always high at Berkeley.

"The fans expect to win," said Cruce, whose resume includes three years as head coach at Cane Bay and 12 years at Hanahan. "I had a fan come up to me the other day and he asked me about the outlook for this season. I told him we are very young. He said, 'That's OK, we've won championships with young teams before.' "

Brown, the new Burke coach, says he doesn't feel any pressure following in the footsteps of his father, who coached the team the past few seasons.

"The only time I felt pressure was when I played for him a few years ago," the younger Brown said. "There's huge shoes to fill, but I don't feel pressure. Actually, it's an advantage because he has a wealth of information and all I have to do is knock on his door."

The elder Brown led Burke to a 9-3 record in 2009, its best season in more than four decades.

"I'm ready for the season to begin," Brown said. "I am ready to rock n' roll. We had an excellent turnout over the summer. ... We'll be ready."

Reach Philip M. Bowman at 937-5592. Follow him on Twitter: @pandcphil.

New head football coaches in the Lowcountry:

Jeff Cruce, Berkeley

Randy Hilyer, James Island

Earl Brown Jr., Burke

Mathis Burnette, Woodland

Tom Wood, Garrett Tech

Russell Zehr, Cane Bay

Johnny Boykin, Stall

Mitch White, Lincoln

Correction

When high school football practice begins today, new Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce says he will be like a child at Christmas.

Correction-Date: August 2, 2011

Load-Date: August 2, 2011

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'It's dangerous out there.' Heat vs. football; High school teams begin practice with safety-first approach

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

July 30, 2011 Saturday, Final Edition

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Section: NATION; Pg. A1

Length: 843 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

A transfer student knocked on Berkeley High School football coach Jeff Cruce's door. He wanted to join the football team.

Cruce, who is in his first season at the Moncks Corner school, is always looking for talent. But he's also looking out for what's best for his players.

"Are you in shape?" Cruce asked the prospective player. "Have you been working out? You just can't come out and play football. It's dangerous out there. It's 100 degrees. You have to be ready. You have to be in shape. Hit the weights, get in shape and come back next year."

Cruce said he won't take chances when it comes to student-athletes and their health. The Berkeley Stags, like most high school football teams around the state, held their first day of practice Friday.

The opponent was the weather, with temperatures in the mid-90s and a heat index close to 110. Coaches and trainers kept a close eye on the players and the thermometer while urging their players to take water breaks, take off their helmets and let the staff know if they felt dizzy or faint.

Most schools in the Lowcountry had certified athletic trainers before this year. Seven more teams in Charleston County have them now, thanks to an agreement between the school district and Roper St. Francis Healthcare.

Certified athletic trainers from Roper St. Francis will work at Baptist Hill, Burke, Garrett Tech, Lincoln, Military Magnet, North Charleston and Stall.

"Summertime heat in the Lowcountry is one risk factor that must be considered by high school athletes, their parents and coaches. In fact, two teen athletes in the state actually died of heat illness in the past four years," said Dr. Robert Schoderbek Jr., the medical director of Roper St. Francis Sports Medicine.

"Now certified athletic trainers will be present not only to evaluate and treat injuries, but to try to prevent sports-related health issues by identifying problems in advance," he said.

The National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research in Chapel Hill, N.C., reported that 132 football players suffered heat-related deaths in the U.S. from 1931 through 2010, including a record eight in 1970.

There have been 46 football players die from heat stroke since 1995, including 35 high school players, according to the center.

Frederick O. Mueller, the center's director, said all heat-related deaths are preventable.

"A player has to tell a coach if he's not feeling well," Mueller said. "A coach has to know his players' situations. If a player spends the summer in low humidity in the mountains and then returns to a humid climate, he needs to tell the coach. And if there is a major medical emergency, the coach has to have a plan.

"Water and rest breaks, those are keys too," Mueller added. "When the heat index hits 110, 115, coaches should consider canceling practice."

The precautions being taken today are in stark contrast to the days when practices included no water breaks, the distribution of salt tablets and a macho attitude.

Ernie Drews is in his 12th year as a certified athletic trainer at Goose Creek High School. He played high school football and remembers that the so-called good old days actually weren't so good.

"It was totally different back then," Drews said. "It was old school. It was something out of 'Remember the Titans' when (coach) Herman Boone said water makes you weak. That was the mindset 25 years ago. Today, the water is flowing at practice. You can't deny kids water. You have to give them water."

Before Goose Creek players begin practice, Drews goes to weatherbug.com to get the latest conditions. He also goes outside and pulls out a state-of-the-art heat index monitor, which measures temperature and humidity.

Inside, there are three 100-gallon tanks of ice water to submerge and cool a player in an emergency situation.

Goose Creek head coach Chuck Reedy, who played high school football in Florida, recalls the way things were in the 1960s and '70s.

"There was a time when the military shut down if (heat and humidity) got too bad," he said. "We would practice when the Marines wouldn't even go outside."

At Stratford High School, head trainer Melissa Murray said the team will practice for 20 minutes, then take a 10-minute water break.

"If it gets really bad, we'll work in even more water breaks," she said. "We'll have them sit in the shade and drink water. Our policy is 'If you aren't on the field, you need to have a water bottle in your hand.'

"We try to educate the players and their parents. We'll give them water and fruit in between practice and advise them to eat healthy. We have a meeting for parents and give them packets that include information on proper nutrition, proper rest and symptoms of heat stroke. That's made a big difference."

Murray and her staff of student trainers also keep an eye on marching band members, who are practicing outdoors as well.

"We meet with them, give them the same information and advise them to keep hydrated," she said. "We're not out there for practice, but we're there for them."

Reach Philip M. Bowman

at 937-5592. Follow him on Twitter: @pandcphil.

Load-Date: August 1, 2011

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http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/berkeley-opens-curtain-on-jeff-cruce-era/article_7c339e26-283e-5c26-bfb9-bf3dff380711.html

Berkeley opens curtain on Jeff Cruce Era

Dan Brown Aug 1, 2011

Stags running back Asante Dantzler takes a handoff from Matt Harkness during scrimmage drills on Friday.

The countdown clock hit 0:00 last Friday morning as the curtain officially opened on the 2011 high school football season.

Football teams across the county hit the gridiron early Friday morning in preparation for the start of football season. They practiced again on Saturday, twice.

For area teams Timberland, Cross and Berkeley, all have been chomping at the bit to hit the field. All three are ranked in the Top 15 and have state title hopes.

The Berkeley Stags spent the summer getting acquainted with new coach Jeff Cruce and learning a new offense and defense. It became quickly apparent that the defense that took the brunt of former coach Jerry Brown's heat during the 2009 state championship season has come of age.

"We are going to be a defensive-minded team," Cruce said in May. "When people talk about Berkeley football they're going to talk about how physical you are. We will be a hitting team. Our offense will score points, but we will win games with our defense."

So far, that prediction rings true. Just ask his players.

"Our defense is dominating," said senior defensive back Tyler Bartley. "The offense is young but the experience lies in our defense. We're going to be tough on defense."

Joining Bartley in the defensive backfield is senior Nick Hill, with big man Hunter Shepherd clogging up the middle at linebacker.

"We're a really young team but we've got some good senior leadership from some guys that have been in the program a while," Shepherd said. "Coach Cruce has been great so far."

While the Stags will field a young team, this is a dangerous young team. It's hard not to get excited about the next four months.

"We've got a lot of rising sophomore and juniors that will have to step up," Shepherd said. "The first couple games are our hardest games. Hopefully by mid-season these guys will be ready to play."

For Cruce, it's all about carrying on the longstanding Berkeley tradition and getting this team ready for another state title run.

Cruce took over for longtime coach Jerry Brown this spring. Brown stepped down after 18 seasons along the sidelines.

"I'm a practice guy," Cruce said. "Where we learn and where we prove ourselves is on the practice field. The game is merely the test of what we've learned in practice.. You want to show me what you have and what you can do, you show me in practice."

The Stags open on Aug. 26, at Stratford.

Art Craig's Timberland Wolves will field the school's deepest and possibly best team in years with 17 starters returning. While Timberland will still have to contend with Class AA nemesis Dillon, if any team can send the Wildcats packing it may be the 2011 Wolves.

"We can't get caught up in how good everybody says we are," Craig said. "On paper this team has the potential to be one of the best teams we've ever had here, but you can take that paper and wad it up in a ball and throw it away.

"We still have to play the games. We're not going to look past anybody. We know anybody on our schedule is beatable but we also know we can be beat by anybody."

This 2011 edition of the Timberland Wolves is deep and that's allowed Craig and his staff a lot of freedom to expand their offense and defensive schemes during summer practices. "We had a good two days of practice and it looks like the team retained a lot of the things we worked on earlier in the summer," the coach said.

Key returning starters for Timberland include quarterback Taylor Elizondo who Craig calls one of the best game in the Lowcountry, lineman James Middleton, talented athlete Trades Lee Mayes, and running back Daquan Lucas, who stands to emerge as the Lowcountry's breakout player this fall.

"Daquan has generated major D1 interest just from what he's done in spring practice," said Craig, who added some of the best competition his team has seen this summer has come on the practice field. "We have the depth and experience and we have the talent.

"We know we will probably face the best competition in the area lining up on the opposite side of the ball on the practice field."

Timberland opens the season on Aug. 19, on the road against Carver's Bay.

In Cross, the Trojans look to fit the final pieces to a puzzle that, when complete, would take Shaun Wright's team deep into the playoffs this year.

As is the nature of the beast with small schools, Wright has to scrounge up able athletes to plug ever present holes, but at the core of his team is a strong senior class ready to step up and take the lead.

"Our numbers today were low," he said. "I'm hoping about ten more guys will help us out. The ones who were there practiced hard."

Wright looks to a senior class led by quarterback Jalen Frazier, Treston Haskell, Stephon Shepherd and Bijaan Cole to carry the Trojans.

"Jalen, Treston, Stephon, and Bijaan are practicing hard," Wright said. "They are the seniors and we hope they continue to carry us. Devante Shepherd has had a great summer and looks much faster along with Dionte and Diamonte Evans."

The Trojans open Aug. 19 against Hunter-Kinard-Tyler.

2011 Top 10; High school Football Teams and Players from the Lowcountry Day 3 of a 10-day series

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 12, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C1

Length: 242 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN and ANDREW MILLER, The Post and Courier

Body

TEAM

No. 8: Berkeley

2010 Record: 8-4, 4-1 in Region 7-AAA

Returning starters: 4 offense, 5 defense

Players to Watch: LB Hunter Shepherd, WR/PK Nick Hill, WR Matthew Bryant, QB Matthew Harkness

The Skinny: With a good number of sophomores, the Stags might be a year away from contending for another state title. Sophomore Matthew Harkness will start at quarterback and could be a big-time prospect. Nick Hill and Matthew Bryant will be his top targets. But the Stags will likely start only one senior on the offensive line. Berkeley will be solid defensively, led by senior all-state candidate Hunter Shepherd.

What the coach says: "The people here expect to win, they don't want to hear about youth and inexperience. I think expectations here are always high, and that's not a bad thing." - Jeff Cruce

PLAYER

No. 8: Matt White

School: Summerville

Position: Defensive back

Year: Senior

2010 Statistics: White had 65 tackles, including 53 solo stops and picked off 11 passes.

The Skinny: A three-year starter, White was a force in the secondary with a state-best 11 interceptions last fall after recording four his sophomore season. He is one of the top baseball players in the state and is playing in The Diamond Prospects Showcase this weekend and will be back on the gridiron Monday.

What the coach says: "He has the ability to move around and play where we need him. He's a real good cover corner, but he also can stop the run. He's really versatile." - John McKissick

Load-Date: August 12, 2011

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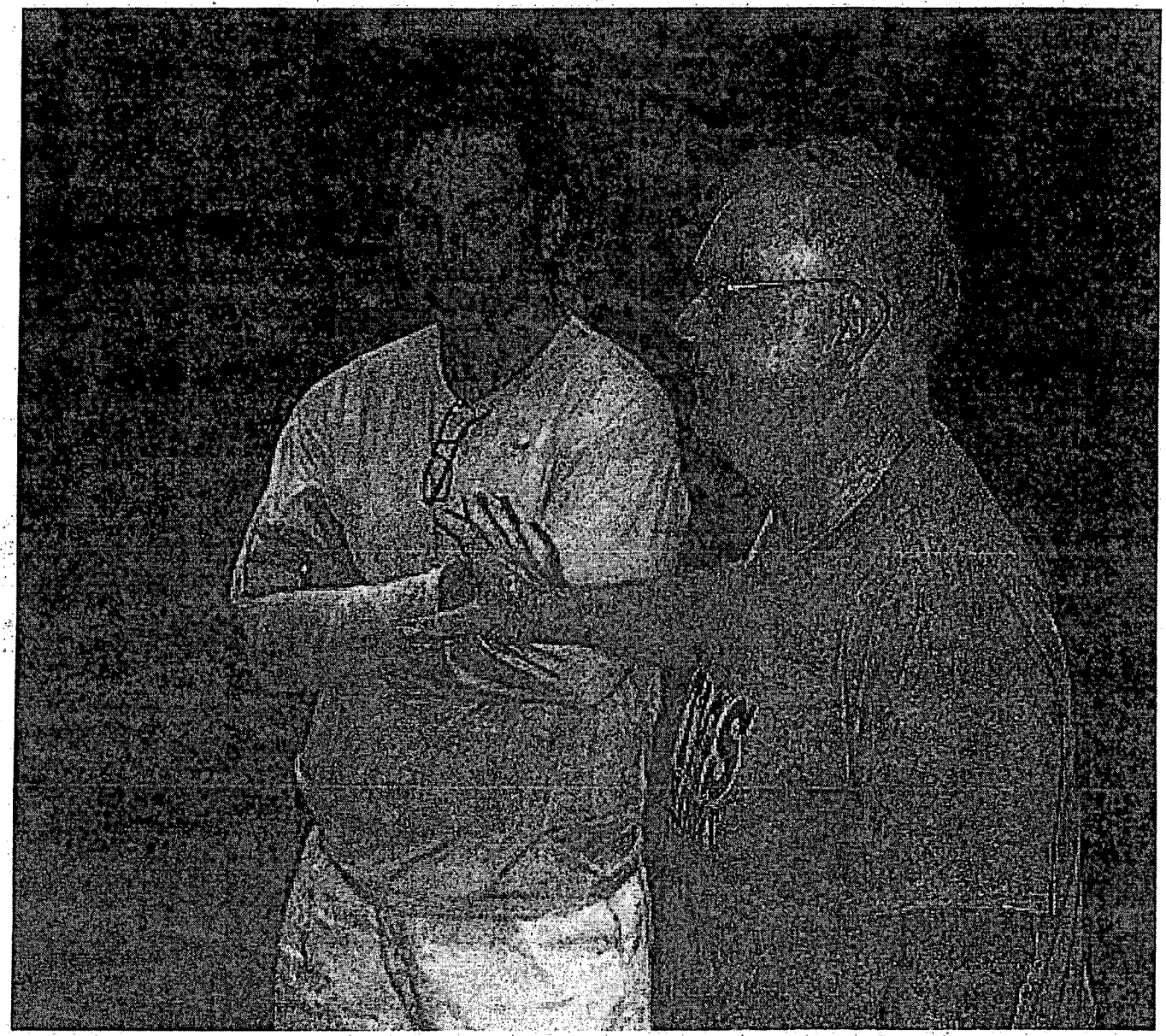
Berkeley to create sports Hall of Fame

Dan Brown Aug 15, 2011



Former BHS coach Jerry Brown (right) may one day be in the school’s hall of fame that Jeff Cruce (left) wants to create.

Berkeley High School Athletic Director Jeff Cruce has long been a disciple of Berkeley Stags tradition. In the spirit of that rich tradition, Cruce wants a hall of fame created for the school.

"Berkeley High School needs a hall of fame," he said. "We have a tradition here that is unequaled by most schools in the state. It's time to honor those athletes who made a difference here over the years."

Cruce remarked on his first day as athletic director about the rich Berkeley heritage.

"The number of banners hanging from these rafters is evidence of the rich tradition of Berkeley Stags athletics," he said. "Our goal here is to hang a few more banners in those rafters, not just in football, but in all sports."

Cruce mentioned names like Andre Ellington, Rusty Williams, Ryan Stewart and Gerald Moody as some of the athletes and coaches that have represented the Blue and Gold.

"Our hall of fame should be as prestigious as our tradition," he said. "Athletes, coaches and administrators would have to be those who have truly risen above and beyond to further Berkeley Stags' sports."

Initial rules would require any BHS athlete or coach to have been removed from the program for five years before being eligible. "Even someone like Jerry Brown would have to wait five years," Cruce said.

Cruce wants the induction of the inaugural Berkeley Hall of Fame class to take place in the fall of 2012. "It's going to take a year to get everything in place with the formation of an induction committee, tabulating the players and their eligibility, and taking the public's input," he said.

Cruce added that Moncks Corner fans are knowledgeable Berkeley Stags fans.

"In nominating athletes for induction, fans will do right by us," he said. "We want to make this hall of fame special. You really have to have been special to get in."

The BHS Hall of Fame induction committee will consist of a member of the local media, teachers, coaches, administrators and Berkeley fans.

Athletes from all Stags boys and girls sports are eligible for nomination with selection from each decade beginning with the 1960s. Athletes playing prior to the 1960s will be included in a Legends category.

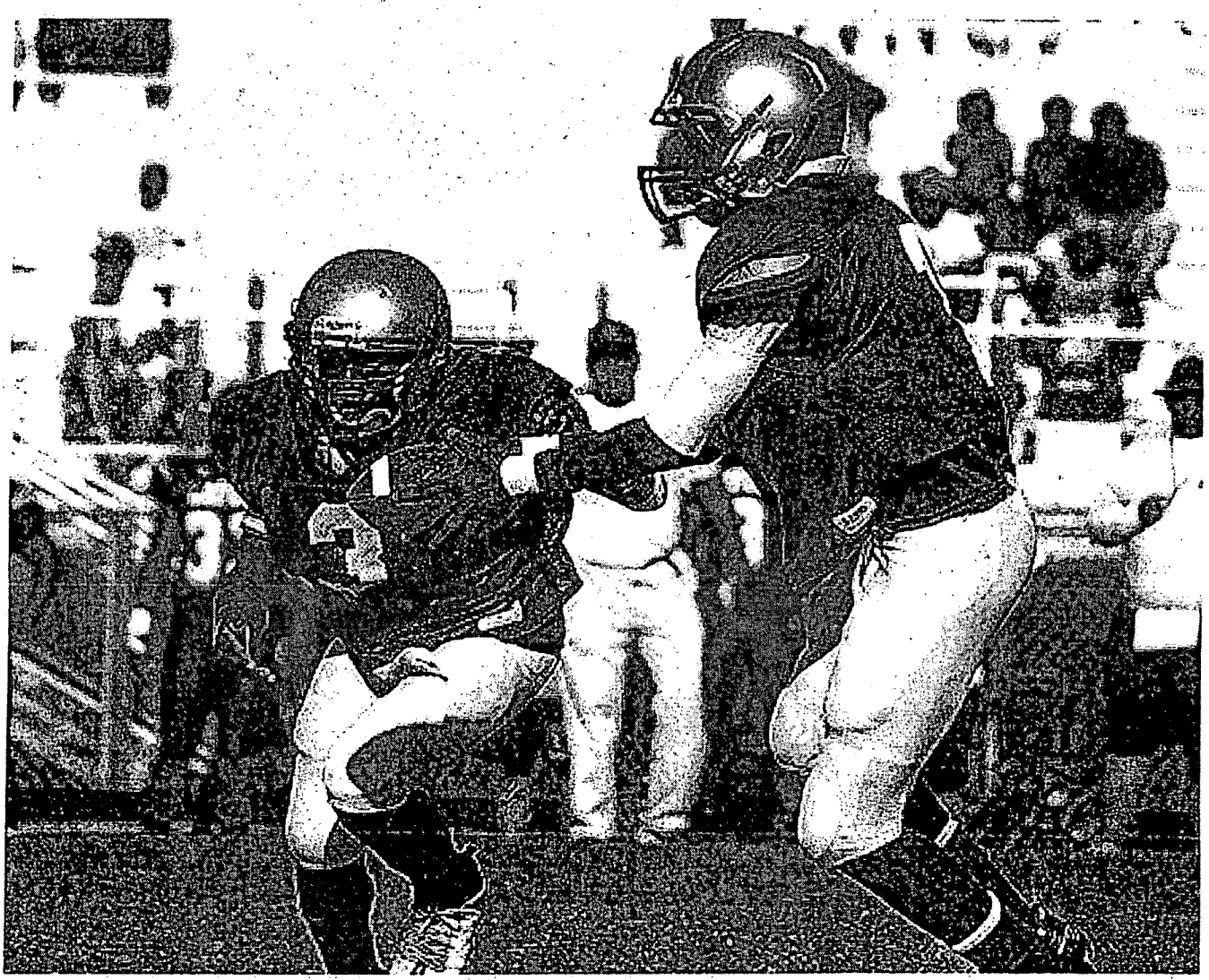
"There are many athletes over the years that have made extraordinary contributions to Berkeley Stags sports," Cruce said. "It's time these athletes are properly honored."

Anyone interested in nominating an athlete or becoming a member of the Hall of Fame induction committee should contact Jeff Cruce at (843) 899-8805, or Dan Brown via email at dbrown@berkeleyind.com.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/cruce-era-debuts-friday/article_506d0f6f-e819-5c46-b358-09603b9e212f.html

Cruce Era debuts Friday

Dan Brown Aug 15, 2011



Quarterback Matt Harkness hands off to Asanti Dantzler during early action in last week’s scrimmage against Goose Creek.

Stags stumble against Goose Creek, look to Sertoma

The Jeff Cruce Era at Berkeley officially begins Friday with a two-quarter scrimmage against Goose Creek at the Sertoma Classic at The Citadel.

Regardless how his team fares against the Class-AAAA Gators, Cruce is excited about this team and what the season holds in store. "We're young, no doubt about it, but we have some awesome talent," he said. "We have only had 10 practices coming into last week. We're still learning."

Cruce's young Stags stumbled in a scrimmage last Tuesday against Goose Creek, losing 56-12 in a game cut short by thunderstorms. A rematch at the Berkeley County Jamboree was also washed out by storms.

Cruce looked forward to the three scrimmages against the cross-county Gators as a great way of measuring his team's progress. "You use this first game as a benchmark and know you'll get to play them again and measure how much you've improved from the first time," he said.

Against the more experienced Gators, the Stags received a reminder of what big time high school football is about in the first quarter, falling behind 21-0 on three Goose Creek scores.

At the 5:34 mark Jaquan Marsh scampered down the left sideline 25 yards for the game's first touchdown. Following a recovered fumble, Kaleb Kinlaw matched Marsh's touchdown run with a 25-yard romp of his own.

With a little more than 90 seconds remaining in the first period Marsh hooked up with Georgia Bulldog committee Tramel Terry on a 27-yard strike.

The Stags scored twice in the fourth quarter just as the skies cut loose.

Cruce's Stags will endure a trial by fire in the season's early weeks. Following their two-quarter Sertoma scrimmage against Goose Creek, Berkeley hits the road on Aug. 26, to open up the season against Stratford.

On Friday, Sept 2, the Stags host longtime rival Summerville at home before facing Timberland on Sept. 9.

The Region 7-AAA schedule kicks off Friday, Sept. 30, on the road against Hilton Head.

Bluffton the clear favorite in Region 7-AAA

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 18, 2011 Thursday, Final Edition

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Section: YOUR LOWCOUNTRY; Pg. ZD9

Length: 1312 words

Byline: David Shelton, Special to The Post and Courier

Body

As a new coach inheriting a program that had never posted a winning season, Bluffton High's Ken Cribb flew in under the radar in 2010. After winning 12 of 14 games and playing for the Class AAA Lower State title, the Bobcats will no longer be a team that will sneak up on opponents.

In fact, Bluffton is one of the early favorites to win the Lower State title this fall and is the clear and easy pick as the favorite to win the Region 7-AAA crown. Cribb returns an experienced team in 2011 and added several quality transfers who will make the Bobcats tough to beat.

"We have a chance to be a better football team on both sides of the ball," says Cribb, a former head coach at Stall and assistant at Fort Dorchester before taking the Bluffton job. "Last year was exciting for the kids, and it motivated them to work even harder in the offseason. I think we overachieved last year but we had great chemistry. It all carried over into the spring and summer, and I feel like we are right on track."

The rest of the region is full of unknowns. Jeff Cruce left Cane Bay for Berkeley's coaching job. Cruce, who had a team returning at Cane Bay that will challenge, inherits a fairly young - but talented - team at Berkeley.

Russell Zehr is the new head coach at Cane Bay after serving on Cruce's staff the last three years. The Cobras are in their fourth year as a program and earned a playoff win over perennial Class AAA power Marlboro County last season.

2010: 12-2

Coach: Ken Cribb (2nd season)

Returning starters: 14

(7 offense, 7 defense)

Players to watch: QB C.J. Frazier, RB Eric Boyles, WR Dimitri Lowery, WR Marquise Walker, OL Yerko Castedo, OL Michael Sulka, DL Ladarius Hughes, LB Michael Grant, DE Josh Black, TE/LB Corey Stoner, CB Anthony Smith, RB Jerry Scott, DB Jeremy Scott

Outlook: The Bobcats will be one of the better offensive teams in the Lower State this fall. Junior quarterback C.J. Frazier has a great arm and will allow Cribb to open up the offense for more balance this season. Boyles is a

talented running back who totaled more than 2,000 all-purpose yards in 2010. Wide receiver Dimitri Lowery transferred from Hilton Head Prep, where he caught nearly 100 passes last season. He and Ridgeland transfers Jerry and Jeremy Scott bring more speed and athleticism.

Notes: Cribb calls tight end Corey Stoner one of the state's best kept secrets. He also says Frazier is the most accurate passer he has ever coached. Frazier's father, Jason, was a star football and baseball player at Hilton Head in the early '90s and played pro baseball.

2010: 9-4

Coach: Jeff Cruce (1st season)

Returning starters: 9

(4 offense, 5 defense)

Players to watch: LB Hunter Shepherd, WR/PK Nick Hill, WR Matthew Bryant, QB Matthew Harkness, OL Haven Sowell, DL Stephen Sawyer, LB Kadeem Palmer, DB Tyler Bartley, RB Asanti Dantzler

Outlook: Cruce inherits one of the Lower State's best programs from Jerry Brown, who won three state titles as the Stags' head coach. This year's team is much younger in terms of experience, but has plenty of speed and talent. Cruce knows the pressure to win at Berkeley is great, but he welcomes the challenge. "The people here expect to win; they don't want to hear about youth and inexperience," says the coach. "I think expectations here are always high, and that's not a bad thing." Sophomore Matthew Harkness will start at quarterback, and Cruce thinks he is a prospect in the making.

Notes: Cruce was an assistant coach at Berkeley for four years, including the 1994 state championship season. He also built a contending program at Hanahan, winning 10 consecutive region titles in 13 seasons before starting the program at Cane Bay in 2008.

2010: 7-5

Coach: Russell Zehr (1st season)

Returning starters: 11

(7 offense, 4 defense)

Players to watch: QB Brandon Hall, RB Anthony Enos, FB Devon Higgins, WR Shaquille Husser, WR Montez Powell, OL Josh Hale, OL David Bryant, OL Blake Paez, OL Kyle Meree, LB Randall Drew, LB Chris David, DB Kennan Reid

Outlook: Zehr takes over after three years as defensive coordinator and has the most holes to fill on the defensive side of the ball. "We're going to be younger on defense, but it's a good group of young guys who just need some experience," said the coach. Linebacker Randall Drew had more than 100 tackles and will lead the defense. The offensive line should be a major strength with four returning starters. All four will be starting for the third consecutive year, led by all-region center Josh Hale and Division I prospect David Bryant, a 6-6, 290-pound tackle.

Notes: Cane Bay has made steady improvement in its first three seasons, including seven wins last year. That victory total should be attainable again if the defense can be steady. Cane Bay's playoff win over Marlboro County last season was the program's first postseason victory.

2010: 4-7

Coach: Tim Singleton

(9th season)

Bluffton the clear favorite in Region 7-AAA

Returning starters: 12

(6 offense, 6 defense)

Players to watch: QB

Michael Julian, WR Robbie Iulo, WR James Sanders, OL Alex

McDonald, OL Melvin Fields,

DL Raheem Williams.

Outlook: The Seahawks have enough experience returning to compete for a spot in the top three in the region, but defensive improvement will be crucial.

Bluffton the clear favorite

Hilton Head allowed at least 37 points in each of its seven losses last season. A new defensive coordinator and some returning experience may mean improvement. Junior quarterback Michael Julian is due for a breakout season after taking his lumps as a sophomore starter last year. Julian stands 6-4 with a strong arm and is drawing early recruiting interest. Junior Robbie Iulo returns as the team's leading receiver. Senior Melvin Fields will be the anchor along the offensive front.

Notes: Julian has been getting help from former Clemson quarterback Steve Fuller, who lives on Hilton Head Island. The school's new defensive coorindator is former Hilton Head Prep head coach Ron Peduzzi.

2010: 0-10

Coach: Jim Shuman

(1st season)

Returning starters: 8

(6 offense, 2 defense)

Players to watch: QB Leroy Jennette, FB D.J. Richardson, RB Jayron Sneed, OL Shaquille Gause, OL David Ratliff, DB Tevon Heyward, DL Josh Knight, DE Warren Lawyer, LB Caleb Harris, DL/OL Justin Frazier

Outlook: Shuman has made wholesale changes on both sides of the ball. The Dolphins will move from a spread to a triple-option attack offensively while moving from a 4-3 to a 50 look on defense. Jennette, a senior, is more suited as an option quarterback and has a solid complement of backs to distribute the ball to. The offensive line, led by Ratliff at center and Gause at left tackle, will average more than 260 pounds.

Notes: Shuman is a former assistant at Battery Creek but spent the last three years as the head coach at Wade Hampton in Hampton. He led the Red Devils to seven wins and won a playoff game last year. Ratliff, a 6-3, 300-pounder, is the defending heavyweight wrestling champion in Class AAA.

2010: 4-6

Coach: Chris Carter

Returning starters: 10

(5 offense, 5 defense)

Players to watch: QB Chris Jenkins, WR Mike Williams, WR Khalil Hall, TE Derrick Jamison, OL Deon Fogle, DL Kalic Shuler, DL Chris Brown, LB Tyrone Aiken, DB Craig Miller

APP. 0603

Outlook: Once again, Lake Marion will have some of the top athletes in the region, but the problem remains having enough of them to compete every week. Carter has done a solid job in two years of making the program competitive, and on a given night, the Gators will compete with anyone. Jenkins is a solid quarterback with good athletic skills. Williams is considered one of the top junior receiver prospects in the state and will attract numerous offers. The Gators have serious holes to fill along the offensive and defensive lines, not a good place to be young and inexperienced.

Notes: Defensively, only one team (Cane Bay) allowed fewer points than Lake Marion in Region 7-AAA last season. However, less than half of the starting unit

returns this fall.

Load-Date: August 18, 2011

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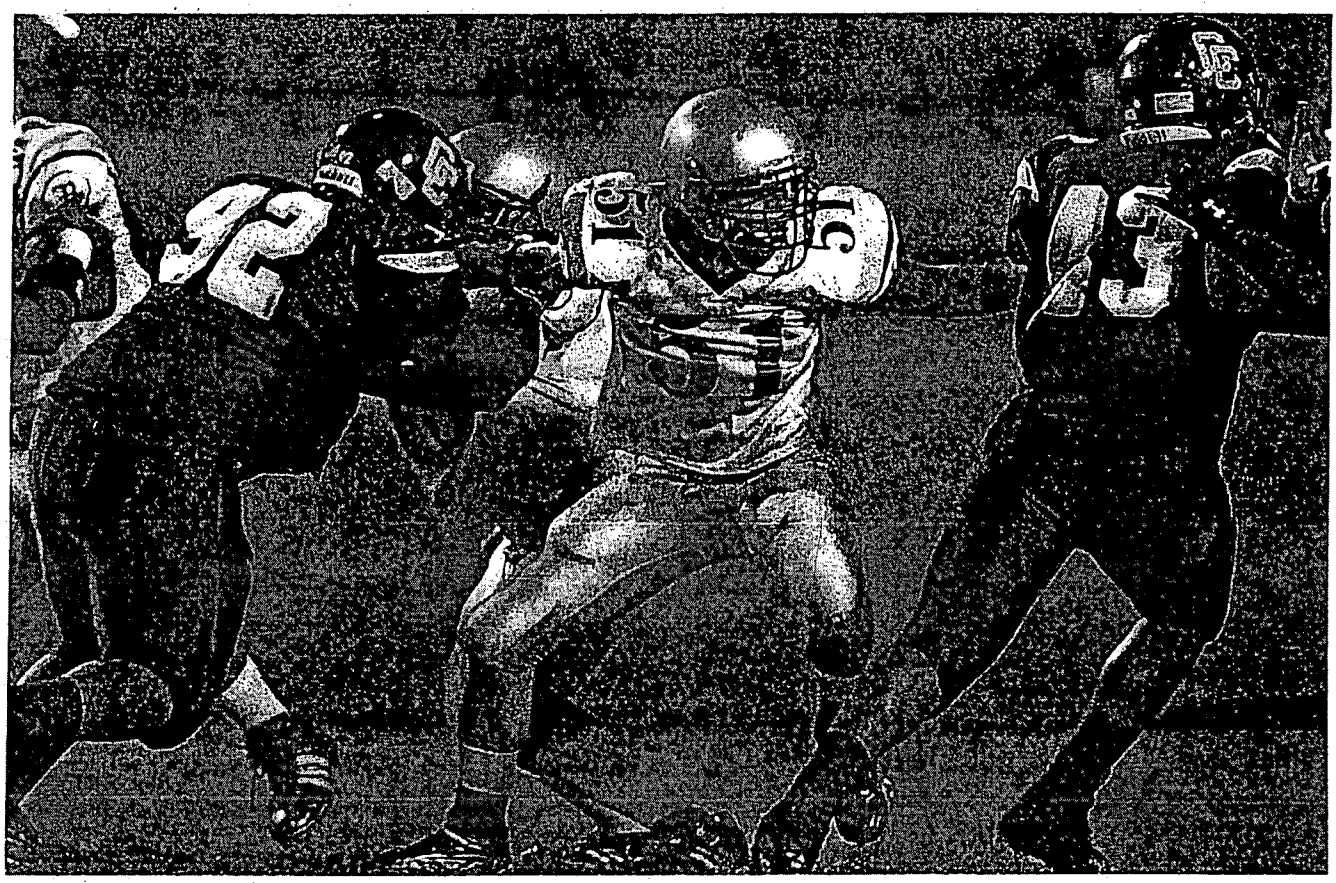
http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/berkeley-set-to-work-on-knight-moves/article_5b60fd41-ba13-5dc8-9fd0-b990c84a4ca2.html

Berkeley set to work on Knight moves

Dan Brown Aug 23, 2011



Berkeley High School center Haven Sowell anchors a big offensive line.

Buy Now

The preseason scrimmages, for better or worse, are over.

It's time to roll the dice on the 2011 season and the Berkeley Stags are ready.

Fielding a young team, learning a new system and all under the guidance of a new coach, the Stags have had to digest a lot since Jerry Brown called it quits back in May after 18 seasons at BHS.

And they've been waiting for this moment since last January.

"We've been preparing for Stratford ever since I took the job here," said Stags coach Jeff Cruce. "I'm ready and excited to get the regular season going. Any time you get to play a team like Stratford and a legend like Ray Stackley it's a good thing. It's great for our guys and great for the school."

Coming off a mediocre 6-6 campaign in 2010 the Knights made the most of their two Sertoma quarters, trouncing Scott's Branch 27-6 behind Devin Washington's 70-yard touchdown run early in the opening quarter.

The Stags dropped their scrimmage to Goose Creek, 21-6.

"Personally, I'm excited to be finally getting under way, and what better team to start off with than Stratford?" Cruce said. "Last time I was here was as an assistant. This is my first Stratford game as a head coach. I'm exited.

"We have made progress through the pre-season and I've seen the improvements in practice and in the scrimmages. At Sertoma we played well against Goose Creek. We stayed with it and hung in there. Two of their touchdowns were on a fumbled snap and a blocked punt.

"We were a couple dropped passes from actually winning that scrimmage."

Cruce said even a game like the Wando scrimmage can produce something positive to take into his team's next game.

"Yeah, I told the guys it's embarrassing to get beat like that but they came away from that game with a positive attitude that they weren't going to make the same mistakes again," he said. "I saw it in Sertoma ... when they were faced with adversity they stepped it up. Goose Creek kept their first unit in there. Our defense made some big plays. We were able to move the ball on offense. We were productive. Any time you can come away with a feeling of moving forward, it's a good thing."

The Stags finished the 2010 campaign with a 10-4 record after losing to Myrtle Beach in the Lower State semi-finals 42-28.

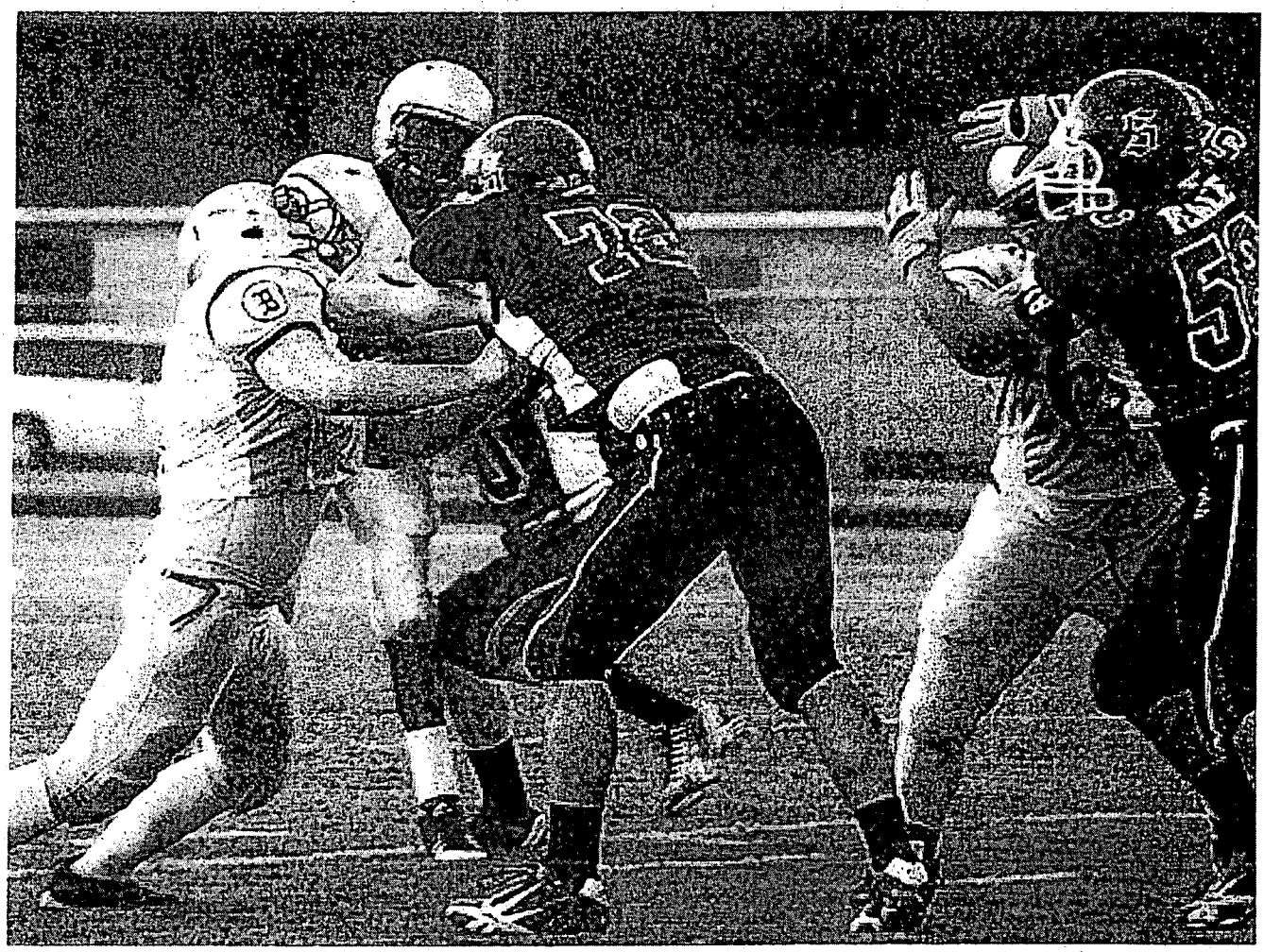
Cruce has big plans for this Berkeley Stags football program and expects big things in the years to come. With plans for a Berkeley Hall of Fame on the drawing board, and other events designed to promote Stags athletics, Cruce is ready to get the show on the road. "We're committed to the program here," he said. "We're committed to our game plan. We're not changing anything. It all starts with Stratford on Friday night."

Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stratford-blanks-berkeley/article_e4666360-ebcd-512d-a2b8-54f19cd950ae.html

Stratford blanks Berkeley 28-0

Dan Brown Aug 29, 2011



Jeff Cruce cited the play of Berkeley’s offensive line Thursday night. The line consists of Robert Paul, Stephen Sawyer, Haven Sowell and Tyrone Bradham.

The Jeff Cruce Era of Berkeley Stags football began Thursday night as Stratford's Jamar Stevens scored a pair of touchdowns to lead the Knights over Berkeley 28-0 at Ray Stackley Field.

Games were moved forward a day to Thursday because of the threat of Hurricane Irene.

Stevens scored on a one-yard run and hauled in a 28-yard Jacob Park scoring toss, one of two touchdown passes for Park on the night.

The Stags started off the game in fine form, mounting an opening eight-play drive that stalled in Stratford territory, keyed by a Shaquille Thompson 32-yard kickoff return.

It would be the only offense Berkeley would muster in the first half and the closest the Stags would come to finding the end zone until late in the fourth quarter when quarterback Devin Kilgor connected with Thompson on three strikes across the middle.

The drive stalled on the Stratford 35-yard line.

"We improved in some areas and we stayed the same in some areas," said Cruce. "We're not down, not at all. We're going to move some people around and try to find the right combinations. I said at the beginning that I wouldn't hesitate to throw anyone back there at any time.

"We need to put some points on the board."

Cruce cited the play of his offensive line, setting up the Stags' spread offense and getting receivers open.

"Offensive line played the best they have all season Thursday," he said. "The defense played well too but they were on the field too long.

"When you get the line playing that well you have to move the football and put points on the board. We had six guys grade out on the offensive line Thursday night. Cyrus Pinckney, Stephen Sawyer, Kadeem Palmer and Haven Sowell all had great games in the trenches."

Cruce said the focus of these early games is to get his team ready for region play.

"They start counting on September 30," he said. "I told the guys I'm not down at all. You didn't quit. You played all 48 minutes. It's a process. The natural tendency is to point fingers but you can't do that. We have to stick together as a team and work hard to get better."

High points from the Stratford game include punter Nick Hill's 64-yard punt in the first half.

"Nick really punted well and he's punted well for us all summer," the coach said. "He averaged about 50 yards a punt Thursday."

Cruce sees the potential in his team and knows it is a learning process. "There's no panic at this point. We're going to be a good football team. Once these kids get it, they'll know what to do with it and we'll do what we have to do to win football games."

The Stags host Summerville next Friday while the Knights travel to Sumter.

"The Summerville-Berkeley rivalry is the most storied and oldest rivalries in the state," Cruce said. "You don't have to say much to the kids to get them up for this game because it's Summerville."

523 Berkeley games and still counting; Football team's No. 1 fan looking forward to the next game

250 Estimated pounds of peanuts Ott has eaten while watching Berkeley football

343 Berkeley victories Ott has witnessed

40,000 Estimated miles Ott has traveled to watch Berkeley play football

Load-Date: September 1, 2011

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523 Berkeley games and still counting; Football team's No. 1 fan looking forward to the next game

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 1, 2011 Thursday, Final Edition

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Section: NATION; Pg. A1

Length: 799 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Moncks Corner - Billy Ott has missed only one Berkeley High School football game since 1968, and he had a doctor's note to justify his absence.

Ott was hospitalized with lung cancer in September 1996 and had to miss the second game of the season, a 14-7 loss to Sumter. It was the only loss of the season for the Stags, who went on to win the Division II-AAAA state championship.

"I was thinking of checking myself out of the hospital," Ott said. "I was hooked up to an IV. I looked out the window, and if I remember correctly, we were having a tropical storm. I decided I wouldn't risk it."

It wouldn't have been the first time Ott checked himself out of a hospital because of Berkeley football.

In 1974, he battled pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital on a Monday. He tried to convince his doctor to release him in time for the game on Friday.

"He wouldn't do it," Ott said. "So I checked myself out. I worked at the Navy yard back then and needed a note from my doctor to go back to work. He told me to write it myself since I checked myself out. But I told him why I did it and he understood and wrote the note."

Billy Gene Ott is 61 now, and an appraiser for the Berkeley County Tax Assessors Office. He says Berkeley football has been his pride and passion for 43 of those years. He's traveled about 40,000 miles, visited 60 stadiums and watched the Stags win four state championships. He will be in the stands Friday for the 524th time as Berkeley battles Summerville.

His most memorable game was Berkeley's 18-15 victory over Gaffney in the 1981 Big 16 state championship game.

His most heart-breaking loss was a 25-21 decision to Walterboro in a 1997 playoff game.

"Walterboro ran a reverse with 50 seconds left to score and beat us," Ott said. "Most people had left thinking we had the game won."

Ott graduated from Berkeley High School in 1968, "did some stuff at Trident Tech," and then settled into his football routine.

One reason he keeps coming back is because the price is right.

"When I first started watching games, it cost $3 to get in. Now, it costs $6," Ott said. "Where can you find a bargain like that?"

He said he loves Berkeley football because the players and fans are like family.

"You get to see tomorrow's leaders today," Ott said. "High school football isn't tainted by money. And, the first game of the season in Moncks Corner is like a family reunion because you see so many people you haven't seen in a year."

Ott didn't play football in high school. He's not into college sports and could not care less about the pros. His sport is high school football. He runs his own website, berkeleystagsfootball.com, and had a chance to expand the site to include the school's other athletic teams.

"The booster club offered to pay me to do it, but I said 'no thanks,' " Ott said.

His nickname is "City Slicker," and the website includes Slick's rants.

Jeff Cruce is Berkeley's new coach and has changed the team from a run-oriented offense into a passing team. Ott has been critical.

"It's been a long time till I have had to adjust to a new Stags coach," Ott wrote on his website. "I wish Jeff Cruce the best, but the new changes and new people have so far been a learning curve. I hope we can adjust, but change is difficult. We must be patient for the Stags' renewal."

"He loves Berkeley," said Cruce, who first met Ott in the early 1990s when he was an assistant coach under Jerry Brown at Berkeley. "He's got his opinions. In my opinion, the two schools that have the biggest football tradition in this area are Summerville and Berkeley. Billy realizes that tradition and he just wants to make sure every coach maintains that same level of excellence."

Ott said he's not a cheerleader type of fan and doesn't wear school colors to the games. He sits alone on the top row of the visitor's side of the field.

"I used to go to the games with Alvin White," Ott said. "We worked at the Navy yard together and went to the games from 1974 to 2007. It finally got to the point where he couldn't see."

Ott's wife of 41 years, Ruth, is a dean at Trident Technical College. She doesn't go to the games with her husband.

"She said it's good for me to be gone on Friday nights," Ott said with a laugh.

When will Ott slow down?

"I wasn't on a quest to go to 600 games," he said. "But that would be a nice number."

And when it comes to numbers, Ott is Berkeley's No. 1 fan.

BILLY OTT BY THE NUMBERS

1 Berkeley football games Ott has missed since 1968

4 State championships Ott has seen Berkeley win

60 High school stadiums Ott has visited

72 Number of opposing teams Ott has seen play

76 Playoff games Ott has attended

Summerville geared to face rival Berkeley

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 2, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C3

Length: 365 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Summerville football coach John McKissick knows longtime rival Berkeley has a lot of new faces for the 2012 season and that many of the team's key players are only sophomores.

"But they have that same old tradition," said McKissick, whose team travels to Berkeley today for a 7:30 p.m. showdown. "They've got a great tradition. They have a long tradition."

The Stags have won four state championships in the last 30 years, the most recent in 2009. But coach Jerry Brown stepped down after last season and was replaced by Jeff Cruce.

Berkeley is a young team experiencing growing pains. The Stags lost a scrimmage to Goose Creek by a 56-12 margin and trailed Wando 59-0 after three quarters. They opened the season with a 28-0 loss to Stratford.

"It will be a different team than the one we saw against Stratford," McKissick said. "Berkeley is young and is going to get better every week. They could come out with some changes this week."

At Summerville, quarterback Dalton Saunders is back for his third season as a starter. He's passed for more than 5,000 yards in his career.

Nigel Frierson is this year's featured running back,

replacing Shrine Bowl running back De'angelo Henderson. He carried 33 times for 150 yards and a score in the Green Wave's 34-19 victory over Conway.

"Nigel picked up the pace in the second half," said McKissick. "He's not as fast as De'angelo and his success depends on how he focuses on a game. I told him he doesn't have to be De'angelo. He needs to be Nigel Frierson."

Three Conway turnovers set up Summerville scores last week. Another interception at the Green Wave goal line cost Conway six points.

Darrin Smalls and Ryan Fowler both had interceptions, while Matt Halter and Christian Campbell both recovered fumbles for Summerville.

"We were real lucky," McKissick said. "We were real lucky thanks to some turnovers. But you can't do a game plan based on turnovers. You can't count on the other team making mistakes. I was pleased with our defense, though. They hustled, played hard and played fast."

Fowler led Summerville in tackles with 17 and Halter had 12. Matt White and Campbell both had 11 tackles against Conway. while Matt Blanton chipped in with three sacks.

Load-Date: September 5, 2011

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http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/berkeley-and-timberland-a-healthy-rivalry/article_fac5b421-d7af-5640-98d1-08043ac2994d.html

Berkeley and Timberland a healthy rivalry

Dan Brown Sep 6, 2011

Timberland’s Daquan Lucas and Berkeley’s Hunter Shepherd lead their respective teams into Friday’s showdown between the Stags and the Wolves.

Buy Now

Call it an uncivil, civil war.

Friday's football game matching visiting Timberland against host Berkeley almost pits brother against brother. The players filling out both rosters have grown up playing with and against each other in Park and Rec leagues in Moncks Corner, St. Stephen and Bonneau.

They love to play each other, and they love to beat each other even more.

It was Berkeley who last defeated the Timberland Wolves in a regular season game and that was back in 2007. The teams did not meet again until last year, leaving Wolves' fans to gnash their teeth in anticipation of revenge for the better part of three years.

Last fall the Wolves notched their first win ever against the Stags, a 24-21thriller in St. Stephen.

On Friday they have at it again, this time in Moncks Corner with the Wolves and their juggernaut defense trying to make it two in a row over a young Stags team.

The 2011 season finds both teams at complete opposites of the spectrum, with the young and inexperienced Stags struggling to find their legs under new coach Jeff Cruce's spread offense. The team has gone eight quarters without a touchdown in the young season, while Timberland's veteran team is running a modified "Pistol" offense and scoring almost at will.

The 2011 edition of the Timberland Wolves return 17 starters and a defense coach Art Craig calls perhaps the fastest and best defense he's ever coached.

"We have to play within our program to be successful," he said. "We are so fast that our biggest problem on defense is that we overrun the play. We have to play a controlled game to be successful."

Last Friday the Stags were shut out for the second week in a row, 13-0 by Summerville, and Timberland blew away Cross 57-0.

The Wolves have surpassed the half-century mark on offense in two out of their first three games, and in their season opener against Carvers Bay won 49-6. The Stags have yet to score.

"These first five games don't count," Cruce said. "We use these games to get ready for our first region game on Sept. 30 against Hilton Head."

It will not be hard to get pumped for this one.

"Jeff Cruce and I have always had a healthy rivalry," said Craig, whose Wolves seem unbeatable in the season's early going.

"Both schools have great football traditions," added Cruce. "This will be a great game. This is Timberland, a great football rivalry."

For Berkeley the season's first two games have been all about learning both a new coach and a new offense. Add to the mix the large number of underclassmen filling out the varsity roster and fans can see how the Stags have had trouble putting points on the board.

"We fought hard on both sides of the ball as a team," said senior linebacker Hunter Shepherd of his team's first two games. "We have more seniors on the defensive side of the ball so the younger guys look up to us and play to a higher standard. The offense doesn't have as many seniors but they are catching on quick."

As for the pending match up with Timberland, it's just what Shepherd and his Stags want.

"Timberland always plays us hard," he said. "We want that kind of challenge."

For interior lineman Stefan Sawyer, who sees duty on both sides of the line of scrimmage, his team's success will come once the mistakes on the field are cut down.

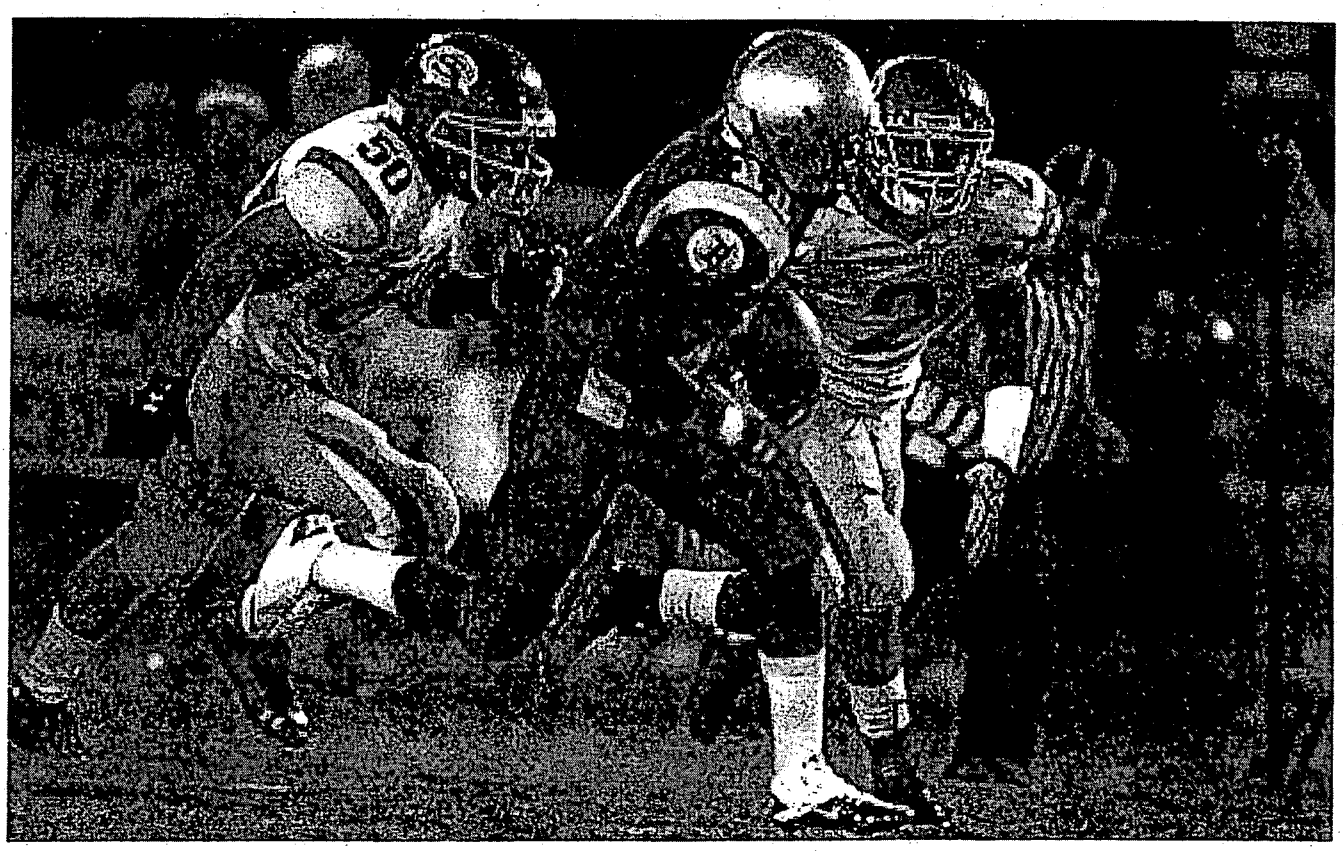
"We as a team just need eliminate the small mistakes, and offensively we just need to come and play football and score," he said. "Defensively if we can play like we played against Summerville or better we will win games."

Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/green-wave-washes-out-stags/article_01050023-39ac-50af-9677-ba9887d74361.html

Green Wave washes out Stags 13-0

Dan Brown Sep 9, 2011



<style type="text/css"> <!-- @page { margin: 0.79in } P { margin-bottom: 0.08in } --> </style> Shaquille Thompson breaks away for a 39-yard gain on a pass from quarterback Matt Harkness as Summerville’s Adam Blocker and Chris Wilson take up pursuit.

Summerville kicker Parker Cleveland's 37-yard field goal late in the third quarter broke a scoreless deadlock as the Green Wave whitewashed Berkeley 13-0 before a capacity crowd at Bonner Stadium Friday night.

The two teams spent the majority of three quarters chewing up the middle of the field before Cleveland connected on the first of two field goals.

"We watched them play Stratford and they (Stratford) beat them up pretty good," said Green Wave coach John McKissick. "I don't know if they played better tonight or we played worse, but we were lucky to come out of here with a win. I think they played much better tonight than last week."

Early in the fourth quarter, the Green Wave finally started firing on all cylinders as quarterback Dalton Saunders connected with tailback Nigel Frierson for a 65-yard touchdown pass to make the score 10-0 Summerville.

Just nine seconds later following a Berkeley fumble recovered by Summerville's Cyle Crowder, Cleveland connected again, this time from 42 yards out, to put the Green Wave up to stay 13-0 with 10 minutes remaining in the fourth quarter.

Berkeley's big play came on a 75-yard kickoff return by Devante Harley to put the ball inside the Green Wave 20-yard line, but the Stags drive stalled when kicker Nick Hill's 34-yard field goal attempt was partially blocked by Darin Smalls.

Summerville improves to 2-0 on the season while Berkeley drops to 0-2.

"I thought we played better," said Stags coach Jeff Cruce. "We gave ourselves several opportunities to score but we couldn't capitalize. I thought our defense played an outstanding game."

The Stags took their opening possession half the length of the field before the drive stalled and punter Nick Hill nailed his first of a half-dozen punts pinning Summerville deep in its own territory.

"You can never appreciate enough the value of a strong kicking game and Nick Hill is one of the best kickers in the Lowcountry," Cruce said.

Hill was voted the Offensive Player of the Week following the Stratford loss after averaging almost 50 yards a punt in the contest.

During the first half of the Summerville game, Hill was the busiest man on the field, punting six times with surgeon's precision to pin the Green Wave deep in its own territory time and time again.

After forcing the Green Wave to punt, the Stags drove the ball deep into SHS territory again but could not find pay dirt.

Berkeley's best chance to score on the night came midway through the third quarter when the Stags once again drove deep into Summerville territory.

Quarterback Matt Harkness hit Harrison Matthews on an 18-yard pass in the corner of the end zone. Matthews appeared to have control of the ball as he backed across the goal line but the pass was ruled incomplete as the ball popped free when he hit the ground.

"I think as a team we played great with a lot effort tonight," said lineman Stephen Sawyer, who spent a great deal of time on the field tonight playing both ways. "Our offense needs to make the plays when we need them but offensively we played a lot better from last week. I'm proud of my offense as long as we are getting better every

week."

Berkeley hosts Timberland on Friday, while Summerville hosts Goose Creek.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-capture-first-win-for-cruce/article_50336e99-5c39-505f-8adb-85bd93679f02.html

Stags capture first win for Cruce

Dan Brown Sep 16, 2011

Cleveland Singleton snatched a fumble out of the air and scored Berkeley's first touchdown of the 2011 season, a four-yard run, as the Stags notched their first win Friday night in Manning.

Berkeley won 9-6 over the Manning Monarchs.

With Berkeley driving in the third quarter and trailing 6-3, BHS quarterback Conner Teague pitched the ball to running back Greg Butler who was hit at the Manning 4-yard line. The ball squirted loose and fullback Cleveland Singleton caught the ball out of the air and scored to give Berkeley a 9-6 lead.

But it was the Berkeley defense that shined this night, shutting down drive after drive in the second half, forcing key fumbles and missed field goals.?The Stags ended their 2011 scoring drought at 155 minutes and 24 seconds when Nick Hill put Berkeley on the board for the first time with a 26-yard field goal late in the first quarter.

Manning put a scare in the hearts of Berkeley fans when defensive back Rashad Hilton picked off a Conner Teague pass and breezed into the end zone to put the Monarchs up 6-3 at the half.

Teague, who stepped in for injured quarterback Matthew Harkness, directed the Berkeley offense with error-free precision save for the lone interception.

Stags running back Asanti Dantzler gained 62 yards in the first half before leaving with an ankle injury near the end of the second quarter. Dantzler would not return. Diamonte Harley stepped up in the second half with big clock-killing runs that helped Berkeley run out the clock in the fourth quarter.

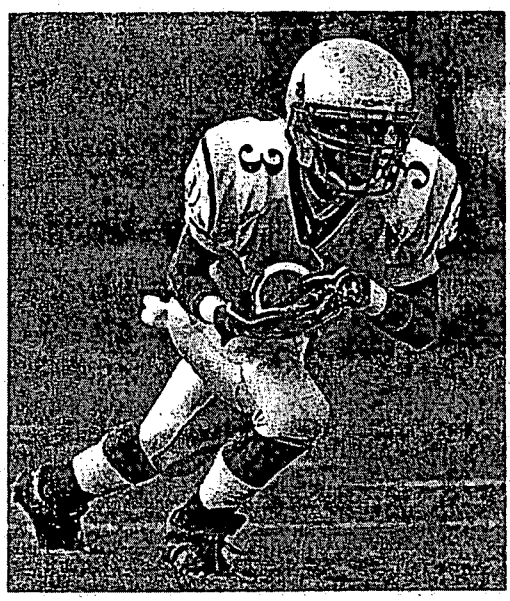
The win was Coach Jeff Cruce's first as head coach of the Stags.

With the win, Berkeley improves to 1-3 and will host Hanahan on Sept. 23 for Homecoming. For complete coverage of the Stags' first win of the 2011 season, see Wednesday's Berkeley Independent.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-top-manning-for-first-win-of-cruce-era/article_b8f1c5bf-aecd-579d-acef-30e4565078f9.html

Stags top Manning for first win of Cruce era

Dan Brown Sep 19, 2011



Running back Asanti Dantzler rushed for 62 yards in the first half to set up the Stags’ offense before going down with a mild ankle injury at the start of the third quarter. Buy Now
DRogers 2010

Cleveland Singleton snatched a Greg Butler fumble out of the air and scored the Berkeley Stags' first touchdown of the 2011 season as the Stags notched their first win, 9-6 over the Manning Monarchs.

With Berkeley driving in the third quarter and trailing 6-3, quarterback Conner Teague pitched the ball to running back Greg Butler who was hit at the Manning 4-yard line. The ball squirted loose and fullback Cleveland Singleton caught the ball out of the air and carried the ball in to give Berkeley a 9-6 lead.

But it was the Berkeley defense that shined this night, shutting down drive after drive in the second half, forcing key fumbles and missed field goals continued to pound the ball deep into Stags territory.

"Our defense played really well," said senior defensive back Tyler Bartley who squelched one Manning drive by forcing a fumble deep in BHS territory at the start of the second half. "We had big plays at the right time starting off the half with my forced fumble and Hunter (Shepherd) leading us to some amazing stops."

Bartley's fumble was recovered by lineman Stephen Sawyer and was one of six big stops keyed by the Berkeley defense.

"The defense did an amazing job holding out on third and fourth downs," Teague said.

The Stags defense stood up on fourth down situations inside the Red Zone, killing drives on four fourth down plays with big stops by Josh Simmons, Hunter Shepherd, Bartley, Jewuan Jefferson and Branden Williams.

The Stags ended their 2011 scoring drought at 155 minutes and 24 seconds when Nick Hill put Berkeley on the board for the first time with a 26-yard field goal late in the first quarter.

Then coach Jeff Cruce pulled a rabbit out of his hat following Berkeley's first points of the season when Hill pooched an onside kick that gave the Stags the ball in Manning territory.

"And the onside kick started it off right," Bartley said. "Our offense stepped up big tonight and especially our backup quarterback Conner Teague."

Manning put a scare in the hearts of Berkeley fans when defensive back Rashad Hilton picked off an errant Teague pass and breezed into the end zone to put the Monarchs up 6-3 at the half.

Teague, who stepped in for injured quarterback Matthew Harkness directed the Berkeley offense with error-free precision save for the lone interception, throwing unofficially for 58 yards on 5 completions.

Running back Asanti Dantzler gave Berkeley its first glimpse of a sustained running attack this season. He gained 62 yards in the first half before leaving with an ankle injury near the end of the second quarter. Dantzler would not return.

"The win was a good accomplishment," Dantzler said. "The team attitude toward the game was intense and very hyped. We wanted this real bad."

Dantzler added that his ankle was fine and the injury not as bad as he originally thought.

Diamonte Harley stepped up in the second half with big clock-killing runs that helped Berkeley run out the clock in the fourth quarter. Unofficially, Harley gained 54 yards rushing in the second half with a pair of big gains of 18 and 12 yards during the Stags' touchdown drive.

The win was Coach Jeff Cruce's first as head coach of the Stags.

With the win, Berkeley improves to 1-3 and will host Hanahan on Sept. 23 for Homecoming.

For complete coverage of the Stags' first win of the 2011 season, see Wednesday's Berkeley Independent.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-keep-winning/article_c94fbea1-516a-5744-b435-51ed528444d0.html

Stags keep winning

Dan Brown Oct 17, 2011

Diamante Harley ran for three touchdowns and Matt Harkness threw for three more as the Berkeley Stags moved into a Region 7AAA tie for first place with second ranked Bluffton, downing Lake Marion 45-14 Friday.

Harkness connected with Dylan Baker for a pair of touchdown tosses, one a circus catch in the corner of the end zone with 1.4 seconds remaining in the first half to put the Stags up 28-6, but it was Harley who shouldered the load in the early going, tallying a pair of early touchdowns including a 31-yard punt return to turn give Berkeley an early 20-0 lead.

The win improves the Stags to 4-4, 3-0 in the region, and sets up next week's showdown for a possible Region 7AAA championship with Bluffton.

"We've worked hard to put ourselves in position to play for a region championship," said Berkeley head coach Jeff Cruce. "We are continuing to execute better which opens up opportunities for our offense."

Bluffton downed Battery Creek 82-0 Friday.

In other area action, Timberland ran its perfect Region 7AA record to 4-0 and 34 region wins in a row in a 34-14 win over Lake City. Cross overcame a slow start to pull away from Military Magnet 40-18. St. John's Cavaliers kept their post season hopes alive with a 48-3 win over Richard Winn in SCISA play.

For more coverage, see Sports.

Berkeley's patience paying off

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

October 21, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C3

Length: 601 words

Byline: DAVID SHELTON, Special to The Post and Courier

Body

When Jeff Cruce accepted the position of head football coach at Berkeley High School last spring, the veteran coach knew exactly what he was getting into.

Cruce left his job at Cane Bay to replace a legend, Dr. Jerry Brown, who guided the program to three state titles during an 18-year run that saw the Stags win 175 games.

Having worked under Brown for three years as an assistant at Berkeley, Cruce knew that he was leaving a program at Cane Bay that he started three years ago from scratch to move to a program - and a community - where winning was expected. The Berkeley program's last losing season came in 1992.

However, the coach knew that his first season might be a trying one. Not only did he inherit a very young football team, but he also implemented drastic changes offensively. The Stags moved from a double wing-based running offense to a spread look that leaned heavily on a throwing game.

"We knew coming in, that with so many young kids and bringing a new system, that we might start a little slow," said Cruce, who led Hanahan to 12 consecutive region championships before starting the Cane Bay program in 2008. "It's just something we had to go through, a maturation process and a learning process."

No doubt many eyes in the community rolled when Berkeley opened the season with three straight losses, failing to score a single point in the first 12 quarters of play. The "old school" crowd wondered if the new offense would ever work at a place like Berkeley.

The first win came in Week 4, a 9-6 decision over Manning. A close loss to Hanahan was followed by three straight wins, evening Berkeley's record at 4-4.

Tonight, the Stags host the state's top-ranked Class AAA team, Bluffton, in a game that will go a long way in deciding the region 7-AAA championship. Cruce kept his focus on the team and on improving, and says the players never lost sight.

"Through all the tough times early, this team never stopped working and they never gave up," said Cruce. "If we had lost them mentally, I would have been worried. But they showed up every day to work. They are getting better each day. We still have a long, long ways to go, but we're a lot better overall. I'm really proud of them."

As many as eight sophomores are starting offensively for Cruce this season. One is quarterback Matthew Harkness, who struggled early but has played well of late.

"He has worked so hard, watching film and working on learning this offense," said Cruce. "He has great talent and potential. He's going to be a good one.

"We have really good talent across the board. There is never a shortage of good athletes here at Berkeley. We just had to change what we were doing, drastically change, and that takes time."

Sophomore receivers like Dylan Baker and Harrison Matthews have steadily become major factors in the passing game. The running game is starting to see more consistent production, led by sophomore Diamante Harley and junior Asanti Dantzler.

Berkeley's defense has been pretty solid all season, largely due to more experience. Linebackers Hunter Shepherd and Kadeem Palmer are seniors with several years of starting experience.

Safety Tyler Bartley is a third-year starter in the secondary and lineman Steven Sawyer has been a leader along the front.

The kicking game has been another strength, with senior Nick Hill handling the place-kicking and punting while also starting in the defensive secondary.

"I'm very excited about this program and the potential we have," said Cruce. "We're not where we want to be and it's going to take a lot of work over the offseason, but we're headed in the right direction."

Load-Date: October 21, 2011

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APP. 0626

Bluffton romps to Region 7-AAA title

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

October 22, 2011 Saturday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C7

Length: 444 words

Byline: DAVID SHELTON, Special to The Post and Courier

Body

Bluffton 53,

Berkeley 7

It took a few minutes to get it going, but once the Bluffton Bobcats got rolling, there was no stopping them.

Bluffton fell behind Berkeley, 7-0, but proceeded to score 53 unanswered points to improve to 9-0 with a 53-7 win, claiming the Region 7-AAA title in the process.

Bluffton junior quarterback C.J. Frazier completed 16 of 27 passes for 176 yards and two touchdowns, and senior

receiver Dimitri Lowry caught 10 passes for 116 yards to pace an offensive attack that tallied nearly 400 yards.

"I thought we were a little tight, a little tense early on. I know I was," said Bluffton coach Ken Cribb. "We settled down some in the second quarter, got going a little bit. Our defense was great all night. We started the season pretty young on defense, but that group has worked so hard. They take a lot of pride in what they do, and they were good tonight."

Bluffton's defense smothered Berkeley all night, allowing only one first down and less than 75 total yards. Berkeley's lone first down came on a fake punt in the first quarter, while the lone touchdown came via a fake field goal. Bluffton's

Anthony Smith intercepted two passes and recovered a fumble, while linebacker Michael Grant had an interception.

"We had made some progress offensively over the last few weeks, but we took some steps backwards tonight," said Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce. "Their defense was good, but we just didn't play well. You could tell it was seniors against sophomores."

Place-kicker Nick Hill gave Berkeley a 7-0 lead by taking off on a fake field goal and scoring on an 8-yard run with 7:37 to play in the first quarter.

Bluffton's Eric Boyles tied the game with a 1-yard run with 32 seconds left in the first quarter.

A 5-yard pass from Frazier to Marquis Webber with 7:32

remaining in the first half made it 14-7, and Mallie Sprouse kicked a 31-yard field goal with 2:39 to play to make it 17-7.

Smith's second interception and return of 50 yards set the Bobcats up at the Berkeley 30, and Frazier hit Lowery from 9 yards out with 54 seconds to play for a 24-7 halftime lead.

Bluffton, ranked No. 1 in the state's Class AAA polls, will play Hilton Head next Friday, seeking to record the school's first undefeated regular season.

"We have a target on our back now, so we have to be ready to play every week," said Cribb. "We have to get better at everything we do."

Berk-Nick Hill 8 run (Hill kick)

Bluff-Eric Boyles 1 run (Mallie Sprouse kick)

Bluff-Marquis Webber 5 pass from C.J. Frazier (Sprouse kick)

Bluff-Sprouse 31 field goal

Bluff-Dimitri Lowry 9 pass from Frazier (Sprouse kick)

Bluff-Jerry Scott 5 run (Frazier pass to Scott)

Bluff-Zach Scott 2 run (Sprouse kick)

Load-Date: October 24, 2011

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http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/cobras-whip-lake-marion-rival-berkeley-looms/article_9d3e9db0-b2db-564a-9e7b-252b5fc9c5fc.html

Cobras whip Lake Marion; rival Berkeley looms

Rob Gantt Oct 25, 2011

Cane Bay coach Russell Zehr got into the profession over two decades ago for games just like the one his team will play in this Thursday.

The Cobras took care of business on Friday, blasting Lake Marion 41-7, to set up a showdown for a home playoff game with rival Berkeley on local television. The winner gets bragging rights and finishes second in the final region standings.

"It's one of those games I'm just glad the kids get an opportunity to play in," said Zehr, whose team improved to 6-3, 3-1. "It's on TV. There's going to be a lot of hype. It's against Berkeley. It's for a home playoff game. It's going to be fun. It's like the playoffs are starting a week early."

The game will be broadcast on WMMP's Thursday Night Lights at 7:30 p.m.

Berkeley is also 3-1 in the region. The Stags are 4-5 overall after last week's 53-7 loss to Bluffton.

Adding intrigue, it marks the return to Cane Bay for former Cobras coach Jeff Cruce, who left CBHS for Berkeley last spring. Zehr, Cruce's defensive coordinator, said the game would have plenty of hype regardless of who the coaches are for each team.

"Before Coach Cruce went to Berkeley, Berkeley was already our biggest rival because half of our kids came from Berkeley," Zehr said.

Zehr does understand, though, it's a chance for the Cobras to beat a program with a bigger reputation. Just two seasons ago, the Stags won a Class AAAA state championship.

"It's a great opportunity for our kids to earn a little respect," Zehr said. "No matter Berkeley's record, year in and year out Berkeley is still Berkeley. Any time you can compete with Berkeley, you've done something. I think Cane Bay Football is still trying to make a name for itself."

The winner of the game will host either Georgetown, Wilson or Socastee in the opening round of the Class AAA playoffs next week. The loser will travel to one of those three schools.

Against Lake Marion, the Cobras got 157 yards and four touchdowns from running back Anthony Enos in the rout. Enos will enter the Berkeley game with over 1,300 yards.

Davon Higgins added 89 yards on nine carries and quarterback Brandon Hall was 6 of 10 passing for 68 yards and a touchdown pass to David Welch.

Defensively, the Cobras limited Lake Marion to negative yardage rushing and picked off four passes. Lamar Gulley, Milon Davis, Randal Drew and Jason Sheppard had the interceptions.

Sheppard had 10 stops to lead all Cane Bay tacklers. Keenen Reid added six stops along with Randal Drew. Matt Rudy added five tackles.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/hanley-to-speak-at-cordesville-meeting/article_ac67ad60-fb24-53b8-afa5-8cdab9d73606.html

Hanley to speak at Cordesville meeting

Dan Brown Oct 25, 2011

If last Friday night was any indication, Halloween came a week early.

The night was full of tricks, some treats and a full-blown nightmare.

The tricks came in the first five minutes of the Berkeley-Bluffton game. What fans saw in a span of five plays would have made Houdini proud.

First there's Bluffton's fake punt on the game's opening series. Apparently Bobcat coach Ken Cribb will pull everything but a rabbit out of his hat over the course of a football game to help his team win. I hate guys like that. Not only do they beat you but they make you look bad while doing so.

The pass over the middle was broken up by defensive back Tyler Bartley, giving Berkeley awesome field position in Bluffton territory.

The Stags returned the favor three plays later when Jeff Cruce fancied a little sleight of hand of his own with a fake punt that worked. The resulting 24-yard pass from punter Nick Hill to Dylan Baker gave Berkeley a first down inside the Bluffton 10-yard line.

Three plays later, Cruce did it again, this time a fake field goal attempt with Hill taking the direct snap and sprinting toward the right corner of the end zone. He scraped over the pylon to give the Stags the lead 7-0 and knock the top ranked Bobcats on the seat of their pants.

Unfortunately for Berkeley, the euphoria wore off, Bluffton woke up, and the Stags offense disappeared for the rest of the night, failing to register a single first down while mustering barely 70 yards of offense on a little more than a baker's dozen offensive plays in the 53-7 loss.

And yes, Bluffton is that good.

The treats came for Goose Creek and Cross.

The Gators look to march to the Class AAAA Division II championship game once again nailing down the Region 7AAAA championship on Friday, and Cross took one giant step toward capturing the Region 6A championship with a wild last second win over Baptist Hill.

Alvonta Halls' return of his blocked punt with two seconds left in the game gave the Trojans wild 25-18 win and put Cross in the driver's seat to take the top seed out of Region 6A into the first round of the playoffs in two weeks.

Then there's Timberland, and the nightmare from which suddenly there is no waking.

The Wolves have stumbled over the last three weeks playing uncharacteristically uninspired football, surrendering 44 points over their last three games after stringing together 18-consecutive shutout quarters earlier in the season.

The Lake City game on Oct.14 week raised an eyebrow or two. Then the shocker, a 17-3 loss to Bishop England that not only snapped all of Timberland's vaunted winning streaks but lost the Region 7AA championship as well.

The Wolves have been lost in a fog for the month of October and their offense on Friday didn't show up at all. Not a good night.

Timberland will rebound though, and they'll be back next week.

You've heard it said too many times; sometimes a loss can be a good thing. Plus, folks can stop counting now.

No more streaks.

Sometimes those can be distracting. You've heard that said, too

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/cane-bay-charms-stags/article_0c15be64-1a6e-5f4c-8044-920b7001762b.html

Cane Bay charms Stags

Dan Brown Oct 27, 2011

Anthony Enos dove over left tackle on one-yard plunge early in the fourth quarter to give Cane Bay a lead it would not relinquish as the Cobras downed the Berkeley Stags 19-15 in high school football action Thursday night.

The Stags (4-6, 3-3) had taken the lead in the third quarter on a 65-yard touchdown bomb from Matt Harkness to Harrison Matthews giving Berkeley a 15-12 lead near the 7-minute mark of the quarter.

Cane Bay struggled on its next series and punted from deep in its own territory. After a first punt was called back because of a motion penalty, the Stags' Brandon Morrison broke through and blocked the Cobra punt.

The bouncing football kicked up into the belly of Matt Rudy who scampered 45 yards down the home sideline for a first down deep in Stags territory. The run kept a Cobras drive alive and set up Enos' go-ahead touchdown.

"The blocked punt changed the entire tone of the game," said BHS Coach Jeff Cruce. "We had scored on a big play to take the lead and our defense had stopped them. We block the punt and it bounces up to their player and he takes off.

"We recover that punt and we go into score, it's a whole different ball game. We're up by two scores."

With the loss the Stags finish as the third seed in Region 7AAA and will open the playoffs on the road at either Socastee or Wilson from Region 8AAA. Cane Bay will play at home against whichever team doesn't play Berkeley.

For the complete game story and all the playoff bracket news, see the Nov. 2 edition of The Berkeley Independent.

Pick Six : High school predictions

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

October 27, 2011 Thursday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C2

Length: 221 words

Byline: Staff report

Body

For the first time in three weeks, WCBD-TV's Brendan Clark wasn't perfect in the Pick Six contest against The Post and Courier's Phil Bowman.

After two weeks of going 6-0 in picking the top high school football games in the Lowcountry, Clark went 5-1 in Week 9. Bowman went 4-2.

For the year, Clark is 42-12 while Bowman is 35-19.

Here are this week's picks:

Berkeley at Cane Bay

Bowman: Jeff Cruce gets a victory tonight against his old team. Berkeley, 28-14.

Clark: Very emotional game for Cobras, but Stags prevail, 24-21.

Ashley Ridge

at Goose Creek

Bowman: Ashley Ridge the latest team to feel the wrath of the Gators. Goose Creek, 42-21.

Clark: Swamp Foxes on a roll, but so is Goose Creek. Gators, 48-24.

Hanahan at Woodland

Bowman: Region 6-AA title is on the line. Hanahan, 28-27.

Clark: Chris Brown back from an injury. It makes a

difference. Hanahan, 28-21.

Beaufort at Summerville

Bowman: Eagles will finish below .500 for the first time in a long time. Summerville, 21-17.

Pick Six : High school predictions

Clark: Wave bounces back after loss to Ashley Ridge: Summerville, 35-21.

Cross at Burke

Bowman: Can Burke hand Cross its first Region 6-A loss? Cross, 20-16.

Clark: Defense wins the game for Cross, 27-14.

Stratford at James Island

Bowman: Stratford is a little underrated at 7-2. Knights, 21-7.

Clark: A tough stretch remains just that for the Trojans. Knights, 28-14.

Load-Date: October 27, 2011

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Enos carries Cane Bay

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

October 28, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C4

Length: 412 words

Byline: DAVID SHELTON, Special to The Post and Courier

Body

Trailing by three points Thursday night in a rivalry game to decide second-place in Region 7-AAA, Cane Bay turned to senior running back Anthony Enos, and the 5-8, 175-pounder carried the Cobras to a victory.

Enos touched the ball on 17 plays of a 19-play game-deciding drive and scored on a 1-yard run with 4:18 to play in the game to lift Cane Bay to a 19-15 win over Berkeley.

The drive began in the third quarter and consumed more than nine minutes off the clock with Enos getting 16 rushing attempts and catching a pass. Enos finished the game with 147 yards on 37 carries and two touchdowns.

"I know my coaches and my teammates have a lot of trust in me, and I want the ball in that situation," said Enos, who has fumbled only three times in 534 career rushing attempts. "The line was great and they opened some holes. The more I get it, the better I am. I'll carry it on every play if I have to as long as we win."

Cane Bay (7-3) converted three fourth downs on the drive. Senior QB Brandon Hall completed two passes on the drive but said there was never a doubt as to the method in which his team would score.

"Anthony is our workhorse and everyone knows it," said Hall. "The line was really getting after it. Berkeley had a great defense and they were very physical, but we were confident we could move it down the field."

Enos gave Cane Bay a 6-0 lead with a 9-yard run in the first quarter but Berkeley (4-6) answered on a 10-yard run by QB Matthew Harkness with 7:08 left in the second quarter.

Cane Bay scored with one second left in the first half on a 6-yard pass from Hall to David Welch to take a 12-7 halftime lead.

Harkness combined with Harrison Matthews on a 63-yard scoring pass with 8:25 to play in the third to take a 15-12 lead. Harkness completed 12 of 17 passes for 174 yards.

"Both teams played hard and really the game could have gone either way," said Cane Bay coach Russell Zehr, who replaced current Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce last spring when Cruce was hired at Berkeley.

"We made a lot of mistakes and had a lot of adversity but our guys never quit. We got some breaks and had some luck but we battled the entire game."

Enos carries Cane Bay

Both teams are in the playoffs next week, with Cane Bay at home and Berkeley on the road.

CB - Anthony Enos 9 run (kick blocked)

B - Matthew Harkness 10 run (Nick Hill kick)

CB - David Welch 6 pass from Brandon Hall (pass failed)

B - Harrison Matthews 63 pass from Harkness (pass to Asanti Dantzler)

CB - Enos 1 run (George Anderson kick)

Load-Date: October 28, 2011

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APP. 0637

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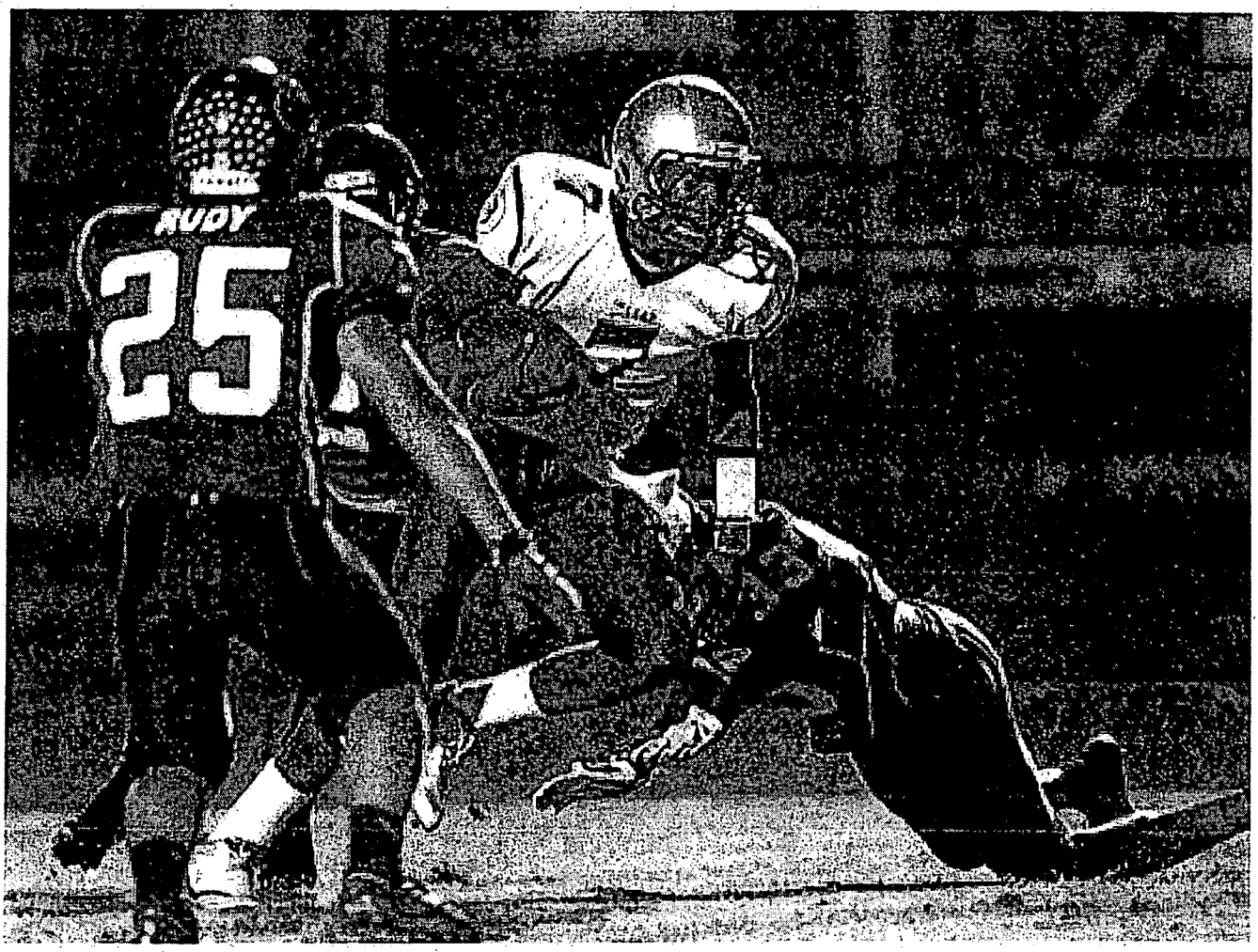
http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/cane-bay-tops-stags-earn-second-seed-berkeley-on-road/article_d15f46e3-0516-5d7e-b73f-adbce9c2766b.html

Cane Bay tops Stags, earn second seed; Berkeley on road as third

Dan Brown Oct 31, 2011



Stags quarterback Matt Harkness scores on a 10-yard run in the first quarter of Berkeley’s 19-15 loss to Cane Bay.
Douglas Rogers

Inventors of football must have had last Friday night's blocked punt by the Stags' Branden Williams in mind when designing the peculiar shape of the pigskin.

After Berkeley had taken a third-quarter 15-12 lead by virtue of a spirit-breaking 64-yard touchdown pass from Matt Harkness to Harrison Matthews, Williams broke through the line on a fourth-and-long deep in Cane Bay territory to block a George Anderson punt.

The ball bounced at Williams' feet straight up into the waiting arms of special teams back Matt Rudy, who then took off 45 yards down the home sideline, and turned disaster into redemption.

Later in the series Anthony Enos dove over left tackle on one-yard plunge to give Cane Bay a lead it would not relinquish as the Cobras downed Berkeley 19-15 to claim the second seed out of Region 7AAA.

"The blocked punt changed the entire tone of the game," said BHS Coach Jeff Cruce. "We had scored on a big play to take the lead and our defense had stopped them. We block the punt and it bounces up to their player and he takes off.

"We recover that punt and we go into score, it's a whole different ball game. We're up by two scores."

With the loss the Stags finish as the third seed in Region 7AAA and will open the playoffs on the road at Socastee, the second seeded team out of Region 8AAA by virtue of its win.

"We continue to make too many mental mistakes on both sides of the ball," Cruce said. "But I'm still proud of these guys. They made a huge improvement over last week's game. If they don't get that first down they don't score at the end of the half, and the bounce on the blocked punt would have put us in position to score again.

"We played a good football game."

Enos put the Cobras on the board in the first quarter with a nine-yard-run. The Stags would block the point after attempt and then answer on their next drive, a 10-yard Harkness run.

Nick Hill's PAT put Berkeley up 7-6.

Cane Bay took the lead in the waning seconds of the first half when quarterback Brandon Hall hit David Welch from six yards out. The failing 2-point conversion left the Cobras with a thin 12-7 lead going into the locker room.

The second half was limited to the pair of scoring possessions with the Stags potential game-winning drive stalling with just over two minutes remaining in the game.

Harkness led the Stags offensive effort going 12 for 17 through the air for 174 yards.

The Cobras will open the Class AAA playoffs at home against Wilson while Berkeley hits the road to play Socastee.

North-South will have Lowcountry flavor

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

November 2, 2011 Wednesday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C1

Length: 290 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

If you need proof of Goose Creek's football dominance in the Lowcountry,

check out won-loss records and statistics.

Or you can also look at postseason rosters.

The Gators, 9-1 and ranked No. 3 in the state among Class AAAA teams, landed two players on the South roster for the 63rd South Carolina

Auto Dealers Association North-South All-Star Football Game.

Linebacker Raemond Robinson, athletic enough to earn a basketball scholarship to the The Citadel, made the team, as well as Gators offensive lineman Matt Steffensen. That gives the Gators four players who will

participate in postseason all-star games. Fullback Virgil Smalls and linebacker T.J. Burrell were selected to play in the Shrine Bowl.

The Gators are among the state leaders in offense with 51.2 points per game and 360 yards rushing, and Steffensen has had a big role on offense. He's a three-year starter, has good size (285 pounds) and quickness. The defense has been just as impressive, thanks to the play of Robinson. The Gators are allowing only 10 points per game.

Timberland, which also landed two players in the Shrine Bowl, has two players on the North-South roster in defensive back Lee Mayes and defensive lineman James Middleton. Bishop England, which defeated Timberland en route to the Region 7-AA title, had only one player make postseason play. Quarterback Danny Croghan will play in the North-South game.

Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce is the coach of the South squad, and 19

players from the Lowcountry are on his team, including two Stags:

linebacker Hunter Shepherd and defensive end Steven Sawyer.

The game will be played Dec. 10 at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium in Myrtle Beach, with a 12:30 p.m. kickoff. The North won last year's game, 26-6, and leads the series, 36-25-2.

North-South will have Lowcountry flavor

Load-Date: November 2, 2011

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http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/cobras-roll-on-in-class-aaa-playoffs/article_f8fba8fb-e7b9-554c-836e-1461f3f5094a.html

Cobras roll on in Class AAA playoffs

Rob Gantt Nov 6, 2011

There was no letdown after the emotional victory over a rival a week earlier.

The first round of the Class AAA playoffs looked like business as usual for the Cane Bay Cobras, who were coming off a hard-fought 19-15 win over former coach Jeff Cruce and the Berkeley Stags.

Cane Bay (8-3) rolled up over 360 yards rushing, getting 245 from running back Anthony Enos, in a 42-16 romp over Wilson. It gave the Cobras a school record for victories in a season for first-year coach Russell Zehr.

Enos, a North-South selection, scored three touchdowns and is now over 1,700 yards rushing on the season. Teammates Davon Higgins and Chris David combined to go over 100 yards against Wilson.

Higgins and David each scored on short runs during the rout. Cane Bay's other touchdown was a 2-yard interception return by linebacker Randal Drew.

Cane Bay's defense finished with four turnovers, including three interceptions. Drew's score made it 28-0 in the first half and the Cobras were never seriously threatened after that.

Cane Bay moves on to face Marlboro County in the second round of the playoffs. A year ago, the Cobras edged the Bulldogs 28-27 in Summerville. This game will be in Bennettsville, though.

Marlboro County (8-3) is coming off a 21-16 win over Brookland-Cayce. The Bulldogs scored with less than a minute left to avoid the upset on Friday.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/south-all-star-selections-announced/article_051a1c07-992d-5df4-b770-8037131af703.html

South All Star selections announced

Dan Brown Nov 7, 2011

Stags co-captains Stephen Sawyer and Hunter Shepherd were named to the South All-Star team along with Timberland’s Lee Mayes and James Middleton.
 Buy Now

The members of the North South All Star teams were announced last week with area teams Berkeley, Timberland, Stratford and Goose Creek landing two players each.

South coach Jeff Cruce made the announcement during a Columbia press conference last Monday, filling out the roster for next month's South Carolina Auto Dealers Association North-South All-Star Football Game at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium in Myrtle Beach.

"We have a lot of good kids who made this team," Cruce said. "We should have a pretty good team."

The Stags' Hunter Shepherd and Stephen Sawyer, along with Timberland's Lee Mayes and James Middleton joined the Cane Bay Cobras' Anthony Enos as local representatives to the South squad.

"I'm very honored and excited," Sawyer said. "I have been doing this for a long time and being named to the North-South All Star team shows that the work I put in paid off."

For Shepherd, the selection was the culmination of a career of hard work and carrying on a family tradition.

"I'm honored to be selected to the North South team," he said. "I'm proud to be a Stag and thankful for the opportunity to play for both Coach Brown and Coach Cruce. Four years of hard work and dedication to football has brought myself and my teammates a state championship two years ago and now the North-South.

"Both of these honors are extra special because my father also was a state champion and a member of the South All Star Team."

Shepherd's dad, Mark played on the Stags state championship team in1981.

Cruce added that being the South coach and being able to take two players from his own team was great for Berkeley County.

Goose Creek's Raemond Robinson and Matt Steffenson were also named to the squad.

Cane Bay's David Bryant, Goose Creek's Virgil Smalls and T.J. Burrell, and Timberland's Bobby McNeil and Daquan Lucas were selected to represent South Carolina in this year's Shrine Bowl.

Kickoff for the Dec. 10 All-Star game is 12:30 p.m.

The Shrine Bowl will be played Dec. 17 at Wofford.

Correct change; Cane Bay's Enos, who moved from linebacker to running back as freshman, leads the area with 1,665 yards rushing

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

November 11, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C3

Length: 472 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Anthony Enos' days as a linebacker were thankfully short.

In 2007, Enos was a freshman at Cane Bay High School. His position coach, Russell Zehr, liked Enos' heart and hustle. But his athleticism and tackling ability came up short.

"After that second day of practice, I asked coach (Jeff) Cruce if he wanted to give him a try at running back," Zehr said. "Going into the ninth grade, Anthony hadn't played a lot of football and he was raw. Part of our job as coaches is getting the kids to play in the right position. Looking back, it was a gamble. But today, I'm glad he's running the football rather than chasing people down."

Today, Enos is a 5-8, 175-pound senior who has speed to get to the outside and strength to run up the middle. He leads the Lowcountry with 1,665 yards on 265 carries and has 23 touchdowns heading into tonight's Class AAA second-

round playoff game at Marlboro County. He turned out to be one of the best running backs in the state, and has been selected to play in the North-South All-Star Game on Dec. 10 at Doug Shaw Stadium in Myrtle Beach.

Cruce, who was coach at Cane Bay from 2007-10, is now the head coach at Berkeley. He will coach his former player and the South team in the all-star game.

Zehr was promoted to head coach of the Cobras after serving

three years under Cruce. He's watched Enos grow and mature every year.

"I was watching video of last year's game against Marlboro County, and Anthony isn't the same player," Zehr said. "Every year, he's gotten a little stronger and a little faster. I'm excited he's getting a chance to play in the North-South Game. He's proof that hard work pays off. He's proof that if you rely on your teammates the right way and work hard, you will go far."

Enos wasn't upset about moving to offense.

Correct change; Cane Bay's Enos, who moved from linebacker to running back as freshman, leads the area with 1,665 yards rushing

"I knew I had to work on my speed," Enos said. "I knew I had to develop that vision to be able to read blocks. In the offseason - I don't like bragging - I was in the weight room every day. I was in there even when Coach Cruce wasn't there. I knew I had to work hard if I wanted to get better."

Enos is getting stronger when many running backs start to show wear and tear because of a long season.

On Oct. 14, he set a school record with 246 yards rushing in a 37-19 victory over Hilton Head.

Two weeks ago, Enos touched the ball 17 times in a 19-play game-deciding drive, scoring on a 1-yard run with 4:18 left in the game to lead Cane Bay to a 19-15 victory over Berkeley. He finished with 147 yards and two TDs on 37 rushes.

Last week, he was just as impressive as Cane Bay won its eighth game, a school record, with a 42-6 decision over Wilson.

Enos rushed for 245 yards and three scores on 34 carries.

"It's great to have a school record, but I want to win," Enos said. "Winning a game is something the entire team can celebrate."

Follow Phil Bowman on twitter: @pandcphil.

Load-Date: November 11, 2011

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Croghan's maturity fuels Bishop England; BE facing Silver Bluff in semis

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

November 25, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C3

Length: 544 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Bishop England senior quarterback Danny Croghan and his classmates suffered some bumps and bruises in their first two years on the varsity team. The Bishops went 4-7 when they were sophomores and 5-6 last year when Croghan missed the final four games of the season with a injury.

But now, it's the opponents who are black and blue as Croghan and his teammates have developed into winners. The Bishops are 12-1 heading into today's Division II-AA Lower State championship game against

Silver Bluff and Croghan has had a key role in the Bishops'

success.

The 6-4, 220-pound quarterback is physical, mobile and has a strong arm. He's a threat on the ground and in the air. He's second on the team with 478 yards rushing and nine touchdowns. He's completed 64 percent of his passes for 1,541 yards and 20 touchdowns.

He also scores well in the intangibles category.

"This year he's more mature," said coach John Cantey, whose team hosts Silver Bluff at 7:30 p.m. at Jack Cantey Stadium. "He's developed into a leader, and you have to have that quality in a quarterback if you are going to be successful. Your quarterback has to have that confidence and must possess the ability to lead others. Danny does, and not only that, he does a great job of directing the offense. He can run the football for the tough yards. He's so physical he can get those extra two yards by just falling forward. And, he can throw the football. He can make the passes in all situations."

Croghan's statistics aren't among the best in the state. But all he's worried about is winning, and the Bishops have done just that. They lost to West Ashley 14-12 in the season opener. The loss to the Wildcats came down to the last play of the game, when Croghan's pass bounced off the hands of a receiver. Other than that, it's been a season to remember. The Bishops reached double digits in the win column for the first time since 1977 and are aiming for their first appearance in a state championship game since 1976, when they lost to Byrnes by a 34-0 decision.

"When we were freshmen, the team went 9-3," Croghan said. "That was coach Cantey's first year. Our sophomore season, a lot of us played but we were bad. But we didn't quit. We didn't give up. It gave us some much-valuable experience. This year, it's been crazy. We're really playing together. It's been a great experience and we just want to continue winning."

Croghan has had a key role in some of the Bishops' biggest wins this fall.

Croghan threw for three touchdowns and ran for two more to lead Bishop England to a 49-35 victory over Hanahan. It was the Bishops' first win against Hanahan since 1995.

In the team's signature win, a 17-3 decision over Timberland, Croghan threw for 120 yards and one touchdown, and added 78 rushing yards and

another score as the Bishops won their first conference title since 1988.

It's performances like that made Croghan stand out when it came time for Jeff Cruce and his South coaching squad to make the picks for the annual North-South all-star game.

"I was sort of surprised because I don't have the numbers other quarterback have," Croghan said. "The one thing I focused on this year was the team. I think a lot of people underestimated us," Croghan said. "We're playing at a good level. I hope it continues."

Load-Date: November 25, 2011

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Hilton 'one of the best'; West Ashley High defender gearing up for all-star game

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

December 9, 2011 Friday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C1

Length: 568 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Eric Hilton certainly knows how to mix business with pleasure.

The West Ashley defensive lineman is in Myrtle Beach to participate in

Saturday's SCADA North-South

All-Star Game, and he's having a grand time. There are intense practices that keep him busy during the day. But the nightlife is a little more conducive to relaxation, and Hilton has spent some of his free time at the bowling alley and in the hot tub at the hotel.

The opposing player who lines up across from Hilton might be in a

different type of hot water Saturday.

Hilton, a 6-3, 270-pound senior, has been almost unblockable and has recorded 101 tackles this season, including 66 solo stops and 29 1/2 tackles for loss. He's strong and quick off the ball. Just ask some of the opposing coaches. He had 18 tackles against Division II-AAAA state champion Goose Creek, and 10 against Division I-AAAA state runner-up Gaffney. He played his best against the top teams in the area. He had 13 tackles against Summerville and 15 against Stratford, including seven for loss.

"Their No. 97 (Hilton) made it tough on us," Stratford coach Ray Stackley said after his team beat the Wildcats, 17-7. "He is one of the best players in the area."

Turns out he was one of the best players in the state. Hilton's coach, Bobby Marion, nominated Hilton to play in the Shrine Bowl of the

Carolinas, which pits the top seniors from South Carolina against their counterparts from North Carolina. But the South Carolina coaches passed on Hilton, so he will play in Saturday's game, which is slated for noon at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium.

"I don't know what (the Shrine Bowl coaches) were looking for, but he's

definitely one of the best players in the state," Marion said. "He played tackle and at nose guard, basically wherever we needed him."

Hilton said the talent level is higher than he expected.

"There are a lot of good players up here. It's more intense and everyone is working hard. I have to work harder is I want to be in the starting lineup."

Hilton, who also played a little on the offensive line, helped the Wildcats to their first regular season winning record since the school opened in 2000.

"Coach Marion pushed me hard," Hilton said. I tried to be a leader and help influence the underclassmen. I helped out team to its first winning record, but I didn't do it myself. We had a lot of players step up."

Hilton has been in contact with the University of South Carolina, The Citadel, Newberry and a couple of junior colleges in Kansas. A strong effort Saturday will make his stock go up.

"I have to play hard. I have to step up my game," Hilton said. "I have to be better than my opponent."

Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce is the head coach of the South team and has 19 players from the Lowcountry on his rosters.

The other 18 players include: Danny Croghan Bishop, England; Devron Glenn, Fort Dorchester, Seamus McKinney, Ashley Ridge; Kyle Clark, Beaufort; Anthony Enos, Cane Bay, Shane Britt, Woodland; Hunter Shepherd, Berkeley; Devin Brown, James Island, Lee Mayes, Timberland; Raemond Robinson, Goose Creek, Michael Sulka Bluffton, James Middleton, Timberland; Steven Sawyer, Berkeley; Lee Cromedy Georgetown; Matt Steffensen, Goose Creek; Eric Mikel Dickerson, Stratford; Jarrid Govia, Summerville and Tyler Stasky, Wando.

The North won last year's game, 26-6, and leads the

series, 36-25-2.

Follow Phil Bowman on Twitter: @pandcphil.

Reach him at pbowman@

postandcourier.com

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North continues dominance over South in All-Star Game

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

December 11, 2011 Sunday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C1

Length: 513 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

MYRTLE BEACH - It was a case of all-star game Armageddon.

The North pounded the South, 42-3, in the 63rd annual North-South All-Star Football Game on Saturday in front of about 5,000 fans at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium. It was the second-most lopsided game

in the event's history. The South's 46-0 victory in 1950 was the most decisive game, but Saturday's result wasn't that far behind. The officials used a running clock in the fourth quarter to ease the South's pain.

The North dominated the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball and outgained the South 303-108 in total yardage, limiting the South to 21 yards on the ground on 32

carries. The North forced seven turnovers, including five interceptions, to record its seventh straight victory and ninth in the last 10 games.

The South's offensive effort was so anemic that Brookland-Cayce kicker Caleb Kelly was named the South's offensive MVP. His 39-yard field goal accounted for the South's only points.

Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce, who led the South squad, said his team's offensive woes could be traced to earlier in the week when Bishop England quarterback Danny Croghan suffered a hamstring injury.

"We moved a kid over to quarterback that we originally picked as a defensive back. We just couldn't get it going. Up front, they dominated the line and they just put us in a bind."

East Clarendon's Carlos Hickson moved from defense to offense and threw two interceptions early in the game. A.C. Flora quarterback Stephen Cagle was 5-of-17 passing for 55 yards and threw two interceptions. Croghan, who led the Bishops to the Division II-AA state title last weekend, was 2 of 5 for 11 yards with one interception.

Chris Robinson scored on a pair of 1-yard runs, and Jordan Hallums caught two TD passes to lead the North. Robinson, a running back from Seneca High School, finished with 75 yards on 13 carries to earn the North offensive MVP award.

Hallums, a receiver from Mauldin, caught touchdown passes of 18 and 22 yards.

Greer quarterback Reese Hannon completed 5 of 11 for 55 yards and two scores, while Strom Thurmond's Raleigh Yeldell passed for 103 yards and another score.

Daniel lineman Shaquille Lawson was the North's defensive MVP. He logged five tackles and had 2 1/2 tackles for a loss,

including two sacks. Myrtle Beach defensive end Tyler Knox was the South's defensive MVP. He was credited with 10 tackles, including 2 1/2 for a loss.

Goose Creek linebacker Raemond Robinson had four tackles, including three for a loss. He had two sacks. James Island defensive back Devin Brown had five tackles and broke up two passes. Woodland linebacker Shane Britt was in on four tackles.

South 0 3 0 0- 3

North 16 17 9 0-42

NORTH - Chris Robinson 1 run (Hunter Townes kick)

NORTH - Jordan Hallums 18 pass from Raleigh Yeldell (Hunter Townes kick)

NORTH - Jaquille Oden safety

NORTH - Jordan Hallums 22 pass from Reese Hannon (Hunter Townes kick)

NORTH - Hunter Townes 27 FG

SOUTH - Caleb Kelly 39 FG

NORTH - Bryton Griffin 9 pass from Reese Hannon (Hunter Townes kick)

NORTH - Hunter Townes 43 FG

NORTH - Chris Robinson 1 run (kick failed)

Load-Date: December 12, 2011

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APP. 0652

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-weight-training-program-available-for-all-athletes/article_9d4248b5-5cb7-5484-ade5-a20da58f2b84.html

Stags weight training program available for all athletes

Dan Brown Jan 16, 2012

Pictured are (front row) Devin Butler, Donni Robinson, Ezekiel Jenkins, (second row) Dylan Baker, Omaine Thomas, Garrett Gallagher, Alex King, TJ Griffin, Camille Pearce, Peyton Pinson, Alonzo McGill, and Patrick Miller.

Buy Now

For the longest time the Berkeley Stags weight room was more or less a football-only enterprise, right down to the golden helmet decals adorning the weight racks.

BHS Athletic Director Jeff Cruce wants to dispel the notion that the weight room is a football player or guys-only environment. The weights are open for all Berkeley Stags athletes regardless of sport or gender, and all athletes are encouraged to take part.

"It helps promote a healthier lifestyle, for one," Cruce said. "Plus, it benefits all athletes and all sports and as both football coach and athletic director, it's important for all our kids who participate in athletics to undertake a consistent off-season weight training regimen."

Cruce has embarked on an aggressive public awareness campaign within the school and the Berkeley Stags community to promote a consistent off-season weight-training program, even at the middle school level.

"The middle school weight room is really nice and we have a daily program available there for any interested Stags athlete," he said.

"We have upgraded both weight rooms. We're upgrading and improving the number and quality of our free weights and implementing a program in which all our athletes can participate."

Cruce said the Stags have 15 total varsity sports ranging from football, baseball, basketball and softball, to boys and girls track, soccer, tennis and golf.

"This weight room isn't just for football players, but as the football coach I understand the benefit of the guys hitting the weights during the off-season," he said. "But I'm also athletic director and I have a whole slate of other varsity sports for both boys and girls where they can benefit and improve through a quality weight training program."

When Cruce came to Berkeley in the spring of 2011 one of the first comments he made upon accepting the coach and AD position was to say teams and athletes are made in the weight room.

"I have always been a weight room kind of guy," he said.

Stags fans will see a photograph of Stags athletes of both genders and all sports gathered in the weight room. The caption underneath will say, "Where are you?"

It's a call out to Stags athletes to start getting in shape.

"It's the only way you improve," Cruce said. "It's the only way you get better."

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/bhs-hall-of-fame-accepting-nominations/article_15140373-6116-5d58-a8aa-f1762e89922b.html

BHS Hall of Fame accepting nominations

Dan Brown Jan 23, 2012

Recent graduate LeAnna Morrison would be eligible for induction in the Berkeley High School Hall of Fame in 2016.

Buy Now

The Berkeley High School Athletics Hall of Fame is accepting nominations for its inaugural 2012 class.

The development of the Stags Athletics Hall of Fame has been one of Athletic Director Jeff Cruce's focal points since coming to Berkeley last spring.

"For a school of Berkeley's stature with their longstanding tradition, they need a sports hall of fame," Cruce said. "Getting this off the ground in 2012 is one of our major goals of the year."

According to Cruce, eligible nominees can be anyone who has made a significant and longstanding contribution to Stags' athletics over the years, from administrators to booster club members, PA announcers, chain gang volunteers and other longtime volunteers.

"Eligible athletes would be those outstanding on the field in multiple sports or excelling in a singular sport to go on to play at the collegiate or even professional level," Cruce said.

To be eligible for consideration an athlete would have to have been graduated at least five years and excelled at his or her respective sport.

"It's not just about athletic ability, but also performance in the classroom," Cruce said. "Hall of fame nominees should be a complete representation of the Berkeley student athlete."

Cruce added that nominees will be selected from all eras of Berkeley athletics and divided up by decade dating back to the 1950s.

Given the lack of credible records prior to 1950, any nominee from beyond 1950 will be classified in a Legends category.

"Berkeley High School has been around since the 1920's," Cruce said. "All eras of Stags athletics should be recognized."

Cruce is also accepting applicants for the BHS Hall of Fame Nomination Committee. Interested individuals, or those with valid nominations for the inaugural class are invited to call the athletic department at (843) 899-8005, or submit the nomination via email at jeffcruce@berkeley.k12.sc.us.

Class AAA votes to form two divisions

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

February 15, 2012 Wednesday, Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. C1

Length: 588 words

Byline: PHILIP M. BOWMAN, pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

Football coaches at Class AAA schools will vote today on whether the South Carolina High School League should form two playoff divisions and crown two state champions in the second largest classification in the Palmetto State.

The proposal needs two-thirds majority, and many observers say there is support for the move, which would mean the high school league would have eight football state champions in four classifications.

Coaches in Region 7-AAA voted 4-2 against the proposal in an unofficial poll. One of those coaches, Berkeley's Jeff Cruce, said having eight state champions would lessen the impact of winning a state title in South Carolina, which had only 199 schools with football teams last fall, according to the National Federation of High Schools. In comparison, Florida had 494 schools playing football with eight state championships. If the proposal passes, one out of every 25 teams in the Palmetto State will be a state champion. The ratio in Florida is one out of every 62 teams. In North Carolina it is one in 46, while it's one in 71 in Georgia, which expands to six classes in 2012.

This past fall, two teams from the same region - Bishop England and Timberland - were crowned Division II-AA and I-AA state champs, respectively.

"I played high school football in Florida, and at the time there were only six teams that won state championships," Cruce said. "I can see having two division in Class AAAA because of the size of the biggest schools. You have some schools with more than 3,000 students competing against schools that have 1,400 students. That's a big difference. But in Class AAA, there's not as big of a discrepancy. The biggest AAA school has about 1,400 students, and the smallest has about 900."

Bryant, Palmer picked

Goose Creek's N'Dea Bryant and Timberland's Darryl Palmer were selected to play for South Carolina in the Clash of the Carolinas, high school all-star basketball games to be played March 17 at Socastee High School.

Bryant, who has signed to play for the University of North Carolina, is averaging 11 points, 8 rebounds and 4 steals per game for the Gators.

Palmer has signed to play for South Carolina State.

Smalls honored

Class AAA votes to form two divisions

Baptist Hill's Brittany Smalls is the Region 6-A girls basketball player of the year.

The senior averaged 14 points, 4 rebounds, 4 steals, and 3 assists per game for the Bobcats, who finished the regular season with a 16-1 record, including 11-1 in conference play.

Calvin Davis of Cross and Cesurian Champagne of Baptist Hill High School shared coach of the year honors.

Baptist Hill's All-Region selections are Smalls, Shalandria Middleton, Dashona Magwood and Candace Hutchinson.

Burke's selections are Shawana McNeil, Latasha Jones and Bria Brown.

Rounding out the team are Shanetta Sabb and Allie Walker of Charleston Charter; Shanyra Lisbon of Cross, Kerrigan Simmons of St. John's, Lanesha Failey of Military Magnet and Amy Smith of Lincoln.

Wiand signs

Fort Dorchester baseball player Tyler Wiand signed to play for Florence-Darlington Technical College.

Wiand, a 6-1, 180-pound pitcher/catcher, is a three-year starter who batted .413 as a junior and ranked in the top 5 in Region 8 AAAA in batting average, hits, doubles, innings pitched and strikeouts.

Follow Phil Bowman on Twitter: @pandcphil.

Here's how South Carolina compares to neighboring states in number of high school league football teams and number of state champions.

State Schools Champions Ratio

South Carolina 199 8* 1:25

North Carolina 370 8 1:46

Florida 494 8 1:62

Georgia 425 6 1:71

*Proposed

Load-Date: February 15, 2012

End of Document

Stags making summer progress

Dan Brown Jul 1, 2012

The countdown clock marks less than 30 days until the start of the Berkeley Stags' preseason football practice for the 2012 season.

Kickoff is just 24 days after that against Stratford, and while great progress has been made so far this summer, there's still a lot of work yet to be completed.

"The summer has been very good for us and we're very proud of the effort the kids put forth," said BHS coach Jeff Cruce. "We went to Byrnes and played in the national passing league and played in the passing league over at Fort Dorchester. We have two more passing camps to go before we start practice."

Cruce added that his biggest objective this summer was to find players to step up and be team leaders.

"The kids have done a great job and continue to get stronger and faster but the main focus was to develop leaders, and I think we've done that by taking the kids off somewhere to compete at a higher level," he said.

The Stags finished the 2011 season with a 4-7 record and have worked hard during the offseason to put last year behind them. "We're excited about the kids playing hard and continuing to improve, and we're very proud about their attention to detail. They have made great progress this summer as opposed to last season."

The one issue Cruce has yet to resolve is the logjam at quarterback with Matt Harkness, Connor Teague and Josh Fiddie competing for the starting job. All three have shown excellent work ethic over the spring and summer but no clear frontrunner has emerged.

"We really want to solidify our quarterback position," he said. "All three are getting better every day but there hasn't been any separation yet. All three of these guys have the ability but it's just about one of them separating themselves from the other two."

Cruce has made some adjustments on defense, moving last year's linebackers Brandon Williams and Josh Simmons to the safety position and former lineman Alonzo McGill to the outside linebacker slot.

"Williams coming back has really been a big help," said Cruce, adding that his defensive line is solid with Cyrus Pinckney and Jejuan Jefferson providing size and speed.

And speaking of size, the Stags will field an offensive line that averages a shade over 300 pounds.

"This is the largest offensive line we've ever had of teams I've ever coached," Cruce said. "Do the math; I have linemen at 340, 320, 295, and 270 pounds, and a 240-pound tight end."

Cruce said the Stags' biggest surprise of the spring and summer is the emergence of Ezekiel Jenkins as the next big time Berkeley running back: "Ezekiel Jenkins has the ability to be a game changer. He's strong, fast, and he's durable. He had a great spring and he runs hard."

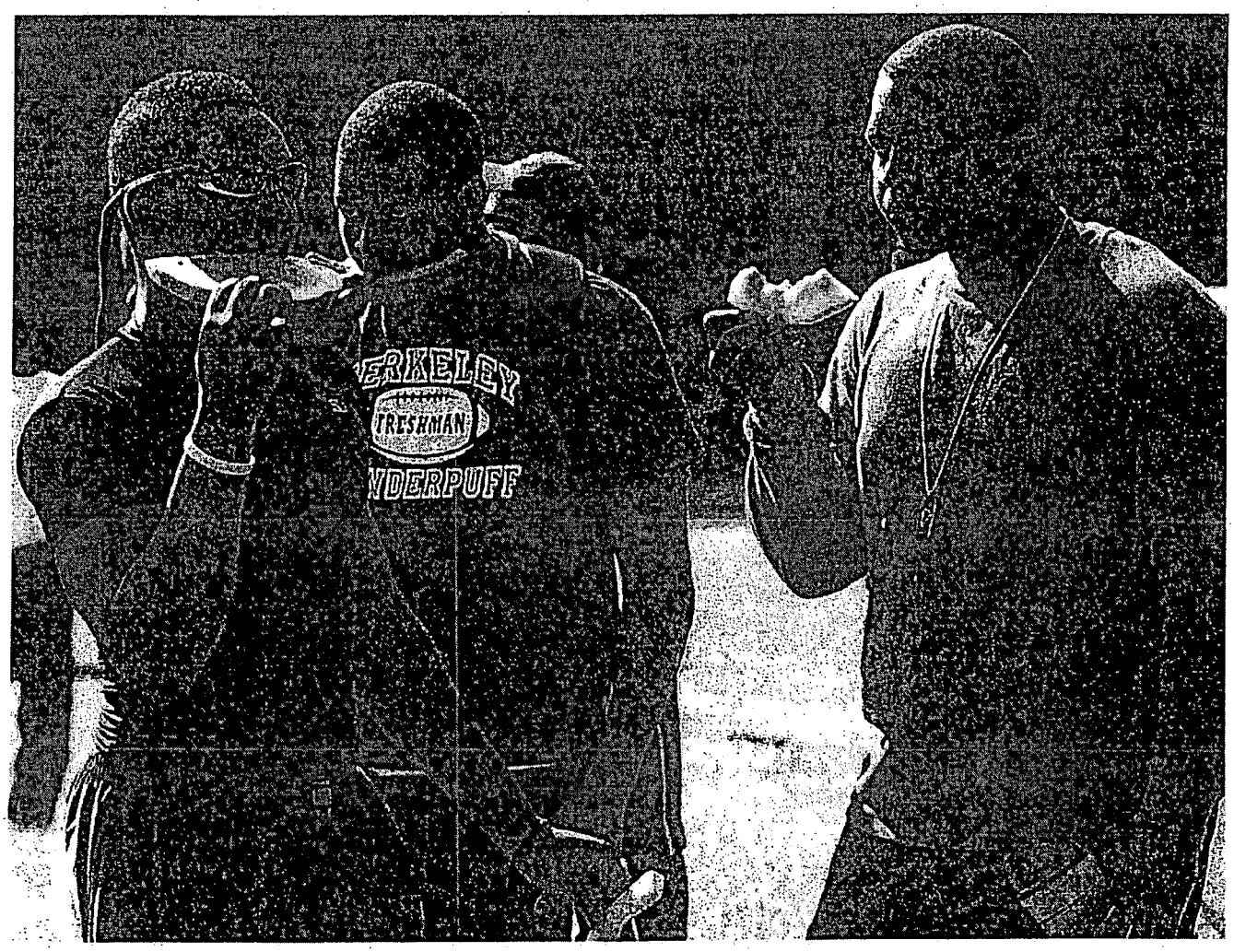
The Stags open against Stratford on Aug. 24, which will include the induction of the inaugural Berkeley Athletics Hall of Fame class during pre-game ceremonies. "We don't have to worry about Stratford or anyone else on our schedule," Cruce said. "We have to take care of business ourselves and play our game."

The Hall of Fame weekend kicks off with a banquet on Thursday night honoring the 15 inductees. The Hall of Fame banquet will be held in the cafeteria. Tickets are $10 each and can be purchased by calling the Berkeley athletics office at 899-8805.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/church-helps-stags-beat-the-heat/article_ca879494-388b-578b-b092-6d6c732aad56.html

Church helps Stags beat the heat

Dan Brown Jul 1, 2012



Trinity Episcopal Church has provided watermelon for the BHS football team for the past two years.

With temperatures expecting to hit triple digits by week's end, a local church stepped in and helped the Berkeley Stags football team beat the summer heat.

Trinity Episcopal Church in Pinopolis treated BHS football players to some watermelon following their Thursday morning workout.

Church members felt it was the least they could do for these kids who have given up their summers to get ready for the coming football season.

"They're up early and out here late during their summer vacations, and we just want to show them the community cares about what they're doing and appreciates their hard effort," said Carol Morrison, a Trinity church member and one of the organizers of the watermelon breakfast.

This is the second year the church has treated the football team to watermelon during summer workouts.

"This is a really nice treat they give the kids," said assistant coach Landy Cox.

With a heat wave expected to stagger the Lowcountry into the week of July 4, the football team has altered its schedule accordingly and had already planned to take the week off.

"We'll come back after the Fourth and participate in a couple more passing leagues and then the season's here," said head coach Jeff Cruce.

The Stags are scheduled to participate in the Berkeley County Jamboree and Sertoma Classic in August, with the 2012 season kicking off Aug

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/finding-mudville-talking-sports/article_e9dd25a7-fd37-56dd-984a-9651e97711e0.html

Finding Mudville: Talking Sports

Dan Brown Aug 5, 2012

• High school football practice started this week and the first scrimmages around this part of the county kicked off last Friday. The 2012 season begins two weeks from this Friday for Cross and Timberland, and on Aug. 24 for Berkeley.

There is no more waiting. Football season isn't coming, it's here.

Timberland, Goose Creek and Bishop England will all defend their 2011 state championships and what's to say they won't repeat?

Timberland and Goose Creek have reloaded. They look tough. They look big.

Then there's Berkeley. Head coach Jeff Cruce has been touting his young talent ever since he replaced longtime coach Jerry Brown in May of 2011. The only problem the Stags had in 2011's 4-7 season is that they were all young – just sophomores mostly.

They're juniors and seniors now, a year older, a year stronger, a year more experienced, and a year bigger. "In my 25 years of coaching this is the most talented team I've ever had," Cruce said.

Those are big words to back up, but watch a practice. Better yet, watch a scrimmage. At least stand next to them.

I'm over six feet tall and I feel like the small guy in this crowd.

• The Major League Baseball trading deadline has passed and the Philadelphia Phillies are officially given up for dead. They have traded almost everybody, and are paying too much for what they have left. Philadelphia will pay more than $80 million in salary to just four players next year.

Shane Victorino is gone. So is Hunter Pence. Jimmy Rollins won't be far behind. Chase Utley and Ryan Howard aren't the same players as they used to be.

Gone is that obnoxious Phillies' swagger. Good.

The standings in the NL East have been turned upside down. The Washington Nationals have led the division except for a day or two in early April. The Nats have the pitching, the sticks, and Jayson Werth is set to come off the DL.

In the second year of a big time contract, Werth had to see the writing on the wall when he decided to bolt the five-time divisional winners and former World Champs for the Nats who have already won more games this year (60 as of Aug. 1) than they did in either 2008 or 2009 (59 wins).

It's still nice to see the Phillies dismantled, though. I rank Phillies fans just behind Red Sox and Mets fans as people upon whose houses I'd wish a pox.

• Lastly, the NBC Olympics. I love this.

NBC tape-delayed the gold medal race of 17-year Missy Franklin in the 100-meter backstroke for its primetime audience. Then, just six minutes before airing the race, NBC ran a promo for The Today Show, which led off with, "When you're 17 years old and win your first gold medal, there's nobody you'd rather share it with. We're there when Missy Franklin and her parents reunite."

NBC ran a promo of a story on Franklin about winning her gold medal before they aired her actually winning her gold medal.

This is why I watch.

No Headline In Original

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 11, 2012 Saturday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 27

Length: 199 words

Body

2011 RECORD: 4-7, 3-2

RETURNING STARTERS: 15

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Matt Harkness, OL John Bellamy, DL Cyrus Pinckney, DL Jewuan Jefferson, RB Ezekiel Jenkins, RB Josh Sellers, DB Branden Williams

THE SKINNY: Berkeley is coming off its first losing season in 19 years. Coach Jeff Cruce has a young team that is still loaded with talent. The Stags are considered by many as the team to beat in Region 8-AAA. Defensive back Branden Williams is the son of former Berkeley star Rusty Williams.

WHAT THE COACH SAYS: "The expectations at Berkeley High and in Moncks Corner are extremely high It's a unique place to coach. It's a fun place to coach." - Jeff CrucePLAYER

No. 7 Roderick McCraySCHOOL: Timberland

POSITION: Running back

YEAR: Senior

2011 STATISTICS: McCray carried 54 times for 447 yards and four touchdowns. He averaged 8.4 yards per carry.

THE SKINNY: McCray came on strong in the second half with most of his yardage in the final five games of the season. His emergence allowed Adam June to move to defense full time and help the Wolves win the Division I-AA state title.

WHAT THE COACH SAYS: "The thing that makes him so special is his versatility. He can play just about any position." - Art Craig

Load-Date: August 11, 2012

End of Document

Berkeley has experience to win 8-AAA

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 16, 2012 Thursday

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Section: 30,ZD; Pg. 15

Length: 1077 words

Byline: pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

The football fans in Moncks Corner tend to get a little antsy when Berkeley is trailing at halftime.

So imagine what it was like last fall when the Stags suffered through their first losing season in 19 years, posting a 4-7 record under first-year coach Jeff Cruce.

The Stags were young with sophomores dominating the starting lineup.

They made mistakes and paid their dues, and this year look like a team ready to contend for the Region 8-AAA title.

"The expectations at Berkeley High and in Moncks Corner are extremely high," Cruce said. "There is a lot of pressure on the kids and coaches. It's a unique place to coach. It's a fun place to coach."

The Stags seem to have all the pieces in place to return to their winning ways. They have 15 starters back, including nine on offense. Cruce says he has the best group of running backs in his 25 years as coach.

But the Stags have to earn the title, and newcomers Hanahan and James Island present some big obstacles.

Hanahan moves up from Class AA and has an impressive roster. James Island moves down from Class AAAA and should benefit from playing schools its size.

Those aren't the only transitions. Stall moves in from Class AA while Orangeburg-Wilkinson aligns with the Charleston area schools.

The only holdover other than Berkeley is Hilton Head.

Berkeley Stags

2011: 4-7, 3-2

Coach: Jeff Cruce (second year)

Returning starters: 15 (9 offense, 6 defense)

Key players: QB Matt Harkness, OL John Bellamy DL Cyrus Pinckney, DL Jewuan Jefferson, RB Ezekiel Jenkins, RB Josh Sellers, DB Branden Williams.

Outlook: Berkeley is coming off its first losing season in 19 years. "We had a great summer and the kids have worked hard. They know it is time to take the next step forward. They know 4-7 is not acceptable in Moncks Corner," Cruce said.

Notes: Defensive back Branden Williams is the son of former Berkeley star Rusty Williams. Cruce enters the season with a 137-98 record.

Hanahan Hawks

2011: 7-5, 5-0

Coach: Charlie Patterson (fourth season)

Returning starters: 16 (10 offense, 6 defense)

Key players: QB Anthony Smalls, WR Mario Gates, RB Octavius Hayes, OL Rodger Flathman, LP Lyndon Young.

Outlook: The Hawks won two straight region championships but now begin life in Class AAA. The Hawks play a Class A team and four Class AA teams to begin the season, but it won't be easy with state champions Bishop England and Timberland back to back. Smalls developed into one of the top quarterbacks in the area last fall with 2,178 yards and 23 touchdowns passing. The offense averaged 38 points a game.

Notes: Patterson said his team is ready for tougher competition this fall. "We know that from the top to bottom, we have to be ready every time we step on the field. The main key is that we have to stay healthy. But we're ready for the challenge."

The Hawks must avoid a slow start. They lost the first four games of the season last fall, but rallied for seven straight victories.

James Island Trojans

2011: 4-7, 0-4

Returning starters: 11 (5 offense, 6 defense)

Coach: Randy Hilyer (second year)

Key players: LB Justin Stanley, QB Ty Stubbs, RB Cornell Stanley, OL Dalton Reindollar, OL Chris Flynn, DL Henry Edwards, DL Derrontae Holmes.

Outlook: Hilyer said the move to Class AAA is something that should have been done years ago. "We will match up better," he said. But the region is still tough. Last year, quarterback Justin Bolus broke his hand, and that sunk the offense. This year, Hilyer doesn't plan to rely on one player as much. He describes the offense for 2012 as a ball-control spread offense. Stanley is capable of 1,000 yards. He rushed for 588 yards in the regular season and averaged 5.1 yards per carry.

Notes: James Island enters the season with a five-game losing streak. The Trojans averaged only 17 points a game and were shut out three times.

Orangeburg- Wilkinson Bruins

2011: 4-7, 1-5

Coach: Tommy Brown (fifth year)

Returning starters: 14 (6 offense, 8 defense)

APP. 0667

Key players: WR/DB Jadar Johnson, WR Sam Felder, OL Harry Lewis, LB Virgil Johnson, LB Jonathan Hagood.

Outlook: Orangeburg-Wilkinson moves down to Class AAA and now seeks to end a streak of six straight years without a playoff appearance and 19 years without a conference championship. Jadar Johnson, a threat on both sides of the ball, is the best player on the roster. He's committed to play for Clemson. Brown said he's not familiar with all the teams in the region. "This is new to us," he said. "I know they have good football in the Charleston area. We look forward to the challenge."

Notes: Brown was almost replaced in the off-season by former Principal Gregory McCord, according to The Times and Democrat. McCord was reassigned. O-W lost its last four games of the season last fall, and the defense struggled, allowing 43 points per game in the slump

Hilton Head Seahawks

2011: 4-7, 2-3

Coach: B.J. Payne (First year)

Returning starters: 12 (7 on offense, 5 defense)

Key players: QB Michael Julian, RB/LB Scott D'Amico, WR/DB Adam Orischak, WR James Sanders, OL Brooks Jenkins, DL Raylon Ford, S Jeremey Hardon.

Outlook: After back-to-back 4-7 years, Payne says his biggest chore is changing the culture of the program. The offense and defense will be retooled with a fast-pace attack and a 4-2-5 on defense. "Fortunately, our seniors are quick learners," Payne said. Julian is the No. 1 quarterback in the state for the Class of 2013, accord- ing to Rivals. He is 6-5 and weighs 195.

Notes: Payne was the head coach in Lexington, Ohio, for six years before taking the Hil- ton Head job. There are 60 play-ers on the roster for the season, which is an increase from last year. One of the biggest chores is shoring up the defense, which allowed 35.7 points per game last fall.

Stall Warriors

2011: 6-4, 3-2

Coach: Johnny Boykin (second season)

Returning starters: 14 (7 offense, 7 defense)

Key players: QB/WR Jordan Carswell, OL Deauntre Dupree, RB Shaquille Moultrie, DL Rakim Gregory, LB Joel Galdin, CB A.J. James.

Outlook: Boykin's team won two more games than they did in 2010, and the momentum must be kept in motion now that the Warriors are back in Class AAA. The team is still young with many sophomores who saw a lot of action last season. The line could use a little more experience and size.

Notes: Stall played two teams last year that are in Region 8-AAA this year. The Warriors lost to Hanahan 57-6 and dropped a 42-10 decision to James Island. "It's going to be a challenge," Boykin said. "We have an op- portunity to make a little noise."

Load-Date: November 28, 2012

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Stags take on Knights in season opener

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 24, 2012 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 25

Length: 380 words

Byline: ANDREW MILLER

apmiller@postandcourier.com

Body

A year ago, the Berkeley Stags were forced to start 13 sophomores in Jeff Cruce's first season as head coach.

The Stags struggled through the growing pains of a young team when they went 4-7 - their first losing season in almost two decades.

But the Stags are a year older, a year bigger, a year stronger and a year wiser. Cruce is hoping that another year of maturity will mean more success on the football field.

The Stags will face Berkeley County rival Stratford tonight in the season opener for both schools in Moncks Corner.

Cruce said another year in the weight room should start paying dividends on the field this season.

"This group has worked very hard in the weight room since the season ended," He said. "We're not used to losing around here and the kids didn't like it. They really dedicated themselves in the offseason. I'm excited about this group. We just need a little success and I think we'll get on a little bit of a roll."

Berkeley will rely on a talented group of young running backs, including Joshua Sellers and Asanti Dantzler. While there might not be an Andre Ellington (Clemson), Rusty Williams (Auburn) or a Bruce Ellington (South Carolina) in the bunch, this might the deepest group of running backs for the Stags have had in a while.

"We've got a lot of talented skill guys, especially in the backfield," Cruce said. "These guys have the ability to make some plays and put some points up on the board quickly."

Getting that early success won't be easy against the Knights, which returned to prominence with a 9-4 record last fall.

Quarterback Jacob Parks, who is widely considered to be the best junior prospect in the state, threw for 1,200 yards and 12 touchdowns as a sophomore.

"He's scary on film," Cruce said. "He's going to get his yards and make his throws. We've got to try and limit his big plays."

The 6-4, 210-pound Park is already being courted by the likes of Auburn, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Notre Dame, South Carolina and Clemson.

"Jacob is as talented a quarterback as we've ever had around here," said Stratford coach Ray Stackley. "We want to be a more balanced team offensively. I think we've got more weapons in our passing game than we did a year ago. Chris White was our leading receiver a year ago and he's looked good in the preseason."

Load-Date: February 19, 2013

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Footballalways matters here; Friday Night tradition still magical around Lowcountry

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 24, 2012 Friday

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Section: 01,A; Pg. 1

Length: 426 words

Body

How important is high school football in the Lowcountry?

Berkeley High head coach Jeff Cruce knows what it means in Moncks Corner.

Last season, Cruce's first at Berkeley, the Stags went 4-7. It was Berkeley's first losing season in 19 years, and Cruce heard about it everywhere he went.

"I have the emails to prove it," said Cruce, whose team plays host to Stratford at 7:30 tonight, one of many big season-opening games in the area. "They want me to know they support me. They also want me to know what happened last season is unacceptable. I understand."

Football might not be a religion in Moncks Corner, but it is a common bond.

"High School football still matters," Cruce said. "High school football is about the community. High school football is the community. The community thrives off it. It's the one thing that links them."

Berkeley County is one of the most fertile football hotbeds in the state with scores of players going on to college and the NFL.

Summerville is another community where football will always matter. The stadium and its field, lined with live oaks and named after football coach John McKissick, might be the epitome of high school football in the South.

Perry Cuda was a high school All-American in 1981 for the Green Wave and remembers how the town rallied around the football team.

"When I played, stores would shut down at 6 o'clock and people tailgated before the games," Cuda said. "Stores would open early Saturday so people could have a place to gather and talk about the game. It was magical. The whole community came together."

The stores no longer close early, but the streets are blocked on Friday nights as the Summerville team's motorcade, complete with police escort, makes its way from the high school to McKissick Field.

Goose Creek coach Chuck Reedy said a high school football team can bring a community together.

He's witnessed it at Goose Creek. When he arrived at the school in 2002, the football program was in disarray and community support was dwindling.

But the Gators have become one of the top teams in the state and won the Division II-AAAA state title last season.

Now, Gator pride is everywhere in Goose Creek. The home side of the football stadium has been expanded by 1,600 seats and the bleachers are usually full by the time the Gators begin their pregame drills.

"Everywhere I go, people stop me and say how proud they are of the Goose Creek football team," Reedy said. "But what we want them to know is we are proud of our Goose Creek community."

Reach Philip M. Bowman at 937-5592 and @pandcphil on Twitter.

Load-Date: February 19, 2013

End of Document

Old rivals meet again Summerville, Berkeley each looking to avoid 0-2 start

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 31, 2012 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 25

Length: 429 words

Byline: pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

The Summerville football team can make history tonight, but it's history the Green Wave would like to avoid.

Summerville has never started a season with an 0-2 record in coach John McKissick's 61 years as coach. The Green Wave lost a 10-3 decision to Cane Bay in the season opener and faces a tough test against Berkeley in a 7:30 p.m. showdown at McKissick Field.

It's rare for the Green Wave to have a slow start. The 1957 team tied James Island in the opener and then lost the next two games. The next year, the Green Wave started with two ties and lost the third game of the season. In 1965, Summerville lost the season opener, tied St. Andrews the next week and lost to Georgetown to start 0-2-1. Other than that, Summerville starts have been fast.

Berkeley also lost its season opener, a 21-0 decision to Stratford. It marked the Stags' eighth loss in their last 12 game heading into today's game, which is one of the longest and most intense rivalries in the state.

"I think you have two teams that are struggling," Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce said. "Both teams had their chances last week, but turnovers killed them. Both teams need a win. It's going to be interesting to see what happens."

Summerville outgained Cane Bay, 264 to 240 yards, but three fumbles and an interception decided the contest.

"We had a first down and fumbled the dang football on the 1-foot line," McKissick said. "And we fumbled it on the 3-yard line. We had too many turnovers and penalties. On offense, our left tackle, right guard, tight end and fullback are our only returning starters. We're just as young on defense. We're what you call a green Green Wave."

Berkeley was 4-7 last year, its first losing record in 19 years. The team was young with numerous sophomores in the starting lineup.

Last year, Parker Cleveland kicked two field goals and Dalton Saunders threw a 65-yard touchdown pass as Summerville broke open a scoreless battle for a 13-0 victory over Berkeley.

The Stags, who last week wore gold jerseys for the first time in a decade, were blanked by the Knights for the second straight year. Down 14-0 in the third quarter, Berkeley moved the ball to the Stratford 11, but a pair of sacks and a fumble pushed the Stags back to the 29-yard line where they turned the ball over on downs.

"Mistakes killed us," Cruce said. "No one stopped us. We stopped ourselves, especially inside the 20s I've never had a situation like this in all my days as a coach. We worked hard to correct our mistakes. It should be a good game. It should be a fun game."

Follow Philip M. Bowman on Twitter:@pandcphil.

Load-Date: February 19, 2013

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http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-drowned-by-green-wave/article_1d5f9e1e-2e4f-5b19-811f-ac80510db405.html

Stags drowned by Green Wave 36-12

Dan Brown Sep 4, 2012

In the end, Summerville defeated Berkeley 36-12 last week - but the Stag football team's concerns are much deeper than a loss to their oldest rival.

Negative yardage in the first half ... 106 yards for the game with two touchdowns scored against Summerville's second string ... losing to go 0-2 for 2012 ... dropping eight of the last 12 games ... being outscored 56-12 by opponents ... this is not what Berkeley Head Coach Jeff Cruce expected out of his team's season thus far.

"There were just too many mistakes," Cruce said after the loss at Summerville. "It's very disappointing. I apologize to the Berkeley fans.

"This isn't good football. The good news is that we scored. But that was because of (Green Wave Head Coach John) McKissick's gracious heart."

Something's not working, and disgruntled fans and players are starting to point fingers.

Cruce had said coming off Week 1 that both Berkeley and Summerville were struggling football teams and that he expected one of the two teams to step it up and grab a much needed win.

The Stags aren't just struggling they're dead in the water.

If there was a way to play a worse football game than what Berkeley put up in Week 1's 21-0 loss to Stratford, they found a way against Summerville. The game got ugly fast.

The first quarter hadn't ended and Berkeley players were already searching for answers along the soggy sidelines. Summerville scored on its first possession and Berkeley's second.

Davon Anderson capped off an opening kickoff drive by plowing untouched from two yards out. Then following a mishandled snap by Stags quarterback Matt Harkness that put Berkeley's backs against the goal posts, Harkness was sacked in the end zone and just like that the score was 9-0.

The only positive note to find among the first half stats is the 25 yards gained by Ezekiel Jenkins on the Stags' opening drive. That drive stalled at midfield.

Down 9-0 with just over two minutes remaining in the first quarter, Anderson followed up a 26-yard gain by Kendall Parker to ramble home from eight yards out and the Stags are now down 16-0.

The Green Wave's Parker Cleveland added a pair of second quarter field goals from 43 and 36 yards out to put SHS up 22-0 at the half.

During half time, the Stags gathered in the end zone. More questions were asked than answers provided between players and coaches.

Summerville outgained Berkeley, 340-101, in total yardage. The Stags (0-2) had negative yardage in the first half and had most of their yardage in the final quarter after Summerville built a 36-0 lead.

Bridges threw a 28-yard touchdown pass to Kendall Parker with 5:16 left in the third quarter to make it 29-0. He completed a 48-yard screen pass to Jarod Tucker for another score with 1:47 left in the third quarter to push the lead to 36-0.

In the fourth quarter, the Stags did manage a pair of touchdowns. Capitalizing on a Summerville fumble quarterback Connor Teague put BHS on the board with a three-yard run and Josh Sellars capped the night's scored with a late touchdown run from 10 yards out.

Berkeley travels to 1-1 Cane Bay on Friday. Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/cruce-expects-tough-battle-with-wolves/article_28362f00-81ab-55d9-adc3-4a370f500924.html

Cruce expects tough battle with Wolves

Dan Brown Sep 16, 2012

Berkeley Head Coach Jeff Cruce knows he'll face a battle out of Timberland on Friday night.

"Art Craig and his coaches have done an excellent job this year," Cruce said. "His team believes in his scheme and they believe in their coaches. He has his kids playing good football."

Cruce said the Wolves' 4-0 schedule means that Craig's squad knows how to win.

"They put themselves in position to win those two games," he said. "One thing you can say about Timberland is they know how to win."

Cruce said that he feels his Stags are the best team Timberland will face so far in this 2012 season, as long as his team is playing their best football.

"We're better than Manning," he said. "We should have beaten Manning. I think we can beat Hanahan too, though they are a good football team. We have to go out there and play our best football game against Timberland. They're the defending state champs."

Despite being 0-4 Cruce believes his Stags are competitive and could surprise a lot of football fans come Friday night.

"We just need to win a game and get it behind us," he said. "And what better time to do that than against Timberland?"

Craig echoed Cruce's sentiments.

"They're hungry for a win," he said. "To come in here and get a win as they go into their region schedule would be a big boost for them. I'm as concerned about this game as any game I've played at this point."

Berkeley vs. Timberland has always been a big game around this part of the county, and this Friday night's game proves no different.

"Timberland and Berkeley has always drawn a big crowd," Craig said. "A lot of people are searching for Berkeley. They need a win. For us we want to see how we stack up going into region play.

"It's going to be fun," Craig added. "You're going to see them play hard and I want to see our kids flying around the ball."

Kickoff at Timberland is at 7:30 p.m.

Berkeley stuns Timberland, 21-20

Dan Brown Sep 20, 2012

The Berkeley Stags notched their first win of the 2012 season with a thrilling 21-20 win over Timberland Friday night.

The game – played at THS – saw the Wolves turn the ball over 10 times – six fumbles and four interceptions. The win is the first of the season for Head Coach Jeff Cruce's Berkeley squad, which improves to 1-4.

The win was as much about the Wolves' self destructing from the opening kickoff; Timberland started and ended the game throwing interceptions.

"Never has a team I've coached had this many turnovers in a game," said THS coach Art Craig. "I'm not taking anything away from Berkeley's win. They played a good, solid game. We knew this coming in, but that many turnovers? It speaks for itself."

Six fumbles and four interceptions, one returned for a touchdown.

"Christmas came a little early for us this year," Cruce said. "Our defense made the plays and helped force the turnovers. They stepped up and won the game for us. This was a big win for our program."

After trading punts on their opening possessions, Berkeley jumped out on top 7-0 when defensive back Alonzo McGill picked off a Matt Gabel pass deep in Timberland territory and returned it 15 yards for the Stags' first touchdown.

Just five ticks of the clock into the second quarter Berkeley took advantage of a pair of personal foul penalties against Timberland to move the ball inside the Wolves' 10-yard line.

Quarterback Conner Teague plunged over center for the Stags' second touchdown to make the score 14-0 going into the locker room.

In the third quarter the Wolves came to life, scoring a pair of touchdowns in the third frame to tie the score 14-14.

Timberland broke the ice with a 15-yard touchdown pass from Gabel to running back Roderick McCray. Then, following a 58-yard run to the 2-yard line, Adam June finished what he started, powering in from two-yards out to tie the score 14-14 with just 49 seconds remaining in the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter the wheels came off the Wolves wagon as turnovers and costly penalties led to the Stags' winning touchdown.

Once again a pair of personal fouls chewed up a big chunk of real estate moving the ball inside the Wolves' 10-yard line. This time Josh Sellars punched the go-ahead score in from the two-yard line to put Berkeley up 21-14.

Gabel, despite throwing four interceptions on the night, put Timberland in position to tie the score on a 14-yard run, but Otto Wilson's PAT sailed wide left leaving the Wolves a point shy and under four minutes left in the game to mount a comeback.

"To come in here and beat a team of the caliber of Timberland is significant for our team," Cruce said. "We needed this game badly."

The Stags open their Region 8AAA schedule on Sept. 28 hosting James Island while Timberland travels to Kingstree to start its Region 7AA tilt. Kickoff for both games is at 7:30 p.m.

No Headline In Original

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 21, 2012 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 25

Length: 373 words

Body

Colleton Prep (3-2) at Palmetto Christian (4-0)

Last year:Colleton Prep won, 50-30.

Coaches: Leroy Riley, Colleton Prep; Jim Daniel, Palmetto Christian

Notable:Colleton Prep is coming off a big win, topping Holly Hill Academy last week in a rematch of last fall's SCISA Class A state title. Palmetto Christian comes in undefeated with an offense that is averaging 43.5 points per game. J.T. Waters rushed for 258 yards and five TDs in last week's win over Hilton Head Prep. He leads the Lowcountry with 675 yards on the ground.

Keep an eye on: Colleton Prep running back Heath Fisk. He scored four touchdowns and a had career-high 223 rushing yards to lead the War Hawks to a 42-21 win over Holly Hill Academy.

Did you know: Coach Riley is has a 155-136 record as a coach in Colleton County.

Goose Creek (4-0) at Dutch Fork (2-2)

Last year:Did not play

Coaches:Chuck Reedy, Goose Creek; Bill Kimrey, Dutch Fork

Notable:Goose Creek moved up to No. 19 in the latest MaxPreps national poll, and continues to get good play on both sides of the ball. The Gators have allowed only 44 points on defense with only 21 points coming in the first half. Tramel Terry averaged 16 yards every time he touched the ball last week against Fort Dorchester and had a career-high five touchdowns.

Keep an eye on:Dutch Fork junior quarterback Derek Olenchuck. He's completed 64 of 112 passes for 869 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Did you know:Goose Creek defensive tackle Mike Myers, who has committed to East Carolina, started out as a fullback.

Berkeley (0-4) at Timberland (4-0)

Last year: Timberland won, 41-0.

Coaches:Jeff Cruce, Berkeley; Art Craig, Timberland.

Notable: Berkeley desperately needs a victory as the Stags have dropped seven straight games dating back to last fall. They are averaging only 9.0 points on offense. Timberland, the defending Division I-AA state champ, is averaging 36 points a game this season and is the state's No. 2 Class AA team in the latest poll. Berkeley leads the series 6-2, but the Wolves have won the last two.

Keep an eye on:Timberland wide receiver Austin McKinney. He's a playmaker who is averaging 19.8 yards per reception.

Did you know:Timberland has six players who have rushed for at least 100 yards this season.

Philip M. Bowman

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Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 22, 2012 Saturday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 27

Length: 1581 words

Body

Woodland 47, Academic Magnet 15

Records:Woodland 4-1, 2-0 in Region 6-AA; Academic Magnet 3-2, 0-2 in Region 6-AA.

Next: Academic Magnet at Ridgeland; Woodland at Burke.

Woodland 13 20 14 0-47

Acad. Magnet 7 0 0 8-15

W - Shepp 13 run (Gaddist kick)

AM - Stewart Walters 82 kickoff return (Nate Anderson kick)

W - Haugton 43 pass from Delee (kick failed)

W - 2 run (run failed)

W - Johnson 53 pass from Delee (Sheppard run)

W - 36 run (pass failed)

W - Smith 2 run (Gaddist kick)

W - Sheppard 31 run (Gaddist kick)

AM - Harry Griffin 8 run (Walters run)

Charleston Coll. 72, Beaufort Academy 8

Stars: Charleston Collegiate's Matt McClain had 313 all-purpose yards for five touchdowns. Khalil Davis also had 298 total yards for 4 touchdowns for the Sun Devils.

Records:Charleston Coll. 2-3

Next: Charleston Collegiate hosts First Baptist next week.

BA 0 8 0 0-8

CC 30 28 6 8-72

CC-Chandler Fletcher 12 run. (Khalil Davis pass from Matt McClain)

CC-Davis 45 run. (McClain run)

CC-Davis 40 run. (Run failed)

CC-McClain 66 run. (Chris Smalls run)

CC-McClain 1 run. (Pass failed)

CC-McClain 2 run. (Davis pass from McClain)

CC-Dvis 58 run. (Fletcher run)

BA-Gvain Palmer 1 run. (Ashton Guest run)

CC-Smalls 14 run. (Run failed)

CC-Davis 87 pass from McClain. (Pass failed)

CC-McClain 40 run. (Fletcher run)

Cross 45, Lake Marion 21

STARS: Dionte Evans ran for 151 yards on 11 carries and scored two touchdowns to lead Cross over Lake Marion. Devontae Shephered added 123 yards and a touchdown on 12 carries, and contributed seven tackles on defense.

Records: Cross 5-1; Lake Marion 3-2.

Next: Lake Marion hosts Lee Central; Cross at Military Magnet.

Cross 8 23 6 8-45

Lake Marion 13 0 8 0-21

LM - Mike Williams 31 pass from Derirante Jenkins (kick good)

C - Owen Pinckney 3 run (Branford Halls run good)

LM - Jenkins 54 run (run failed)

C - Halls 1 run (Anthony Myers pass good from Dionte Evans)

C - Evans 32 pass from Halls (Devontae Shepherd run good)

C - Halls 1 run (Malik Gooding kick good)

C - Shepherd 2 run (run failed)

LM - Williams 9 pass from Jenkins (Jenkins run good)

C - Evans 60 run (Shepherd run good)

Calhoun Academy 34 Dorchester Acad. 20

Stars: Jesse Reeves had 5 touchdowns (2 passing, 3 rushing) for Calhoun Academy. Jordan Weathers had had 2 touchdowns and 181 total yards for Dorchester Academy.

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Records: Dorchester 1-3.

Next: Dorchester Academy hosts Colleton Prep.

DA 0 8 6 6-20

CA 0 14 6 14-34

CA-Jesse Reeves 4 run (Griffin Creekmor run)

DA-Daniel Fralix 44 pass from Harley Bozard (Jordan Weathers run)

CA-Reeves 1 run. (Run failed)

CA-Reeves 1 run. (Run failed)

DA-Weathers 4 run. (Run failed)

CA-Jackson Fleming 16 pass from Reeves. (Pass failed)

DA-Fralix 32 pass from Weathers. (Pass failed)

CA-Rett Davis 25 pass from Reeves. (Griffin Creekmor run)

Wilson Hall 37, Porter-Gaud 14

STARS: Parker McDuffie finished with 166 yards on 11 carries and scored three TDs.

Records:Porter-Gaud 2-3.

Next: Hammond School at Porter-Gaud; Orangeburg Prep at Wilson Hall.

Porter-Gaud 0 0 0 14-14

Wilson Hall 14 14 9 0-37

WH - Jay Goodson 10 run (Cody Hoover kick)

WH - Parker McDuffie 8 run (Hoover kick)

WH - McDuffie 14 run (Hoover kick)

WH - William Kinney 3 run (Hoover kick)

WH - McDuffie 50 run (kick failed)

WH - Hoover 24 FG

PG - Rob Thomas 3 run (Trey Lowe kick)

PG - Bobby Faith 59 fumble return (Lowe kick)

Patrick Henry 66, Faith Christian 36

STARS: Paul Daniel DeLoach ran for 387 yards and seven touchdowns on 26 carries to lead Patrick Henry over Faith Christian. Defensively, Brandon DeLoach had 12 tackles, and Gibson Wald added nine tackles and two pass breakups.

Records:Patrick Henry 6-0, 3-0; Faith Christian 1-5, 1-3.

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Next: Patrick Henry at Cathedral Academy; Faith Christian hosts St. John's Christian.

Faith Christian 6 8 14 8-36

Patrick Henry 30 20 8 8-66

PH - Paul Daniel DeLoach 3 run (Gibson Wall pass good from Cody Youmans)

FC - Timothy Tran 6 run (run failed)

PH - DeLoach 51 run (DeLoach run good)

PH - DeLoach 52 run (DeLoach run good)

PH - Wall 30 pass from Youmans (pass failed)

PH - DeLoach 51 run (run failed)

FC - Josh Carter 10 pass from John Elvington (Logan Winningham pass good from Elvington)

PH - DeLoach 16 run (Youmans run good)

PH - DeLoach 67 run (run failed)

FC - Elvington 9 run (Tran run good)

PH - DeLoach 42 run (Wall pass good from Youmans)

FC - Austin Pfoff 10 pass from Elvington (run failed)

FC - Elvington 18 run (Tran pass good from Elvington)

PH - Wall 31 pass from Youmans (Wall pass good from Youmans)

First Baptist 68, Pee Dee Academy 30

STARS: Alex Frazier finished with 144 yards rushing and scored a pair of TDs on five carries. Alan Bradford hauled in three receptions for 112 yards and scored two touchdowns.

Records:First Baptist 5-0.

Next: First Baptist faces Charleston Collegiate.

First Baptist 16 24 14 14-68

Pee Dee 14 16 0 0-30

FB - Alan Bradford 57 pass from Trent Keisler (Trevor McNeil run good)

PD - Caleb Hill 11 run (conversion failed)

FB - Alex Frazier 65 run (McNeil run good)

PD - Dalton Rowe 51 pass from Hill (Hill run good)

FB - Bradford 97 kick-off return (Frazier run good)

FB - Bradford 40 pass from Keisler (Keisler pass to Howard good)

PD - Tyler Page 9 pass from Hill (Korey Thomas pass to Page good)

FB - Strom Altman 5 pass from Keisler (Keisler run good)

PD - Chandler Tisdale 59 run (Hill run good)

FB - Frazier 52 run (conversion failed)

FB - McNeil 25 run (Keisler run good)

FB - Bradford 38 run (conversion failed)

FB - Jackson Murray 3 pass from Carter Falk (Altman run good)

Garrett Tech 20, Burke 12

Stars: Darell Roberts had 1 touchdown and 53 yards for Garrett Academy.

Records: Garrett Academy 3-2. Burke 1-4.

Next: Garrett Academy hosts North Charleston. Burke at Woodland.

B 0 0 12 0-12

GT 12 0 8 0-20

GT- Darrell Roberts 3 run. (Conversion failed)

GT-Jamie Cooper 13 run. (Conversion failed)

B-Devion Smith 30 pass from Stephon Taylor. (Kick failed)

B-Stephon Taylor 22 pass from Craig Williams. (Kick failed)

GT-Antonio Davis 12 run. (Quantrell Gadsen run)

St. Johns Christian 74, Coastal Christian 20

Stars: Evan Hammond SJC quarterback went 10-14 for 337 yards passing and 4 touchdowns.Rashae Bey had 269 yards and 3 touchdowns on 8 carries for SJC.

Records:St. Johns Christian 5-0, Coastal Christian 2-3.

Next: St. Johns Christian at Faith Crhistian. Coastal Christian at Beaufort Academy.

SJC 38 28 8 0-74

CC 8 6 6 0-20

SJC- Rashae Bey 84 run. (Bobby Winters run)

SJC-Jalen Ward 33 pass from Evan Hammond. (Joe Denton pass from Hammond)

CC-Tony Crenshaw 47 run. (Garrett Casaias run)

SJC-Bey 30 run. (Winters run)

SJC-Damian Hurta 34 pass from Hammond. (Pass failed)

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No Headline In Original

SJC-Ward 25 pass from Hammond. (Bey run)

SJC-Bey 76 run. (Pass failed)

SJC-Mike Lewis 24 pass from Hammond. (Bey run)

CC-Casias 29 pass from Cameron Barett. (Run failed)

SJC-Ward 50 pass from Hammond. (Bey run)

SJC-Hurta 55 pass from Britt Tipkin. (Run failed)

CC-Will Hollingsworth 25 pass from Barett. (Run failed)

SJC-Winter 66 run. (Winters run)

Berkeley 21, Timberland 20

The Berkeley Stags notched their first win of the season with a thrilling 21-20 win over Timberland Friday night.

The game saw the previously unbeaten Wolves turn the ball over 10 times - six fumbles and four interceptions. The win is the first of the season for Berkeley, 1-4.

"This is a significant win for our program, to come in here and beat the defending state champions,"Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce said. "We needed this win bad."Timberland, the defending Division I-AA state champion, is 4-1.

Hanahan 49, Wade Hampton 14

STARS: Quarterback Anthony Smalls completed 8 of 12 passes for 224 yards, three touchdowns and one interception. Marion Gates had seven catches for 224 yards and three touchdowns.

Records:Hanahan 4-1; Wade Hampton 0-5.

Next: Orangeburg-Wilkinson at Hanahan.

Hanahan 14 14 14 7-49

Wade Hampton 0 0 0 14-14

H- Marlin Washington 65 fumble recovery (Kyle Spigner kick)

H - Mario Gates, 24 pass from Anthony Smalls (Spigner kick)

H - Quan Wade 3 run (Spigner kick)

H - Gates, 99 pass from Smalls (Spigner kick)

H - Gates 45 pass from Smalls (Spigner kick)

H - Octavius Hayes 17 run (Didar Sandsaval kick)

WH - Jones 15 run (Skinner kick)

H - Kalihm Denmark 61 pass from Mason Schwerzler (Sandsaval kick)

WH - Smalls 49 run (Skinner kick)

Northwood 41, Hilton Head Prep 13

No Headline In Original

STARS:Northwood Academy's Darrett Drayton ran for three touchdowns to highlight a 28-point victory. Defensively, Alex Simmons had 11 tackles, Josh Chambers had seven, including one for loss, and Andrew Singer intercepted a pass.

RECORDS: Northwood 1-4; HHP 2-3.

Next: Northwood Academy at Williamsburg Academy; Hilton Head Prep at Calhoun Academy.

Northwood Acad 0 17 10 14-41

Hilton Head Prep 0 7 0 6-13

NA - Darrett Drayton 2 run (Andrew Singer kick good)

NA - Singer 31 yd field goal

HH - Logan Clark 77 pass from Charlie Wilmot (Logan Clark kick good)

NA - Drayton 4 run (Singer kick good)

NA - Singer 32 yd field goal

NA - Chris Williams 9 run (Singer kick good)

HH - Wilmont 10 run (kick blocked)

NA - Drayton 3 run (Singer kick good)

NA - Will Lloyd 20 run (Singer kick good)

St. John's 41, Scott's Branch 8

STARS: St. John's Brandon Dickerson ran for 171 yards and three touchdowns, and threw a touchdown pass to lead the way over Scot's Branch.

RECORDS: St. John's 3-2; Scot's Branch 0-5.

Next: St. John's hosts Baptist Hill.

St. John's 14 21 0 6-41

Scott's Branch 0 0 0 8-8

SJ - Brandon Dickerson 4 run (run failed)

SJ - Dickerson 36 run (London Brown run good)

SJ - Jordan Hammond 1 run (Taiwan Green pass good from Dickerson)

SJ - Dominique Robinson 41 pass from Dickerson (run failed)

SJ - Hammond 11 run (Brown kick good)

SB - Leon Mathis 20 run (Mathis run good)

SJ - Dickerson 64 run (kick good)

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No Headline In Original

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 26, 2012 Wednesday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 27

Length: 425 words

Body

The natives are a little less restless in Moncks Corner this week, thanks to Berkeley's 21-20 victory over previously undefeated and defending Division I-AA state champion Timberland last Friday night.

The Stags were aided by Timberland's 10 turnovers, but a win is a win. And it was Berkeley's first of the season and fifth in the last 16 games.

"We're getting better," said ?second-year coach Jeff Cruce, whose team is 1-4. "Obviously, a win, a win of that caliber, helps us mentally. It's hard for us because we're so young, but we've really had only one bad game, and that was against ?Summerville.

"I thought we played well against Stratford. And I thought we played really well against Cane Bay and Manning. A victory against a team like Timberland gives us confidence."

And just at the right time. The Stags begin Region 8-AAA play this week with a home game against James Island and follow that with another home game against Hanahan on Oct. 5. So, the schedule works in the Stags' favor. The other difficult region encounter is at Orangeburg-Wilkinson on Oct. 19.

"I think Orangeburg and Hanahan have lots of good athletes, as does James Island," Cruce said. "No disrespect for Stall and Hilton Head, but those are the three teams to beat. We have a chance. We just need to play well for 48 minutes and avoid mistakes. Mistakes have killed us this season."

The Stags played one of the tougher non-region schedules in the state, and their five opponents are a combined 15-5. The Stags held Cane Bay to 162 total yards, but a turnover with 5:11 left in the game changed momentum as Cane Bay scored two times to gain a 28-17 victory.

Timberland, 17-2 over the past two seasons, fumbled the ball six times and threw four interceptions, including one for a touchdown, against Berkeley.

Timberland began and ended the game by throwing interceptions.

Super Mario

Hanahan's Mario Gates had a big effort in Friday's 49-14 victory over Wade Hampton. The wide receiver caught seven passes for 224 yards and three TDs. He set a school record with a 99-yard TD catch.

Tucker tabbed

No Headline In Original

Summerville wrestling coach Randall Tucker was picked as a coach for the ?2013 SCWCA North-South match.

The South Carolina all-star wrestling match is the second longest running all-star wrestling event in the country.

The other South coaches include Eric Pack of Swansea, John Morello, Aynor and Larry Long, Bamberg-Ehrhardt.

The North coaches are Randy Twigg, Ridge View, Chad Nelson, Greer, Sean McNinney-Powdersville and Ed Purdy of McCracken.

Follow Philip M. Bowman on Twitter @pandcphil

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Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

October 5, 2012 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 25

Length: 348 words

Body

Cane Bay (5-1, 0-0) at Stratford (6-0, 1-0)

Last year:Did not play.

Coaches:Russell Zehr, Cane Bay;

Ray Stackley, Stratford.

Notable:Region 7-AAAA play begins tonight and this is the marquee game on the conference schedule. Stratford is off to its best start since 2002 and is coming off an impressive 41-17 victory over Summerville. Cane Bay has won three straight games, including one of the best comebacks of the year. Colleton County led 21-0 last weekend, but the Cobras scored the final 26 points of the game.

Keep an eye on: Stratford running back Jordan Johnson. He carried four times last week for 129 yards.

Did you know: This is the first game between the two schools.

Beaufort (3-3, 0-0) at Bluffton (6-0, 0-0)

Last year:Did not play

Coaches: Mark Clifford, Beaufort, Ken Cribb, Bluffton.

Notable: Bluffton begins Region 8-AAAA play on a roll. The Bobcats are averaging 56 points a game while allowing only 5.4 points per game. The Bobcats have won 20 of their last 21 games. Beaufort, meanwhile, has lost two of its last three games and has surrendered 121 points in the stretch. The Eagles are trying to avoid their second straight losing season.

Keep an eye on:Bluffton quarterback C.J. Frazier. He passed for 1,189 yards and 25 touchdowns.

Did you know: This is Bluffton's first year in Class AAAA. Last year, the Bobcats lost to South Pointe in the Class AAA state championship.

Hanahan (5-1, 1-0) at Berkeley (1-5, 0-1)

Last year:Hanahan won, 24-21.

Coaches:Charlie Patterson, Hanahan; Jeff Cruce, Berkeley.

No Headline In Original

Notable:The transition from Class AA to AAA has been smooth for Hanahan. Berkeley, meanwhile, has been one of the state's most underachieving teams in the state. The Stags returned 15 starters from last year's team, but have had troubles on both sides of the ball. The Stags have won just five times in their last 17 games.

Keep an eye on:Hanahan wide receiver Sammy Richardson. He caught two TD passes last week.

Did you know:Cruce coached at Hanahan for 11 years. He led the Hawks to 112 victories and 10 straight region titles after going winless his first year.

Philip M. Bowman

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APP. 0693

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-face-win-or-go-home-scenario-for-playoffs/article_27ffd124-e214-593c-983e-86563c6fe5a2.html

Stags face win or go home scenario for playoffs

By Dan Brown Oct 15, 2012

The Berkeley Stags hold their 2012 fate in their own hands.

Win and live to play another Friday.

Lose and it's time to get ready for basketball and wrestling seasons.

With a 55-7 win over Stall on Friday, the Stags find themselves in a position to finish second in Region 8AAA should they win their final two games against Orangeburg Wilkinson and Hilton Head.

With Orangeburg-Wilkinson downing Hilton Head 48-42 and the Sea Hawks yet to face Hanahan, Berkeley can secure a second place Region 8AAA finish should they win out over the Bruins on Friday and against Sea Hawks on Oct. 26.

Stags Coach Jeff Cruce says that's just fine.

"We have to win out in order to make the playoffs," Cruce said. "We have to beat Orangeburg and Hilton Head to make the playoffs. We hold our football lives in our own hands and in the end, that's the way it should be. We win and we're in."

With just a 2-7 overall record, the Stags are currently 1-2 in Region 8AAA and tied for fourth place with James Island. The Stags' two region losses came against James Island and Hanahan.

"Of all the losses we had this season, the loss against James Island hurt the most," Cruce said. "That one hurt. We missed 21 tackles in that game. We just didn't get the job done against them."

Ahead of the Stags behind first place Hanahan (3-0) are Hilton Head and Orangeburg-Wilkinson with 2-1 marks.

"Hilton Head losing to Orangeburg means we're going to need a little help when Orangeburg plays James Island," Cruce added, "but basically we have to win out. We're playing for our playoff lives.

With wins against both the Bruins on Friday and Sea Hawks on Thursday, Oct. 25, Berkeley could leapfrog over both teams into second place in Region 8AAA and a playoff berth.

"If we win, we're in. If we lose we go home."

Against Stall, the Stags offense found its rhythm, pouring on 55 points, a season high for Berkeley this season.

"We had more than 600 yards of offense against Stall," Cruce said. "Harkness scored twice and threw for more than 200 yards for the second week in a row. Asanti Dantzler scored a pair of touchdowns. Josh Sellars scored twice. We are coming together and improving in important areas. We have kids on this team stepping up and becoming leaders."

Cruce said the improvements in Berkeley Stags football this season has been program wide.

That's the thing I'm really excited about," he said. "While we've had some good opportunities to win some ball games that we haven't won, our younger programs have really stepped it up. Our weight lifting program at the middle school has really taken off. They're doing the same thing that the varsity is doing but at a much younger age. That's real exciting."

Cruce said coaching and teaching these kids goes beyond the X's and O's on the blackboard.

"We preach to these kids about building character and solid work ethic. There are a lot of positive things we're doing with these kids. We are teaching these kids to become leaders.

I still think this team has got a lot of things to accomplish this year and the biggest thing is to win these last two games and make the playoffs."

Hilton Head is the lone holdover from Berkeley's 2011 Region 7AAA schedule and is a much improved team over the one that lost 31-20 to the Stags last year.

"The Hilton Head quarterback is going to the Shrine Bowl so they're going to be tough. None of these games are going to be easy. We're going to have to show up and take care of our own game."

Before the Stags can line up against the Sea Hawks for that playoff spot, Berkeley must first get by a revamped Orangeburg-Wilkinson team. This will be the first meeting between the Stags and Bruins in several years.

"Orangeburg has the wide receiver that's committed to Clemson," Cruce said. "They have some good athletes. It was a shootout against Hilton Head. But if we continue to get better we should take care of our own business against Orangeburg and Hilton Head."

How the two teams will line up on Friday is a coin toss.

Kickoff Friday in Orangeburg is at 7:30 p.m.

Stags roll into playoffs berth

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

October 26, 2012 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 5

Length: 533 words

Byline: Greg Hutton

Special to The Post and Courier

Body

MONCKS CORNER - Four teams with identical 2-2 Region 8-AAA records remained in contention for three playoff berths entering the final week of the regular season.

As two of those squads whose postseason fate hung in the balance, there was no questioning the importance of Thursday's game between Hilton Head and Berkeley.

The Stags excelled under pressure, as Ezekial Jenkins and Joshua Sellers combined for five touchdowns to lead Berkeley to a 52-31 win at Gerald Moody Stadium.

While a spot in the playoffs is secure, the Stags (4-6 overall, 3-2 Region 8-AAA) must wait until the conclusion of today's games to learn their seed and opening-round opponent. If Orangeburg-Wilkinson defeats James Island, Berkeley will claim the second seed and host the No. 3 seed from Region 5-AAA next week. A Trojans win hands the Stags the third seed and a road match against the second seed from Region 5-AAA.

"We probably lost some games we shouldn't have lost," said second-year Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce. "But, hey, we are where we are. We're 4-6 and have a chance to finish second in the region. It's not what we envisioned when we started the season, but we'll take it."

The Seahawks (5-5, 2-3) will also be rooting for a Bruins win, which would give Hilton Head the fourth and final playoff spot.

Berkeley got off to a fast start, as Jenkins ran 76 yards to the Seahawks' 4-yard line on the first play from scrimmage. Two snaps later, quarterback Matthew Harkness connected with Dylan Baker for a 6-yard touchdown pass.

Hilton Head 0 16 3 13 -32

Berkeley 10 14 21 6 - 51

B - Dylan Baker 5 pass from Matthew Harkness (Vance Bailey kick)

B - Bailey 32 field goal

HH - Adam Orischak 12 pass from Michael Julian (Khalil Lewis run)

B - Ezekial Jenkins 5 run (Bailey kick)

B - Joshua Sellers 3 run (Bailey kick)

HH - Lewis 4 run (Orischak pass from Julian)

B - Sellers 25 run (Bailey kick)

HH - Colin White 31 field goal

B - Harkness 30 run (Bailey kick)

B - Jenkins 75 pass from Harkness (Bailey kick)

HH - James Sanders 55 pass from Julian (conversion failed), 4:21

B - Jenkins 65 run (Bailey kick failed), 3:33

HH - Lewis 1 run (White good), 0:51

Vance Bailey added a 32-yard field goal before the first quarter expired for a 10-0 Berkeley advantage.

Each team found the end zone twice in the second quarter as the Stags led, 24-16, at halftime following a pair of Hilton Head two-point conversions.

"(The Seahawks were) playing for the same thing we were playing for," Cruce said. "We had to come out with a lot of intensity and try to win the game. We just needed a win."

Sellers extended Berkeley's lead to 15 points less than three minutes after the break. The junior ran for scores of 3 and 25 yards and turned in a 122-yard rushing performance on 15 carries.

Jenkins, meanwhile, carried 16 times for 246 yards. In addition to two scores on the ground, he added a 75-yard touchdown reception.

"It's nice to have two different running backs that can run the football, and we have a third one there in (Dantzler)," Cruce said. "Hopefully we can carry that momentum into the next game."

Harkness (30-yard keeper) and James Sanders (55-yard reception) also found the end zone for the Stags, who outgained Hilton Head by a 565-445 margin.

Load-Date: February 19, 2013

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Berkeley advances in AAA playoffs

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

November 3, 2012 Saturday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 7

Length: 409 words

Byline: Special to The Post and Courier

Body

MONCKS CORNER - It wasn't a thing of beauty, but it was a playoff victory and Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce was glad to get it.

Despite a basket full of first-half mistakes, the Stags were able to knock off visiting Midland Valley, 24-2, to advance to the second-round of the Class AAA lower state playoffs Friday night.

Berkeley (5-6) will play at undefeated Socastee next week.

Joshua Sellers rushed for 89 yards and quarterback Matthew Harkness passed for 92 as the Stags notched their first home playoff victory since 2009.

"You know, we're in the playoffs and all that matters is that you survive and advance to the next round," said Cruce. "We made some mistakes and it wasn't pretty at times but we won the game.

We won a home playoff game and we're moving on. I thought we played hard. Our defense played very well and we were without some guys over there. It's just good to win."

Berkeley took a 7-0 lead on the second play of the game when Harkness connected with Asanti Dantzler on a 61-yard pass. But mistakes plagued Berkeley's offense throughout the rest of the first half.

A bad snap from their own 10-yard line was recovered by Harkness for a Midland Valley safety with 5:27 to play in the first quarter.

In the second quarter, Berkeley put together an 11-play drive to the Mustangs 21-yard line, but Harkness was intercepted in the end zone by Michael Herndon.

Late in the second quarter, Harkness fumbled on the one-yard line and Midland Valley recovered in the end zone for a touchback.

Berkeley's defense bent somewhat on a few long Midland Valley drives, but came up with stops and allowed the Mustangs less than 175 total yards. Berkeley came up with four turnovers in the fourth quarter, setting up the offense with short scoring drives.

Vance Bailey's 31-yard field goal with 11:55 to play in the game pushed Berkeley's lead to 10-2.

Berkeley advances in AAA playoffs

Berkeley defensive back Josh Simmons scooped up a fumble near midfield and returned it to Midland Valley'ss 22-yard line. On third down, Harkness hit Damonte Harley with a 22-yard touchdown pass with 6:57 to play, pushing the lead to 17-2.

After Midland Valley's third turnover of the fourth period, Berkeley went 27 yards in five plays with Ezekial Jenkins scoring on a five-yard run with 3:10 to play.

B - Asanti Dantzler 61 pass from Matthew Harkness (Vance Bailey kick)

MV - Harkness tackled in endzone

B - Bailey 31 field goal

B - Harley 22 pass from Harkness (Bailey kick)

B - Ezekial Jenkins 5 run (Bailey kick)

Load-Date: February 20, 2013

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Cruce has Berkeley on a roll; Stags running on all cylinders heading into today's playoff game

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

November 9, 2012 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 3

Length: 575 words

Byline: pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

It's been a tale of two teams united by one coach.

Jeff Cruce is his second year as coach of the Berkeley Stags, and will lead his team into the second round of the Class AAA playoffs tonight when the Stags travel to the Grand Strand to battle second-ranked and undefeated Socastee in a 7:30 p.m. showdown.

The Stags are a completely different team than the one that began the season with a 1-6 record and were outscored 181-83. The team that's hitting the road today is 4-0 and has outscored foes 155-54 in its last four games.

"It's been a season of life lessons," said Cruce, who posted a 4-7 last fall after replacing the legendary Jerry Brown, who won 175 games and three state championships at the school. "We fumbled the ball here and made a mistake there but we never quit. The biggest life lesson is perseverance. When things go bad, you don't give up. It's been a spiritual life lesson."

Cruce admits that coaching in Moncks Corner, where football is king, can be tough when the losses outnumber the wins. He's heard the critics in the stands and on the telephone and has received their emails. But he never wavered in his faith in himself.

"Moncks Corner is a very unique place," Cruce said. "I dare say but it is one of the top five communities in the state as far as high school football is concerned. Berkeley High School and its football team is the centerpiece of the community.

"If you listen (to some fans), it can drive you crazy," Cruce added. "I've actually told people not to call me or send me emails. I am an adult and can take criticism. But when you criticize my players - that's malicious. They're teenagers."

Cruce has drawn on his experiences at Hanahan and Cane Bay, programs he turned into winners.

"If I were a younger coach, I might have been overwhelmed," Cruce said. "But I drew on my experience. We went 0-10 in my first year at Hanahan, 6-6 the second year and then had that great run (where we won 12 straight region championships). It was the same thing at Cane Bay. It's a process you go through."

Cruce dismissed four starters from the team this season and that showed his players he was committed to discipline.

"You can't sacrifice the integrity of the program when a kid makes a mistake and doesn't have the right attitude," Cruce said. "When you say something, you have to stick to your word. You give your players boundaries and they have to stay within it."

The Stags' first victory came in Week 5 when they topped defending Division II-AA state champ Timberland 21-20 thanks to 10 Wolves' turnovers.

"Obviously, a win, a win of that caliber, helps us mentally," Cruce said after the game. "It's hard for us because we're so young."

The team has final mature as is the program. The B- and junior varsity teams have winning records and next year's team will include 40 seniors if there is no attrition.

Running back Ezekiel Jenkins and quarterback Matt Harkness have shown improvement every week.

Jenkins scored three touchdowns and amassed 321 all-purpose yards to lead Berkeley to a 51-32 victory over Hilton Head that gave the Stags a berth in the playoffs.

The defense is led by outstanding defensive ends Cyrus Pinckney and Jewuan Jefferson.

Last week, Pinckney recorded a fumble recovery, 2.5 sacks to lead a Stag defense that held Midland Valley to 175 yards of total offense in their first-round 24-2 win.

"We ready for the challenge of playing the No. 1 or 2 team in the state," Cruce said. "We believe in ourselves."

Load-Date: November 9, 2012

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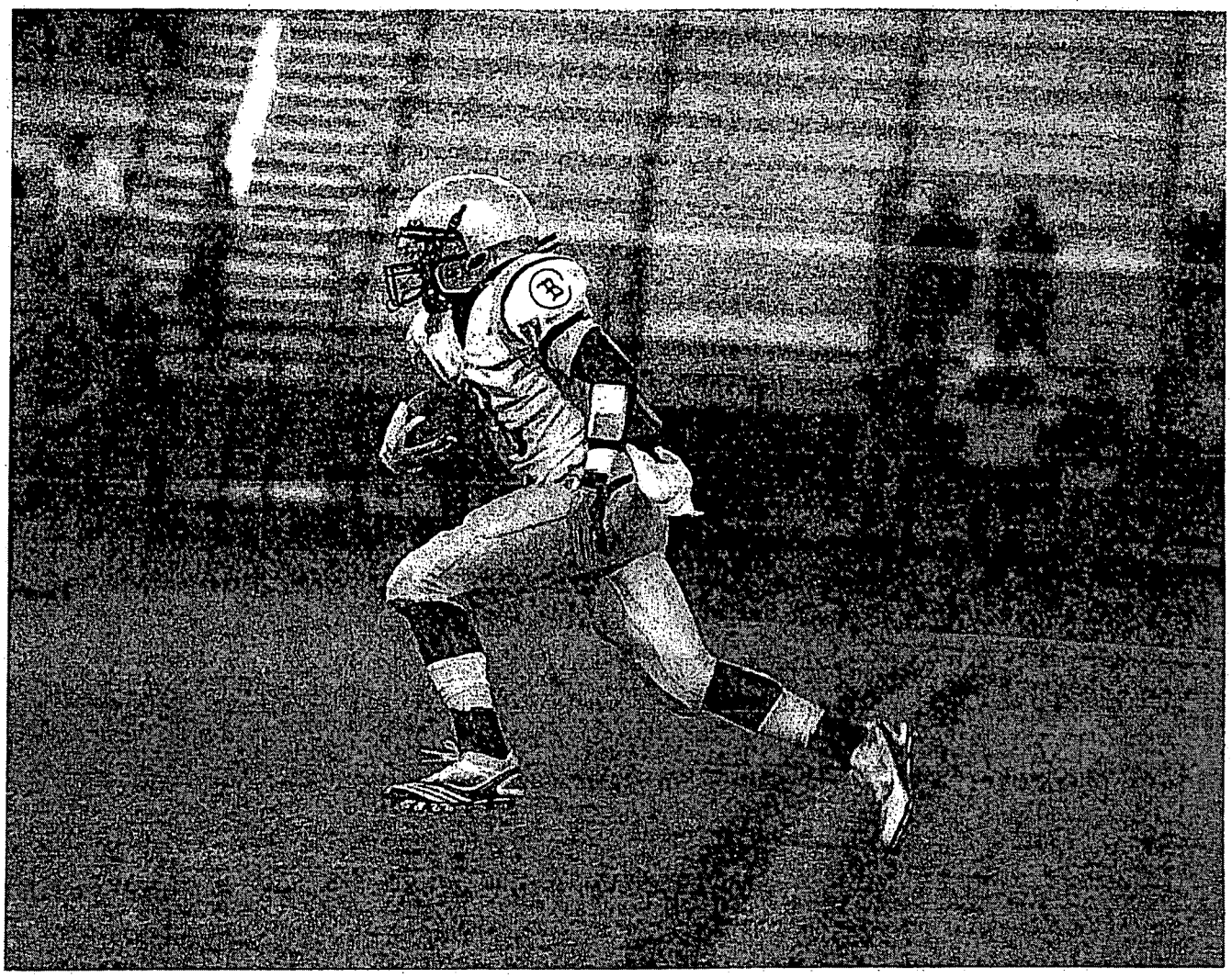
http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/braves-skin-stags---to-end-berkeley-run/article_74663e13-2f67-50e8-93ed-1bc487fb7924.html

Braves skin Stags 41-14 to end Berkeley run

Dan Brown Nov 13, 2012



Asanti Dantzler’s 90-yard kickoff return for a touchdown were the last points scored by the Stags in a 41-14 playoff loss to Socastee.

Buy Now

Once again, the Socastee Braves slammed the door on the Berkeley Stags' season.

Down 20-14 to start the second half, the Stags came apart at the seams as the second ranked and undefeated Braves scored 21 unanswered points to advance to the third round of the Class AAA playoffs Friday night at Socastee.

"We lost our composure in the second half," said BHS Coach Jeff Cruce. "We were back in this game and moving the ball, but two personal fouls take us out of a first-and-goal situation. We fell apart after that."

Cruce, who was forced to suspend three starting defensive players before the second round game with Socastee for undisclosed reasons, felt good about his team's chances going into the second half, despite losing starting quarterback Matthew Harkness early in the first quarter with an injury.

"Our kids played extremely hard," Cruce said. "Matthew got knocked out of the game early and Joseph Dress came in and did an excellent job running our offense."

Dress directed a scoring drive capped by a 12-yard run by Ezekiel Jenkins, and after Asanti Dantzler's 90-yard kickoff return for a touchdown pulled the Stags to within six points at the close of the first half, orchestrated a drive to start the third quarter that put Berkeley inside the Braves' 10 with a chance to tie the score.

"The penalties killed us," said Cruce. "After the penalties took us out of scoring range we lost our composure and Socastee put the game away."

The Braves scored on touchdown runs by Delano Walters and Tommy Lazaroff, their second touchdown each, and Hunter Renfrow to put the game out of reach.

Cruce praised his offense after Harkness went down with the injury.

"We had two backs rush for more than 100 yards," he said. "Dress is just a sophomore and handled himself well under center. He threw the ball well and ran with the offense with poise."

Josh Sellers finished with 111 yards rushing and Jenkins added 102 yards on the ground.

Cruce said while he was disappointed with the loss he saw improvement across the board in how his team bought into what he and his coaches were teaching.

"We talked to them about their character and the way that things needed to be done here," he said. "These young kids have bought in and know what's expected of them."

"I was real proud of our kids," the second year BHS coach said. "The 41-14 score was not indicative of the game we played."

With 40 potential seniors returning for next year's team, Cruce is optimistic about the immediate future of Berkeley football: "We finished 5-7 but could just as easily have been 7-5. Our region was a tough region top to bottom and we competed well against teams like Hanahan, James Island and Hilton Head. We won the big games we needed to win and advanced to the second round of the playoffs.

"While I'm disappointed in the losing record I'm very optimistic about what's next."

Cruce understands his team is a work in progress but his team has matured and 2012 was a big improvement over 2011.

"We beat better competition than we did last year," he said. "We played better football than we did last year. We have everybody back on defense, all our linebackers and defensive backs. We have almost our entire offensive line. We lose some valuable seniors this year but we have kids ready to step in and fill that gap."

Unhappy with Cruce

Jan 12, 2013

Dear Editor:

I have been thinking about season two under Coach Jeff Cruce at Berkeley High School.

This 2012 season was the season to judge Cruce's team, per his statements. Well, coach, the season is over and you won one more game than 2011. You talked about a hard schedule and I see your 3AAA schedule as one of the easiest in 3AAA. With 40 seniors and another year with you, I wonder what 2013 will bring. I cannot understand how the Stags went 18 years with no losing record with the last coach. I know there were many years of young teams but somehow the coaching staff found ways to motivate the players to win more than they lost. What happens if you don't win with 40 seniors and we have to start over again?

I am on my 48th year of Stags football and have seen many wins and many losses, but now there is something more than Jimmies and Joes. The program is in disarray and the fan base is bailing on the team. I went to all the games and found great dissent in the Stags Nation.

Arrogance and lack of communication with the fans of Berkeley is unacceptable. You are a representative and as athletic director/coach should be open to thoughts positive and negative of the people who pay your salary. Everywhere I go I am told of you refusing to take comments if you don't agree with them and I know that since the second game of the season, you refuse me any conversation with you.

That's my thoughts and opinions of the state of the Stags Nation.

Billy Ott

Moncks Corner

Reader supports Cruce

Jan 13, 2013

Dear Editor:

It appears that Billy Ott's Dec. 5 Letter to the Editor indicates that he is disgruntled because Berkeley football coach Jeff Cruce won't allow Stag fans to help him coach.

Kudos to Coach Cruce, and shame on Stag fans for their lack of support (according to them) in a dismal two seasons.

South Carolina Head Coach Lou Holtz went 0-11 his first season at Carolina. However, Williams-Brice Stadium was packed to capacity for every home game supporting the Gamecocks in anticipation of things to come.

When I played high school football, my coach wouldn't even speak to his players during class changes. But he was the boss during our practices and games, with no assistance from fans. He knew what he was doing. We went on to win the state championship.

In Coach Cruce's first season at Hanahan High School, he was 0-11. The second season, he was 6-6. After two slow starts, Coach Cruce won 10 consecutive regional championships at Hanahan.

No disrespect for the former coach at Berkeley, but has one considered that perhaps his foresight of coming attractions (lack of rising talent) may have played a role in his decision to step down as coach at Berkeley High School?

One should consider the feelings of the players personally with losing, and how Coach Cruce feels not only for himself, but for his players and especially for Stag fans and supporters.

What's the old saying? Walt 'til next year.

Gene "Bunky" Lewis

Hanahan

Cruce critic responds

Jan 13, 2013

Dear Editor:

This is a response to the recent letter from Mr. Lewis concerning my letter about (Jeff) Cruce dissatisfaction.

Hanahan has never won a football championship. I know Cruce's Hanahan football record was in a very easy region with an influx of players from Calnhoy High School after it closed.

The former coach from Berkeley left due to his health, not what players were coming back.

You are certainly a friend of Coach Cruce from his Hanahan days, and I can appreciate that. I think that Coach Cruce cares about his players, too. I have never sent a play to Cruce or wanted to call his plays. I simply stated my thoughts from 48 years of Berkeley Stags football with no real response from the coach unless I sent him a donation of money for trips, etc.

Comparing Hanahan to Berkeley in football is like apples and oranges. Hanahan has always been a baseball school and not a football power.

I just want to say I am and have always been open to the coach but he does not like my thoughts, so be it. I too await next year with great excitement and hope.

My last thought is, your former coach set the bar for the team by stating in the newspaper to judge him on 2012, not 2011. I simply did that and frankly he didn't reach expectations whether it was players or coaching. I personally think 2013 is the year, great improvements need to be accomplished or a change is needed.

Billy Ott

Moncks Corner

BHS Hall of Fame golf tourney April 25

By Dan Brown The Independent Apr 16, 2013

The Berkeley High School Athletics Hall of Fame Second Annual Golf Tournament will introduce the next class of inductees on April 25 at the Berkeley Country Club. The Hall of Fame's 2013 class of nine inductees were announced by Berkeley Athletic Director Jeff Cruce in January. The class consists of Albert "Snookey" Boyt Jr., Mike Brown, Ben Fleming Sr., Rodney Mack, Allen Watson, John Rivers, Marsha Williams, Rusty Williams and Rufus Wofford Sr.

"These are all deserving Berkeley Stags legends," Cruce said. "We have a very deserving class in this year's inductees. All of these inductees could have been with the first class."

Cruce added that a school rich in tradition and history like Berkeley has a long line of stellar athletes, coaches, administrators and volunteers deserving of induction into the Hall of Fame.

"All the great ones will get in eventually," he said.

Entry fee for the shotgun start tournament is $60 per person and $240 per team. The event will begin at 10 a.m. on April 25 at the Berkeley Country Club. This includes 18 holes of golf, a meal and beverages.

"It's a great chance to bring together the rich past of Berkeley athletics and honor some very deserving athletes," Cruce said. "This tournament is what funds everything with the Hall of Fame and it is the first opportunity for the new class to be formally introduced."

Cruce also announced the awarding of a scholarship to a Berkeley student athlete to begin with the 2014 Hall of Fame Class. The scholarship will be funded by proceeds generated from each class induction and will be awarded to a graduating senior student athlete.

"Everything we do with the Berkeley Hall of Fame goes back to the school and these deserving student athletes," said Hall of Fame Committee member Lane Wofford. "All of the funds will go back to help Berkeley High School, Berkeley athletics and Berkeley student athletes."

Both past and present inductees are scheduled to attend.

"This is a very exciting time for Berkeley athletics," Cruce said. "Any time you can reach the past and let the present see what the past did for them is all it's all about."

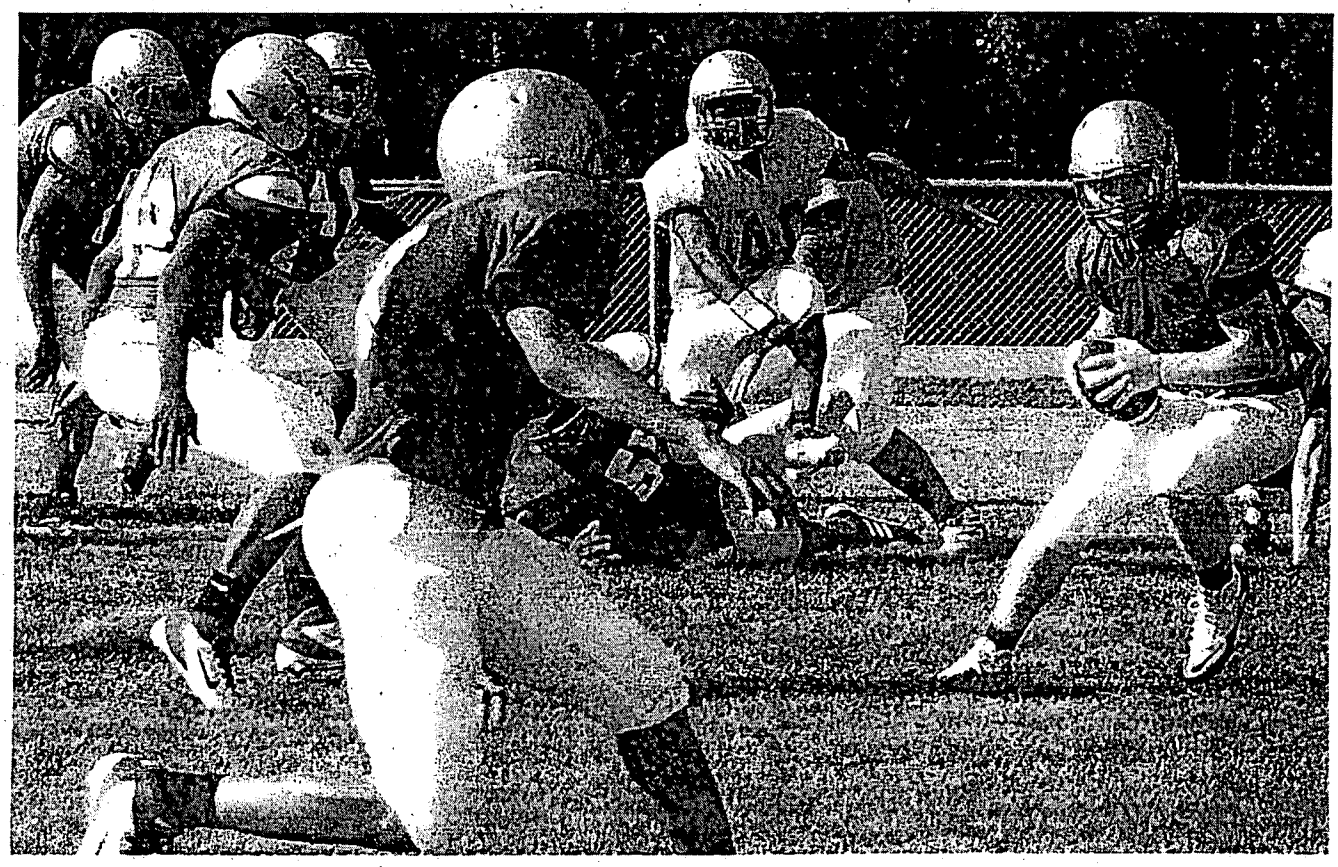
A limited number of hole sponsorships are still available. The cost to sponsor a hole is $100.

For more information about the golf tournament and the Hall of Fame, contact Lane Wofford at 899-2568, or Jeff Cruce at 899-8805.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/good-weather-shines-on-spring-football-practice/article_39c561dd-16b1-5d81-8547-ee866b0891b6.html

Good weather shines on spring football practice

By Dan Brown The Independent May 14, 2013



Dan Brown/Independent -- Quarterback Joseph Dress runs the option during spring practice drills last week.

The current weather for 2013 spring football practice can best be described by taking a page out of Goldilocks and the Three Bears: not too hot, not too cold, but just right.

For the Berkeley Stags it's that crucial year three under the guidance of Coach Jeff Cruce. The Stags finished the 2012 with a 5-8 mark and fell in the second round of the Class AAA state playoffs 41-14 to Socastee.

"The third year is the big year," he said. "I know Moncks Corner and Berkeley fans don't like to lose. We look to put a winning team on the field this fall."

For Cruce, his Stags are finally coming of age and the dividends from a three-year, high caliber weight training program have surfaced across the board during Berkeley's 2013 spring sports season.

These Stags also have experience. Cruce will field 41 seniors during workouts over the spring and summer.

"We have virtually everybody back," he said. "This is the largest returning senior class of any team I've coached in

twenty-five years."

With experience on both sides of the ball, the Stags will be able to fine-tune their offensive and defensive schemes. Joseph Dress looks to get the starting nod under center as the 2013 season approaches. "Our line is back, we have a deep core of quality backs and our defense is returning as well," Cruce said.

Branden Williams and Josh Simmons head up a strong Stags defense and Sterling Fiddie anchors the offensive line at center.

The Stags open up the season on the road on Aug. 30 at Stratford. Berkeley's first home game is set for Sept. 6 against Summerville.

The St. John's Christian Academy Cavaliers, SCISA 8-man football state runners up from 2012, will get another crack at the state title even though the Cavs have to replace seven starters which include their quarterback, top linebacker and their tight end. With eight players on the field that's almost half the team.

But it is the nature of the beast in small-school football and coach Bill McCall is well used to it by now.

"We lost seven starters last year that will be missed," he said. "We will use spring practice to evaluate our players and see where we are and try to evaluate them. We have 17 already signed up and we expect those numbers to grow. If we can fill those three voids at quarterback, linebacker and tight end everything else will fall into place."

The Cavaliers finished the 2012 season with an 11-2 mark and advanced to the SCISA Class A 8-Man Football State Championship Game. SJCA fell in the title game 58-42 to Wardlaw.

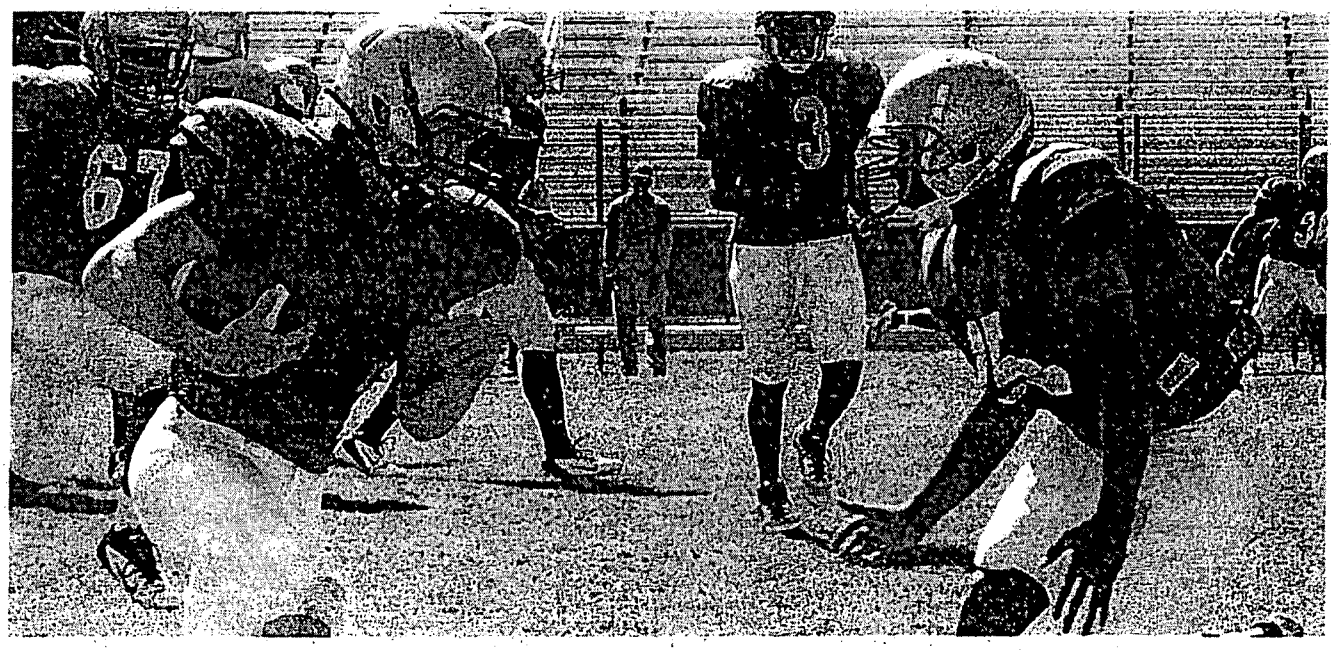
Rashae Bey, who rushed for more than 2,700 yards last year returns to try it all again. Joining Bey to lead the returning Cavs are Jalen Ward and Damion Hurta.

"These are three key home run threats," McCall said. "We have to get the ball in their hands on offense and we will be able to score."

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/the-team-we-ve-been-waiting-for/article_2f33f7fd-b302-5292-bc9b-e6d2d3fd0eff.html

'The team we've been waiting for'

By Dan Brown The Independent May 28, 2013



Dan Brown/Independent -- Starting quarterback Joseph Dress lowers his shoulder as linebacker Joshua Simmons comes in for the tackle.

Berkeley Head Football Coach Jeff Cruce got his first look at the team as the Stags wrapped up spring practice with the school's annual spring game.

"These young kids will be seniors in the fall," he said. "They're coming of age. This is the team we've been waiting for. We have so many seniors this year we were able to expand on what we do."

Cruce has more than 30 seniors on the roster this fall and will field teams on both sides of the ball entirely comprised of upper classmen.

"These kids know the system now and we know what we have to do," Cruce said. "We've got something the kids can hang their hat on. We're not experimenting with anything. We're set. We're just better than we were last year."

Cruce added that there's been a different feel around the practice field this spring.

"They are confident and they know this summer is going to be big for them," he said.

The biggest accomplishment coming out of spring practice is the establishment of a starting quarterback in rising junior Joseph Dress.

"Dress had a good spring," Cruce said. "He will be our starting quarterback in the fall and Josh Fiddie will back him up. Both kids had good springs."

Cruce said the most improved player coming out of spring practice was tight end Bryce Kunkle.

"Bryce got better as the spring progressed," he said. "He takes coaching well, he wants to be coached."

Cruce added that Kunkle made a couple of key blocks in touchdown runs by Dress in the spring game: "Bryce came up and made a great block on the defense that allowed Dress to find the whole and run for the touchdown."

The Berkeley defense is deep and experienced with seven seniors and four juniors. LeBlanc Whitfield stood out on the defensive side of the trenches during the spring game as did bookends Brandon Williams and Josh Simmons in the defensive backfield.

"These guys are beasts and Simmons is a legitimate D1 candidate," Cruce said. "He's starting to get some looks."

On offense, center Sterling Fiddie has emerged as a solid collegiate prospect.

"He's got good feet," Cruce said. "He's quick and he's big. If we can get his arm healthy he'll be a force on the line this fall."

Of the younger receivers Stags D.J. Witherspoon and Deion Williams both caught the coach's eye. "They're going to be good," he said.

Wide receiver Dylan Baker will be Dress' primary target through the air.

"He'll go after anything and won't think twice about laying-out to make a catch or making a key block," Cruce said. "He knows the game and he's the total team player. He's just a good kid."

Beginning his third year at the helm of the Stags' sports program as athletic director and as football coach, Cruce uses the term "good kid" a lot.

"We stress character and focusing on your teammates," he said. "We are not a selfish team and every one of these kids puts the team first.

"These kids should be role models now. There are younger players watching them from the sidelines. We want our players to do the right things on and off the field, get good grades, use good judgment, and be good citizens."

Cruce said it takes a special athlete to wear the Berkeley Blue.

"It's not your right to play, it's a privilege," he said. "And I think we did a good job of having good character kids as part of our program."

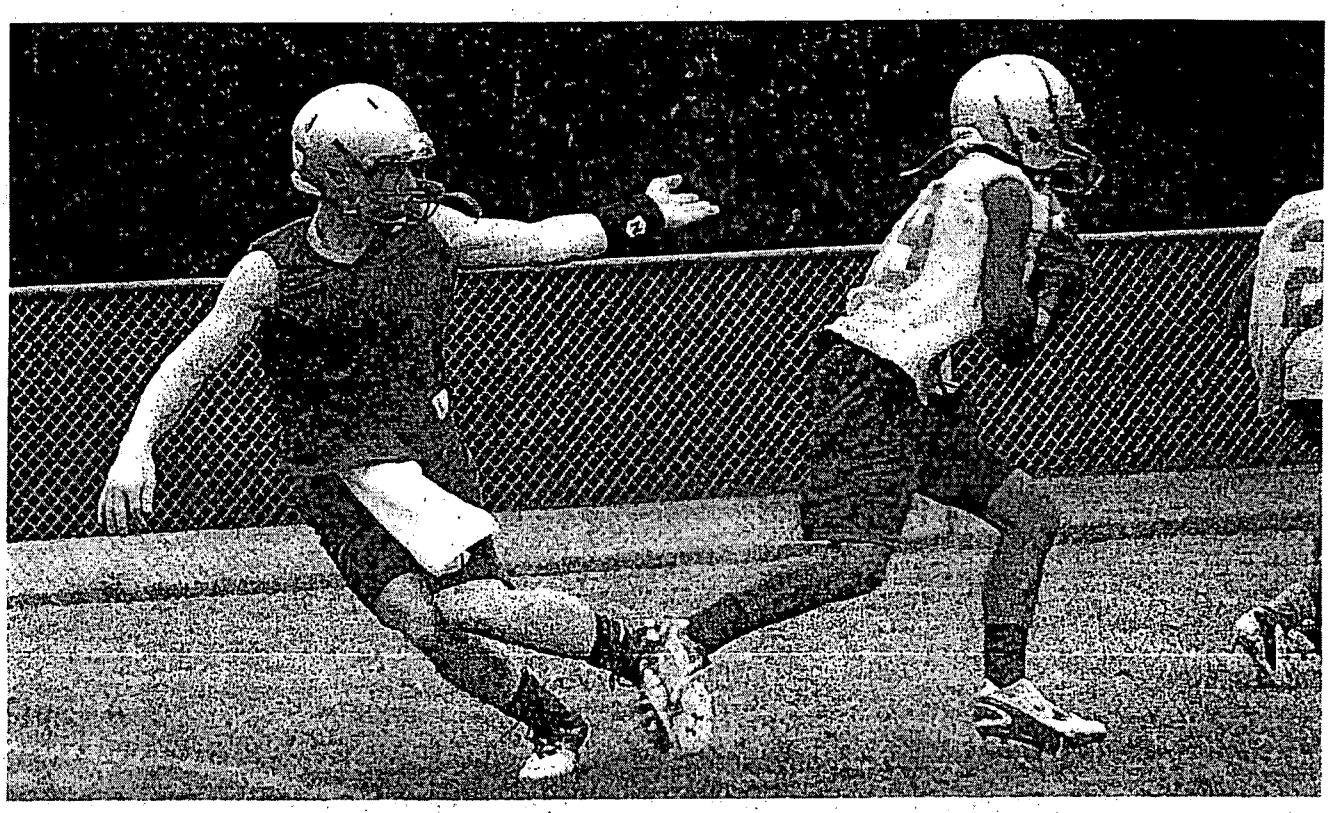
Before the regular season begins Aug. 30 against Stratford the Stags will line up a series of tough scrimmages. They will be tested early and often.

"We play Wando, Beaufort, and Goose Creek early in the summer and then we have Goose Creek again at Sertoma," Cruce said. "That's about as good a preseason match up as you're going to find."

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-eager-to-silence-critics/article_f7e92db4-d656-5339-8b87-ea87018d95bd.html

Stags eager to silence critics

By Dan Brown The Independent Aug 4, 2013



Quarterback Joseph Dress hands off to Josh Sellers during drills on the first day of fall practice. The Stags open the season on Aug. 30 on the road against Stratford.

The 2013 Berkeley Stags are eager to make their mark on the football field in 2013.

"We have been working hard this summer to get ready for August 30 against Stratford," said Stags coach Jeff Cruce. "Our primary goal is to field a team with student athletes of good quality character. This isn't like the old days when selfish players put themselves ahead of the team. We won't tolerate poor grades or poor character on this team.

"No one puts the individual ahead of the team."

Cruce will field a roster stocked with 26 seniors, down from a high of 41 seniors at the start of spring practice in May.

"Being of good character is as much a choice as it is to exhibit poor character quality," said Cruce, who had to whittle the roster down. "We have a good thing going here. These kids have been working hard, and we're not going to let kids with bad attitudes spoil it for everyone else."

Cruce said dismissing 15 seniors over the summer was tough, but "you don't put yourself ahead of your teammates and that's a concept we're preaching daily to these kids. The team comes first," he said.

Cruce is eagerly anticipating the start of the 2013 season and the chance to show Berkeley fans the team they've been waiting for.

"We have a very strong group of seniors that are providing quality leadership over our program," he said. "Guys like Josh Simmons and Branden Williams on defense, Sterling Fiddie and Dylan Baker on offense ... these kids have grown up through this program and it's their time to shine."

The Stags are coming off a pair of disappointing seasons and are four years removed from the state championship in 2009. In 2011, Cruce's first year after 18 years of Jerry Brown on the sidelines, Berkeley finished 4-7 in the regular season and was knocked out of the playoffs in the first round.

In 2012 the Stags finished with a 6-8 mark and were eliminated in the second round of the Class AAA playoffs.

"This is the team I've been waiting for," Cruce said. "I've got the players and the coaches that represent the great tradition of Berkeley Stags football. They know 'character matters.'"

This year the Stags hope to pull it all together and realize the potential Cruce has been waiting for in this, his third season at the helm.

"We are so much more improved than we were this time last year, more improved than the end of last season even," Cruce said. "We have an outstanding core of seniors, many with three years varsity experience. These kids have matured and are experienced. We are big upfront and big and fast on defense. We have a solid quarterback in Joseph Dress under center.

"We expect good things this fall."

The Stags open the 2013 season on Aug. 30 on the road against Stratford.

Berkeley will induct its 2013 Athletic Hall of Fame Class during halftime of its home opener on Sept. 6 against Summerville.

Berkeley looking to overtake Hanahan in Region 8-AAA

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 19, 2013 Monday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 6

Length: 778 words

Byline: GREG HUTTON

Special to The Post and Courier

Body

Last year, a Region 8-AAA championship and third-round playoff appearance proved that Hanahan can compete at the Class AAA level after 28 years in Class AA. This season, the Hawks challenge will be maintaining their spot at the top.

It s hard to stay at the top once you get there, Hanahan coach Charlie Patterson said. (But) we re hoping to be better than we were last year. We want to win the state championship. That s our goal, and we feel like that we have guys that can compete at that level.

The return of 10 defensive starters should help counteract the offensive void left by RB Octavius Hayes, WR Mario Gates and QB Anthony Smalls, a North-South selection last year.

The postseason fate of Orangeburg-Wilkinson, Berkeley, James Island and Hilton Head in 2012 was not determined until the last week of the regular season, and a similar situation could unfold this year.

Stall, meanwhile, aims to improve upon a winless Region 8-AAA campaign.

Berkeley Stags

2012 RECORD: 5-7

COACH: Jeff Cruce (third season)

RETURNING STARTERS: 8 (3 offense, 5 defense)

PLAYERS TO WATCH: WR Dylan Baker, S Josh Simmons, OL Sterling Fiddie, LB Brandon Williams, RB Josh Sellers, QB Joseph Dress, WR Deion Williams, WR DJ Witherspoon, DE Lablac Winfield.

NOTES: The Stags lost six of their first seven games last year before using a midseason turnaround to secure a playoff berth. Fans are eager to continue that upward swing and avoid a third straight losing season. Being at a place like Berkeley where football is important, the goals are very high, said Cruce, whose squad will feature 29 seniors. We are trying to get back to a championship-caliber team.

Hanahan Hawks

2012 RECORD: 11-2

COACH: Charlie Patterson (fifth season)

RETURNING STARTERS: 14 (4 offense, 10 defense)

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Mason Schwerzler, WR Terrell Green, RB Quan Wade, OL Jacob Billings, DB Marlon Washington, LB Lyndon Young, DL Vontrell Grant, LB Ronald England.

NOTES: Schwerzler, Green and Wade will shoulder the load on offense. I think we have the talent to replace what we lost last year, Patterson said. It s just unproven at this point. If they pan out like we think they can, then we ll be as good or better than we were on offense last year.

Hilton Head Seahawks

2012 RECORD: 5-6

COACH: B.J. Payne (second season)

RETURNING STARTERS: 14 (6 offense, 8 defense)

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Khalil Lewis, DT Poona Ford, DB John Baty.

NOTES: The departure of QB Michael Julian, who now plays for the University of Toledo, will carry a heavy impact on the Seahawks approach. Our offense will change a little bit and we will run the ball more, Payne said. You don t just replace a Michael Julian-type athlete, so you alter your offense to your strengths.

James Island Trojans

2012 RECORD: 4-6

COACH: Randy Hilyer (third season)

RETURNING STARTERS: 12 (5 offense, 7 defense)

PLAYERS TO WATCH: TB Buss Hamilton, TE Andrew Hutto, DE/NG Henry Edwards, ILB D eandre Streat, LB Ryan Green, QB Ty Stubbs.

NOTES: The Trojans lost three games by a combined 11 points last year, so Hilyer has spent the summer emphasizing the need for stronger finishes. We don t need guys to be superhuman, (but) just (to) play consistently to the level we know they can and witness in practice, he said. If we get 11 guys doing that on both sides of the ball, we can have a good year. James Island will open its season against Wando for the second straight year.

Orangeburg-Wilkinson Bruins

2012 RECORD: 6-5

COACH: Tommy Brown (sixth season)

RETURNING STARTERS: 14 (8 offense, 6 defense)

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Austin Bradley, DL Albert Huggins, WR Wally Tarte, RB Tyshaun Butler, DE Randall Haynes, LB Jonathan Hagood.

NOTES: O-W comes off a campaign in which it advanced to the playoffs for the first time since 2006. In order to repeat that success, the Bruins will need to overcome the loss of versatile standout Jadar Johnson, who is now at Clemson. After the season, Brown will coach the South Carolina squad in the 2013 Shrine Bowl.

Stall Warriors

2012 RECORD: 2-8

COACH: Johnny Boykin (third season)

RETURNING STARTERS: 14 (7 offense, 7 defense)

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB/WR Jordan Carswell, DB/WR Adario James, DL Andrew Seay, OL John Simpson, OLB/TE Dominique Richardson, DB Elijah Junior.

NOTES: Boykin s holistic approach to the season involves building a foundation with an eye to the long term. This is a total team effort from our administration to our community, he said. We will continue to invest in our recreational programs, our middle schools and our students at (Stall). And while expressing cautious optimism for 2013, he also acknowledged a lack of depth. We need to stay healthy to be competitive this year, Boykin said.

Load-Date: August 19, 2013

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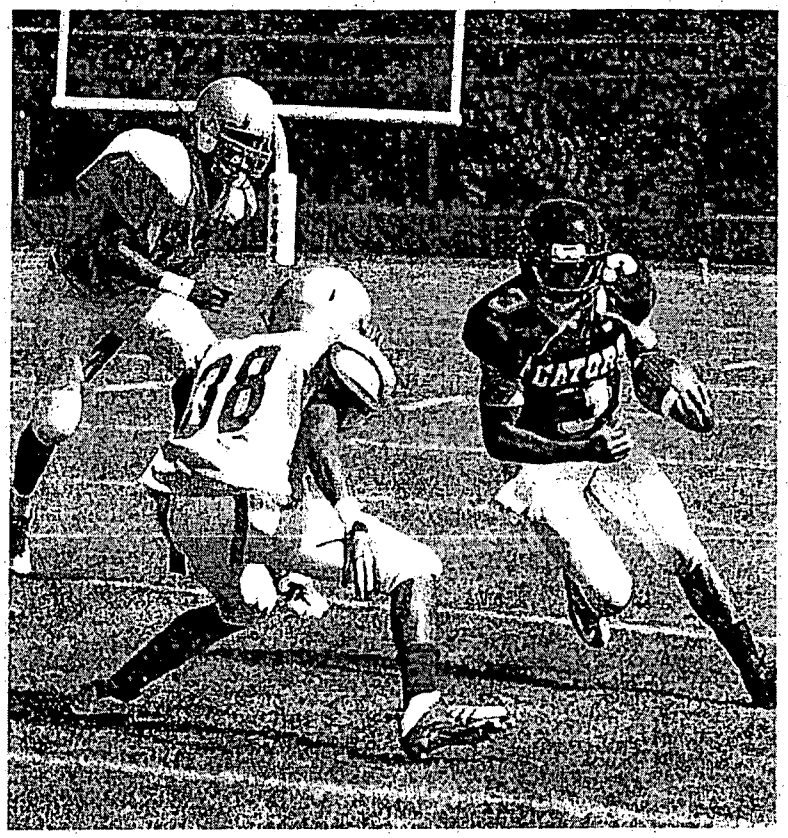
APP. 0717

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/it-s-showtime-timberland-and-cross-kickoff-friday/article_94d3ab67-b52a-5efb-a1b1-64a892a63d00.html

It's Showtime: Timberland and Cross kickoff Friday

By Dan Brown The Independent Aug 20, 2013



Berkeley's Karon Reid sets up to stop Goose Creek's Dantez Bennamon in scrimmage play last week.

It's time to play some football.

The 2013 football season kicks off on Friday with Timberland and Cross among area teams playing games in Week 0.

Berkeley, Cane Bay, Summerville and Goose Creek are taking part in this year's Sertoma Classic on Thursday and Friday, with the Stags and Gators squaring off for a two-quarter scrimmage in the Friday finale at The Citadel's Johnson-Hagood Stadium.

Stag fans hope Berkeley fares better than their game-live scrimmage last week. Capitalizing on four interception returns and two blocked punts the Gators won 61-0.

"It was awful," said BHS Coach Jeff Cruce. "They beat us for sure, but we made them look better than what they actually were by how poorly we played."

Cruce said the game was as ugly as the score indicated.

"We played about as bad as we could play," he said. "It was embarrassing how we played. Since that time though, we rebounded well, we practiced well. We're looking forward to seeing how we've learned from that game and finding out where we are when we play them a second time.

"We hope to give them a better game."

For Timberland and Cross, the waiting game is over. Their regular season begins on Friday. The Wolves open at home against Manning and the Trojans take to the road to take on Kingstree.

The Trojans have wrapped up their pre-season schedule and are now preparing for Friday's trip to Kingstree to take on the Jaguars. Coach Shaun Wright said his team is playing with a mission.

"They want to repeat for Coach Simmons," he said. "We want to win to defend our state championship, but we also want to do this for Coach Simmons. These kids are focused and they are ready."

Wright called off the pre-season's final scrimmage game to let his players heal from some nagging summer injuries.

"We have no depth and that worries me in the event someone goes down. We have the players but there's no one behind them."

Wright has the most dynamic backfield in the state at any classification in 2012 All-State backs Devontae Shepherd, Dionte Evans and Diamonte Evans. Their words are few, but their mission is crystal clear.

"We want to go back," Devontae Shepherd said.

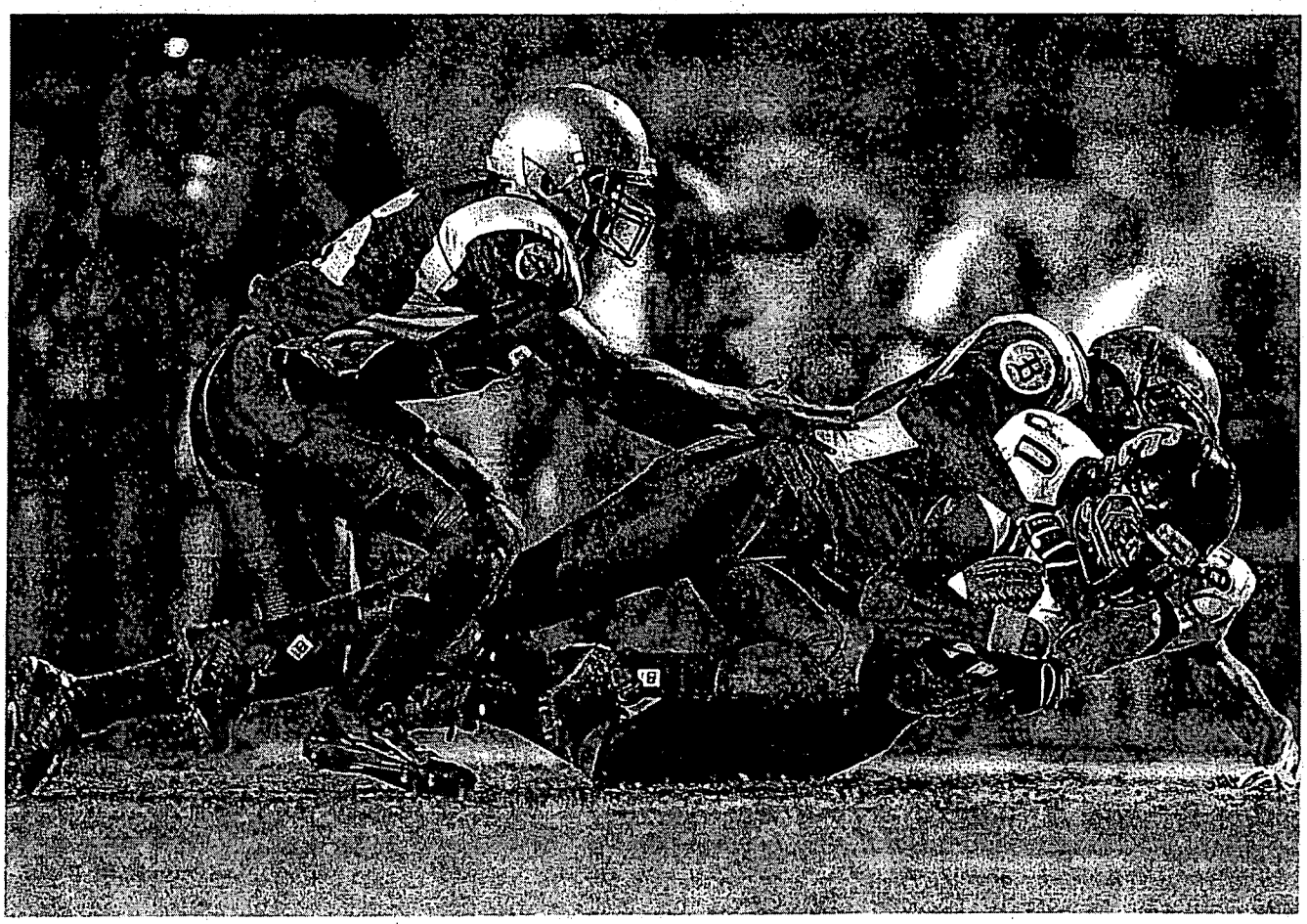
"For coach," Diamonte Evans finished, with a fist to the heart and a nod toward the sky.

The journey starts Friday.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-take-clean-slate-to-stratford/article_d08b495f-4e72-5743-b7d4-be2fc6be49ce.html

Stags take clean slate to Stratford

By Dan Brown The Independent Aug 27, 2013 .



BHS defenders bring down a Gator during last week's Sertoma.

The best thing about the summer football scrimmage schedule is that the games don't mean a thing. Win or lose, the slate is wiped clean come Labor Day weekend and teams start over 0-0.

Coach Jeff Cruce begins his third season at the helm of Berkeley Stags football, and this is the team he said he's been waiting for since he replaced Jerry Brown in 2011.

"I've got the team I want and the players in place to do good things this year," he said. "We expect good things to happen this fall."

Berkeley fell to Goose Creek 36-20 in their two-quarter Sertoma Classic scrimmage Friday, but the contest was just that, a scrimmage. The real games begin this week and for the Stags, their focus is on this Friday and Stratford and what to do with the rocket arm of Knight quarterback Jacob Park.

"Park is going to get his numbers but we have to minimize the big plays and answer with our own plays," Cruce said. "We have to make the plays to put ourselves in position to win the game."

The Stags have one of the toughest pre-region schedules in the area, kicking off the season with the Knights and following with Summerville, Cane Bay, Manning and Timberland.

"I'll stack my preseason schedule up against anybody," Cruce said. "Three AAAA schools then Manning and Timberland. These are five very good football teams. We'll be ready for our region schedule come October."

Berkeley gets little relief when October arrives with a much-improved James Island and Hanahan leading off the region slate on Oct. 4 and Oct. 11, respectively.

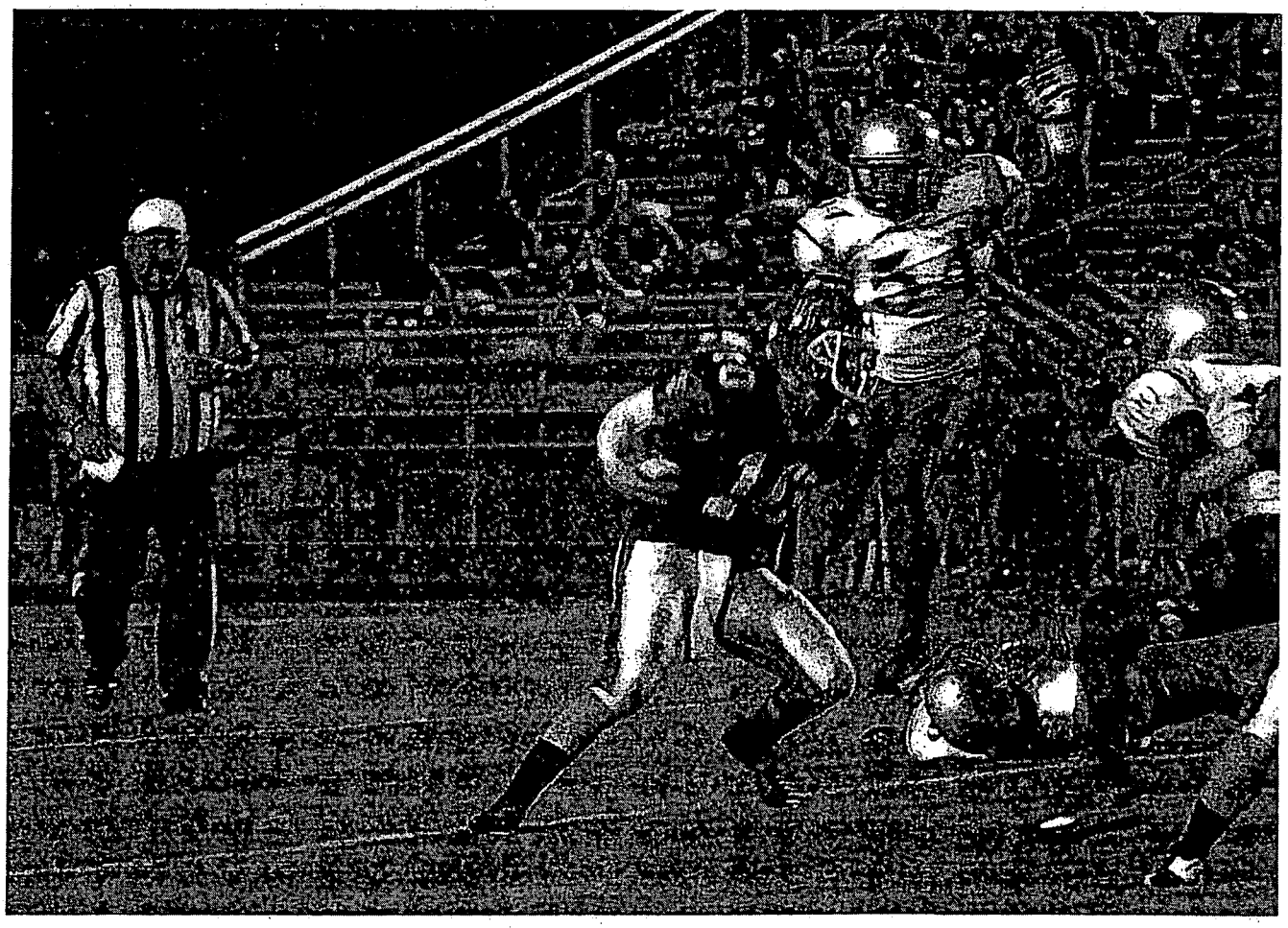
"We are so far above where we were this time last year," Cruce said. "We've been able to work on a lot of things over the summer besides teach these kids how to run an offense and defense."

Kickoff at Stratford is at 7:30 p.m.

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/knights-outlast-berkeley/article_3daf9865-ad28-5eb8-bd43-db09e726003c.html

Knights outlast Berkeley, 29-10

Dan Brown Aug 29, 2013



Knights quarterback Jacob Park evades the rush of Berkeley's Darrius Nelson and Josh Simmons.

Stratford quarterback Jacob Park proved two things in the Knights home opening 29-10 win over the Berkeley Stags: He has the golden arm to get a shot at playing SEC football, and he's still just a high school senior.

Park threw three interceptions to the Stags' Dee Harley – but also threw for three touchdowns to lead the Knights to their third straight win over Berkeley.

The Stags salvaged a horrendous first half by staging a comeback in the third quarter, breaking a 14-quarter scoreless streak against the Knights with a Joseph Dress 28-yard scoring strike to D.J. Witherspoon to close the gap to 16-7.

Vance Bailey made the score 16-10 with a 30-yard field goal late in the third quarter.

Park, who has committed to play football in 2014 at Georgia, shook off the three picks and put the game away with

a 12-yard touchdown pass to Thad Thompson.

Jordan Johnson added a touchdown late in the fourth quarter on a 33-yard run to cap the scoring and seal the win.

"We had a positive third quarter after an awful first half," said Stags Coach Jeff Cruce. "We have something to build on from here for next week."

Life for Berkeley could not get any worse in the first half.

Following a three-and-out on their first possession the Stags threw an interception, had a blocked punt, a fumble, and a safety on a bad punt snap.

Park connected on a pair of TD passes in the first half to Johnson to go with the safety.

Berkeley (0-1) plays Summerville at home on Friday in their annual Hall of Fame game. Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m.

Stratford travels to Sumter next week to take on the Gamecocks.

Showdowns loom in Berkeley County

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

August 30, 2013 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 3

Length: 460 words

Byline: pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

The Hanahan football team had a tune-up game last week and walked away with a 67-14 victory over Military Magnet. This week, the Hawks will be tested.

Timberland, the No. 4 team in the latest statewide poll of Class AA teams, travels to Hanahan, which is No. 7 in Class AAA. Kickoff is set for 7:30 p.m. Friday.

This is going to show us where we really are at this stage of the season. Hanahan coach Charlie Patterson said. I think this week will be a genuine measuring stick.

The high school football season shifts into full gear this week, and there s two big battles involving Berkeley County schools. Timberland vs. Hanahan and Berkeley at Goose Creek.

Timberland is 62-4 over the past five years, including 11-2 last fall.

This is the youngest team I ve had since I ve been here, Timberland coach Art Craig said. While we re young, there are some positives. We are extremely athletic and fast.

The Wolves start four seniors, 11 juniors, six sophomores and a freshman.

As always, they have very good athletes, Patterson said of Timberland. Their guys upfront on their defensive line are very disruptive. The linebackers and secondary are solid, too.

Hanahan was 11-2 last fall but lost some key players to graduation. Mason Schwerzler is the new quarterback and Quan Wade is a big, powerful back with good speed.

Patterson said they keys to victory are avoiding big plays and winning the turnover battle. That s something the Hawks didn t do in last year s game.

Timberland s Rod McCray scooped up a fumble with just over a minute remaining and returned it 30 yards for a score in the Wolves 25-21 victory. It gave the Wolves their 10th straight victory over the Hawks.

Berkeley, meanwhile, will try to end its skid against Stratford when the Stags travel to Stackley Field.

Berkeley will have to stop Stratford quarterback Jacob Park, who has committed to play at Georgia.

Park completed 5 of 5 passes for 271 yards and three TDs in two quarters of play last week in the Sertoma Classic. He also had another 70-yard completion wiped out because of a penalty.

He s one of the top four quarterbacks in the country and competed in the Elite 11 camp, Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce said. He s a great quarterback who is going to play in the SEC. He deserves all the accolades. But Stratford is more than Jacob Park. Their defense is very, very good and their coach, Ray Stackley, is one of the best. You don t win more than 200 games and have a field named after you for nothing.

Cruce is in his third year at the school and has yet to have a winning season in Moncks Corner. The Stags were 4-7 in Cruce s first year and went 6-7 last fall.

Basically, we started 14 sophomores my first year here, Cruce said. This team has had two years together. We are ready.

Load-Date: August 30, 2013

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Will third year be the charm for Cruce?

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 6, 2013 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 3

Length: 481 words

Byline: pbowman@postandcourier.com

Body

This could be the game Berkeley turns it around. Whether it is or not, this should be the year when the Stags return to their winning ways after back-to-back losing seasons.

The Stags opened the 2013 season with a 29-10 loss to Stratford, and have another big test when Summerville travels to Moncks Corner for a 7:30 p.m. showdown Friday.

Summerville defeated Cane Bay, 28-0, last week to give coach John McKissick his 603rd career victory.

We face the winningest coach in football history, third-year Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce said. Summerville is an excellent football team. But we re getting better. I don t know who it will be, but someday we re going to knock off someone big.

Cruce struggled in his first two years in Moncks Corner. The Stags were 4-7 in Cruce s first year and 5-7 last fall.

But the third year, historically, has been when Cruce has turned sub-.500 teams into winners.

He was hired at Hanahan in time for the 1995 season. After two seasons of struggles, the Hawks went undefeated during the 1997 regular season and allowed only one touchdown in 12 games.

Cruce was named coach of the new Cane Bay High School in 2008 and the Cobras posted back-to-back losing seasons in their first two years. But the team went 9-4 in year No. 3, reaching the third round of the Class AAA playoffs.

The Stags have potential, but plenty of room for improvement. Special teams mistakes cost Berkeley four touchdowns in preseason games.

It wasn t much better last week, when one bad snap on a punt resulted in an eventual Stratford touchdown. Another resulted in a safety.

Nine points off turnovers, that s way too much, Cruce said. We ve worked hard to eliminate special teams mistakes. We have to keep correcting our mistakes.

Cruce said this is the fastest Summerville team he s seen over the last few years. He is impressed with sophomore quarterback Sawyer Bridges, who is in his second season as a starter.

Will third year be the charm for Cruce?

Bridges was 15 for 35 in a 28-0 victory over Cane Bay, throwing for 171 yards and a score.

Their quarterback doesn t mismanage the game, Cruce said. He s been effective.

Summerville has dominated Berkeley in recent years. The Stags haven t defeated Summerville since the opening game of the 2004 season when they posted a 16-3 victory. Summerville even defeated Berkeley, 28-20, in 2009, the year the Stags won the Division II-AAAA state title.

I know Jeff is frustrated, McKissick said. I think they are a lot better than last year.

Berkeley had some mistakes in the first game, and so did we, McKissick said. Our defense played well, but our offense didn t. I don t know if it was us or Cane Bay. We had 10 penalties and two fumbles. We re not good enough to make mistakes like that and win on a consistent basis.

Summerville posted a 36-12 victory over Berkeley last fall.

I know Jeff is frustrated, McKissick said. I think they are a lot better than last year.

Load-Date: September 6, 2013

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Summerville rides big plays to victory

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 7, 2013 Saturday, Sports

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 7

Length: 496 words

Body

MONCKS CORNER Summerville s Sawyer Bridges continues to develop as a quarterback, and the Green Wave continues to come up with big plays.

Summerville ventured into Berkeley s Bonner Stadium for its annual clash of football titans and proved to be too much with a 43-20 victory over the Stags in front of about 4,000 fans.

The Green Wave gave up a 55-yard touchdown run when Joseph Dress scored on a keeper to give Berkeley a 7-6 lead in the first quarter. After that, Summerville dominated with big plays. The Green Wave had three plays go for 208 yards and three scores.

Darin Smalls, who has committed to South Carolina, had a 77-yard TD catch and a 76-yard punt return for a score. David Coccoli ripped off a 55-yard TD late in the game.

We had three big plays and that was the difference, Summerville coach John McKissick said. They moved the ball up and down the field at will. Our big plays were the difference. It s as simple as that.

Summerville upped its record to 2-0 and gave McKissick his 604th career victory. Berkeley fell to 0-2, and continues to feel the wrath of green and gold. Summerville is 8-0 in games between the two rivals since 2004.

I am proud of the kids, Berkeley coach Jeff Cruce said. They played hard. We gave up some big plays, but we have the makings of a good football team.

Bridges, a sophomore who has already committed to Clemson in baseball, accounted for three touchdowns.

He threw a 17-yard pass to tight end Sean Smith for the first score of the game. Then Bridges marched the Green Wave to three scores in six minutes and 21 seconds.

He had a big run and pass to set us Jacerie Ponder s 8-yard TD run with 11:01 left in the half. He hit a wide-open Smalls for a catch-and-run that went for 76 yards with 8:20 left in the half.

Bridges made it 26-7 with a two-yard TD run with 4:39 left in the half. Berkeley s Joshua Simmons intercepted a pass and returned it 50 yards, deep into Green Wave territory. But the Stags managed only a Vance Bailey field goal in the final seconds of the half.

Berkeley s Simmons cut the lead to 26-17 with a 12-yard TD run. But David Kennedy kicked a 44-yard field goal and Smalls returned a punt 76 yards for a score to give the Green Wave a 19-point cushion.

Summerville rides big plays to victory

Summerville has a big test next week when Goose Creek travels to McKissick Field in a battle of unbeaten teams. The Gators have won 28 straight games on the field.

I might not show up, McKissick said with a laugh. I tell you what, Goose Creek is a good football team. We will have to play better.

Summerville 6 20 0 17 43

Berkeley 7 3 7 3 20

S Sean Smith 17 pass from Sawyer Bridges (run failed)

B Joseph Dress 55 run (Vance Bailey kick)

S Jacerie Ponder 8 run (pass failed)

S Darin Smalls 77 pass from Bridges (David Kennedy kick)

S Bridges 2 run (Kennedy kick)

B Bailey 22 FG

B Joshua Simmons 12 run (Kennedy kick)

S Kennedy 44 FG

S Smalls 76 punt return (Kennedy kick)

Berkeley Bailey 31 FG

S David Coccoli 55 run (Kennedy kick)

Load-Date: September 7, 2013

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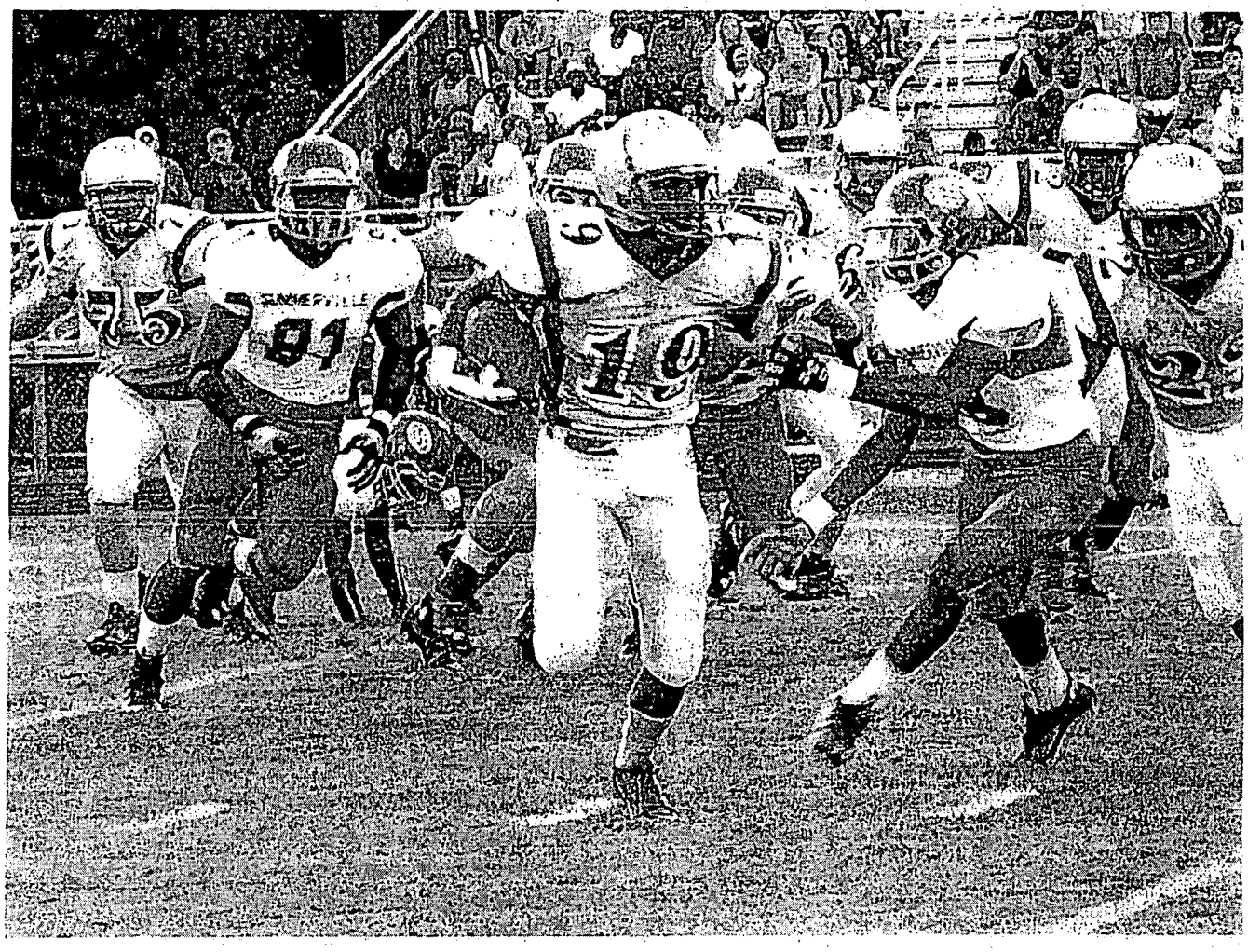
http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/big-plays-bite-stags/article_12f6e7c0-2f33-5ecd-891a-7106dff1dfd0.html

Big plays bite Stags

By Dan Brown The Independent Sep 10, 2013



Stags running back Josh Sellers breaks off a big gain against the Green Wave.

If anyone happened to overhear Summerville Coach John McKissick after the Green Wave's 43-20 win over Berkeley last Friday night at BHS, they would think the scoreboard had the numbers wrong.

"They beat the tar out of us," the legendary coach said. "They outgained us and they had more first downs than we did."

McKissick held up three fingers.

"We had three big plays, that's it," he said.

The three big plays McKissick referenced were three big touchdowns: A 77-yard catch and run touchdown pass

from Sawyer Bridges to Darin Smalls, a 71-yard fourth quarter punt return, again by Smalls, and a dagger-to-the-heart 56-yard run up the middle by David Coccoli.

"We played our butts off out there," Berkeley Head Coach Jeff Cruce said. "We have nothing to hang our heads about. We established our running game and we put points on the board.

"Take away those three big plays and we're in this football game."

It's the big plays though, that continue to haunt the Stags in the season's early going. Including the pre-season scrimmages and the season opener against Stratford, those plays include six touchdowns resulted from kicking team miscues, and four from interceptions. The silver lining around this dark cloud is there were no bad snaps on punts and except for the one punt return late for a score, the kicking game and special teams play was solid against Summerville.

"We kicked a pair of field goals and improved in the special teams area," Cruce said.

Kicker Vance Bailey is perfect from the field, nailing three field goals in three attempts over two games.

In the first quarter the Green Wave took command and marched 60 yards on five plays on its first possession, culminating in a 17-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Sawyer Bridges to big tight end Sean Smith.

Berkeley answered quickly when Joseph Dress scored on a 55-yard run, a play action fake that fooled just about everybody on the field, on the sidelines and the 4,000 fans packing the Bonner Stadium stands. Bailey's kick put the Stags on top 7-6.

The Green Wave answered with a 20-point second quarter that threatened to put the game away before halftime. Jacerie Ponder scored on an 8-yard run at the 11:01 mark of the quarter to make the score 12-7.

Three minutes later Bridges connected with his second TD pass of the night, a 77-yard catch and run to Darin Smalls. David Kennedy's PAT was good and Summerville went up by a 19-7 score.

Bridges would set up the Green Wave's third touchdown of the second quarter with an 11-yard pass to his tight end Smith and then take matters into his own hands to score on a one-yard plunge to make the score 26-7 with less than five minutes remaining in the first half.

The Stags would not go down without a fight, though, as Josh Simmons picked off a Bridges pass deep in Berkeley territory. He returned the interception 56 yards to the Summerville 20.

Dress nearly scored his second touchdown of the night with a 16-yard run to the four-yard line, but was hurt on the play and did not see action the rest of the night.

The drive stalled at the goal line and Bailey knocked a 21-yard field goal through the uprights with 11.5 seconds remaining on the clock.

"He got banged up a little on the play," Cruce said of his quarterback's injury. "He'll be fine for next week. Matthew Harkness did an excellent job in his place. He played well."

As it did in the Stratford game, the Stags defense stepped it up in the third quarter, shutting down the Green Wave offense as Berkeley battled back to cut the score to 26-17 on an 18-yard run by Josh Sellers with 1:52 left in the third quarter.

Early in the fourth quarter, Summerville kicker David Kennedy snatched the Stags' momentum away when he drilled a 44-yard field goal to make the score 29-17 at the 10:24 mark.

It all went down hill from there for the gold-attired Stags.

Smalls followed with his third TD of the night, the 77-yard punt return at the 7:51 mark to make the score 36-17.

Bailey drilled his second field goal of the night, a 36-yard kick to close the gap to 36-20 with a little less than six

minutes remaining in the game.

Three plays later tailback David Coccoli ripped off a 55-yard scoring run untouched up the middle to put the game on ice 43-20.

"We're improving," Cruce said. "We corrected some mistakes we were making early on. Our primary goal was to come in and establish the running game, and we did that.

"Our kicking game and special teams play improved. I'm proud of our kids. We gave up some big plays but we have the makings of a good football team."

McKissick, who picked up his 604th career win, agreed.

"We had three big plays and that was the difference," he said. "They moved the ball up and down the field at will. Our big plays were the difference.

"It's as simple as that."

The Green Wave improved to 2-0 and play Goose Creek on Friday. The Stags dropped to 0-2 and host Cane Bay.

McKissick said his Green Wave had better be ready when the Gators come to call. "We have to play better," he said.

For the Stags, Cane Bay marks their third straight Class AAAA opponent of the season, sixth if the pre-season scrimmages are included.

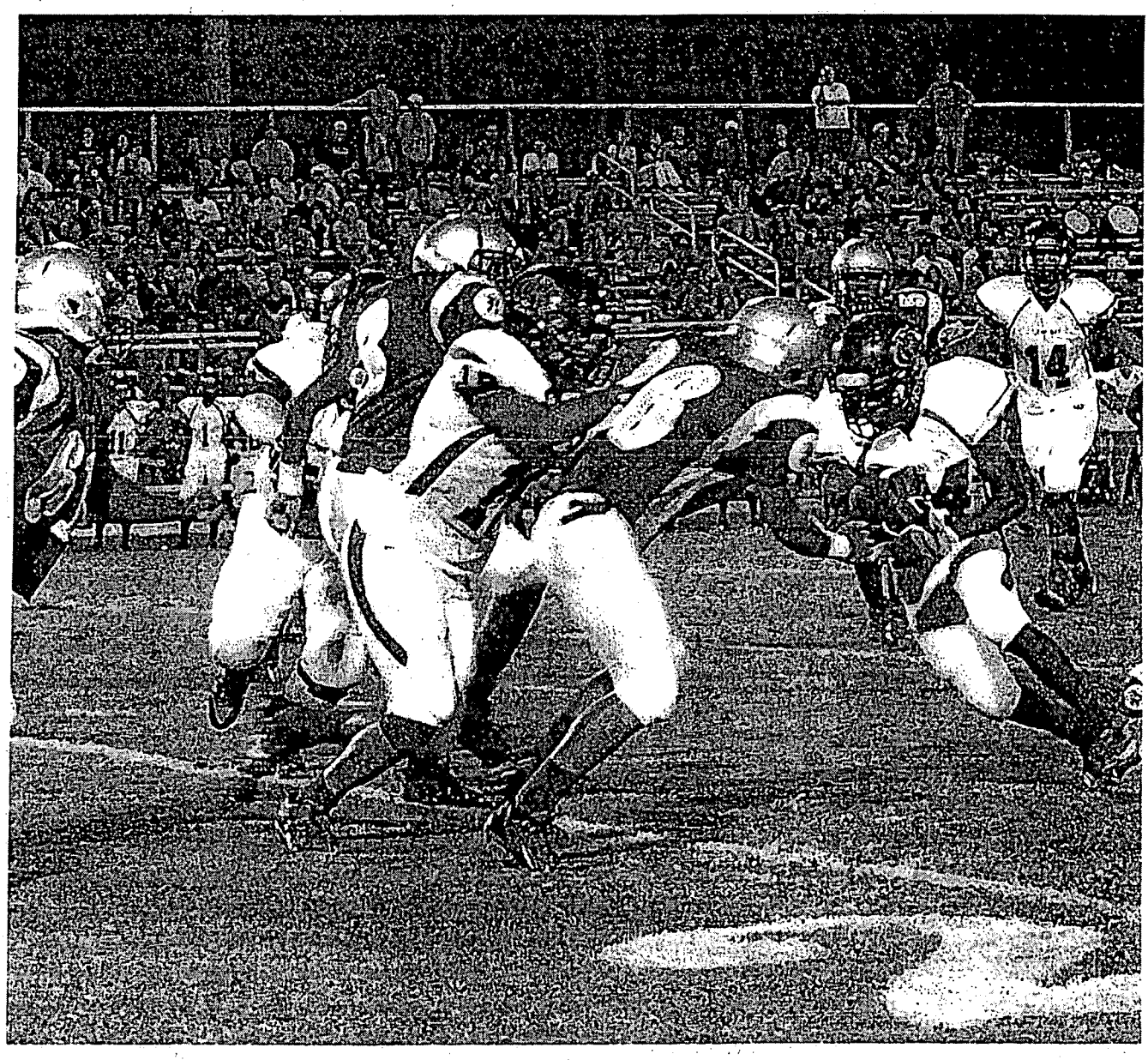
"We will have played three AAAA schools so far this year," Cruce said. "We had scrimmages against Wando, Beaufort and Goose Creek. Then Goose Creek again at Sertoma, and we start the season against Stratford, Summerville and now Cane Bay."

The Stags will be ready, he added: "It's always a big game when Berkeley plays Cane Bay."

http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/berkeley-tops-cane-bay-for-first-win/article_806282f9-bd40-5082-9e60-cb72a70e7463.html

Berkeley tops Cane Bay for first win

By Dan Brown Sep 17, 2013



Tyler Crouse lines up to stop the Cobra's Tyler Farr during the Stags' 28-13 win over Cane Bay.

The Berkeley Stags had momentum, lost it, and then got it back with a pair of fourth quarter touchdowns to hold off a Cane Bay comeback. Berkeley defeated the Cobras 28-13 at Jim Bradley Field Friday night.

The win was the Stags' first of the year to improve to 1-2. The Cobras drop to 0-3 with the loss.

"It's our first win," said Berkeley Coach Jeff Cruce. "Now we can move on from here."

Branden Williams picked off a Devin Kilgore pass at the Cane Bay 21-yard line, one of three Berkeley interceptions on the night, and galloped untouched for the touchdown with 6:02 remaining in the fourth quarter. A Vance Bailey extra point made the score 21-13.

After the Cobras turned the ball over on downs, quarterback Matt Harkness picked up his own dropped snap and rambled home five yards for a touchdown to cap a 30-yard drive on four plays.

"Our defense stepped it up in the fourth quarter to take the game back," Cruce said.

The Stags secondary has tallied six interceptions in three games, four by free safety Dee Harley.

Berkeley came out firing in the first half on a pair of touchdown runs by Jamal Bowman to go up 14-0 at the half.

In the third quarter, the Cobras snatched the momentum away by recovering a Berkeley fumble on the second half kickoff. Tyler Farr capped a five-play, 37-yard drive with a one-yard dive for a score at the 9:15 mark of the third quarter.

"Our defense came out smoking in the third quarter," said Cane Bay Coach Russell Zehr.

"I was very impressed with the way we played tonight. We showed a lot of class and a lot of heart. We did we what we needed to do to win this game."

Cane Bay faked a punt on their next drive as Romonte Frazier took the short snap and raced 12 yards for a first down to the Stags 26-yard line. Kilgore capped the drive with a 12-yard scoring toss to Devin Dingle. Phillip Jackson's PAT sailed wide right and Berkeley held on to a slim 14-13 lead before putting the game away with the two fourth quarter scores.

"That momentum thing is something else," Zehr said. "Just like that it changes hands."

The Stags hit the road to take on Manning next week. Cane Bay hosts Beaufort.

friday s Key Matchups

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 27, 2013 Friday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 3

Length: 324 words

Body

West Ashley (4-0) at Summerville (3-1)

LAST YEAR: Summerville won, 45-33.

COACHES: Bobby Marion, West Ashley; John McKissick, Summerville.

NOTABLE: The Wildcats are seeking their first 5-0 start since the school opened in 2000. They will battle a Summerville team that last week posted 36 points in a victory over Wando, but managed only 270 yards in total offense as coach McKissick won his 605th career victory. The Green Wave is 13-1 all-time vs. the Wildcats.

KEEP AN EYE ON: West Ashley junior running back Marquize Jenkins. He rushed for 91 yards and 3 TDs in last week s win over Colleton County.

DID YOU KNOW: Coach McKissick celebrated his 87th birthday on Wednesday.

Timberland (3-1) at Berkeley (1-3)

LAST YEAR: Berkeley won, 21-20.

COACHES: Art Craig, Timberland; Jeff Cruce, Berkeley.

NOTABLE: Timberland has been impressive since losing its season opener 44-0 to Class AAA power Hanahan. The Wolves have outscored their last three foes by a 106-18 margin. Berkeley needs a victory after dropping a 33-9 decision to Manning. The Stags are allowing 29.5 points per game.

KEEP AN EYE ON: Timberland s Matt Gable. He can play quarterback, wide receiver and punter. He also is a threat to run the football.

DID YOU KNOW: Berkeley leads the all-time series, 10-2.

Stratford (4-0) at Colleton County (1-3)

LAST YEAR: Stratford won, 62-0.

COACHES: Ray Stackley, Stratford; Chris Collins, Colleton County.

NOTABLE: Stratford faces an improved Colleton County team. The Cougars ended a 34-game losing streak two weeks ago and lost to undefeated West Ashley by seven last week. Stratford, No. 8 in the latest state poll, is led by

Jacob Park, who has passed for 1,270 yards and 12 TDs. The Knights defense has allowed 78 points in four games.

KEEP AN EYE ON: Stratford wide receivers Tyree Scroggins and Thad Thompson. They have combined for 33 catches for 835 yards and 7 TDs.

DID YOU KNOW: Stratford is 11-1 all-time against Colleton County.

Philip M. Bowman

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Berkeley tops Timberland

Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

September 28, 2013 Saturday

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Section: 03,C; Pg. 8

Length: 382 words

Byline: The Independent

Body

MONCKS CORNER Josh Simmons returned an interception for a touchdown and recovered a fumble to help Berkeley beat Timberland, 31-12, Friday night.

Diamonte Harley added a pair of interceptions for the Stags (2-3), who finished with four picks against the Wolves.

Timberland (3-2) turned the ball over six times in the game and now has 16 turnovers for the season.

You can t turn the ball over 16 times and expect to win football games, said Timberland coach Art Craig.

The Wolves hit the ground running as Bernard Harmon capped a seven-play, 65-yard drive with a 9-yard run to put Timberland on top, 6-0.

After both teams exchanged punts, the Stags found life, marching 70 yards in eight plays, the drive capped by a Matthew Harkness pass to D.J. Witherspoon for a 10-yard touchdown.

The wheels came off the Timberland wagon less than a minute later as Simmons picked off a Ryan Hood pass and galloped untouched 56 yards for the score.

The Stags took control in the second quarter when they called a fake punt on fourth-and-eight. Vance Bailey hit Tirahn Bradford with a pass for a 36-yard gain to the Timberland four-yard line.

One play later, Josh Sellers drove up the middle for a touchdown. Bailey s PAT gave the Stags a 21-6 lead heading into the locker room.

Berkeley added a pair of scores to put the game away. Bailey kicked a 36-yard field goal to make the score 24-6 early in the fourth quarter.

Harmon added his second touchdown of the night on a three-yard run and Timberland recovered the ensuing onside kickoff, but a fumble recovery by James Ancrum deep in Wolves territory killed the drive.

Jamal Bowman iced the game on the next play, scoring on a 10-yard run.

Both teams played hard out there tonight, said Stags coach Jeff Cruce. Our defense stepped it up and played a great game after what we did last week. It was important to come out here and get the win with the region schedule starting next week.

The Stags travel to James Island on Oct. 3, while Timberland hosts Kingstree on Oct. 4.

T Bernard Harmon 9 run (kicked failed)

B Matthew Harkness 10 pass to D.J. Witherspoon (Vance Bailey kick)

B Josh Simmons 56 interception return (Bailey kick)

B Josh Sellars 3 run (Bailey kick)

B Bailey 36 FG

T Harmon 3 un (kick failed)

B Jamal Bowman 10 run (Bailey kick)

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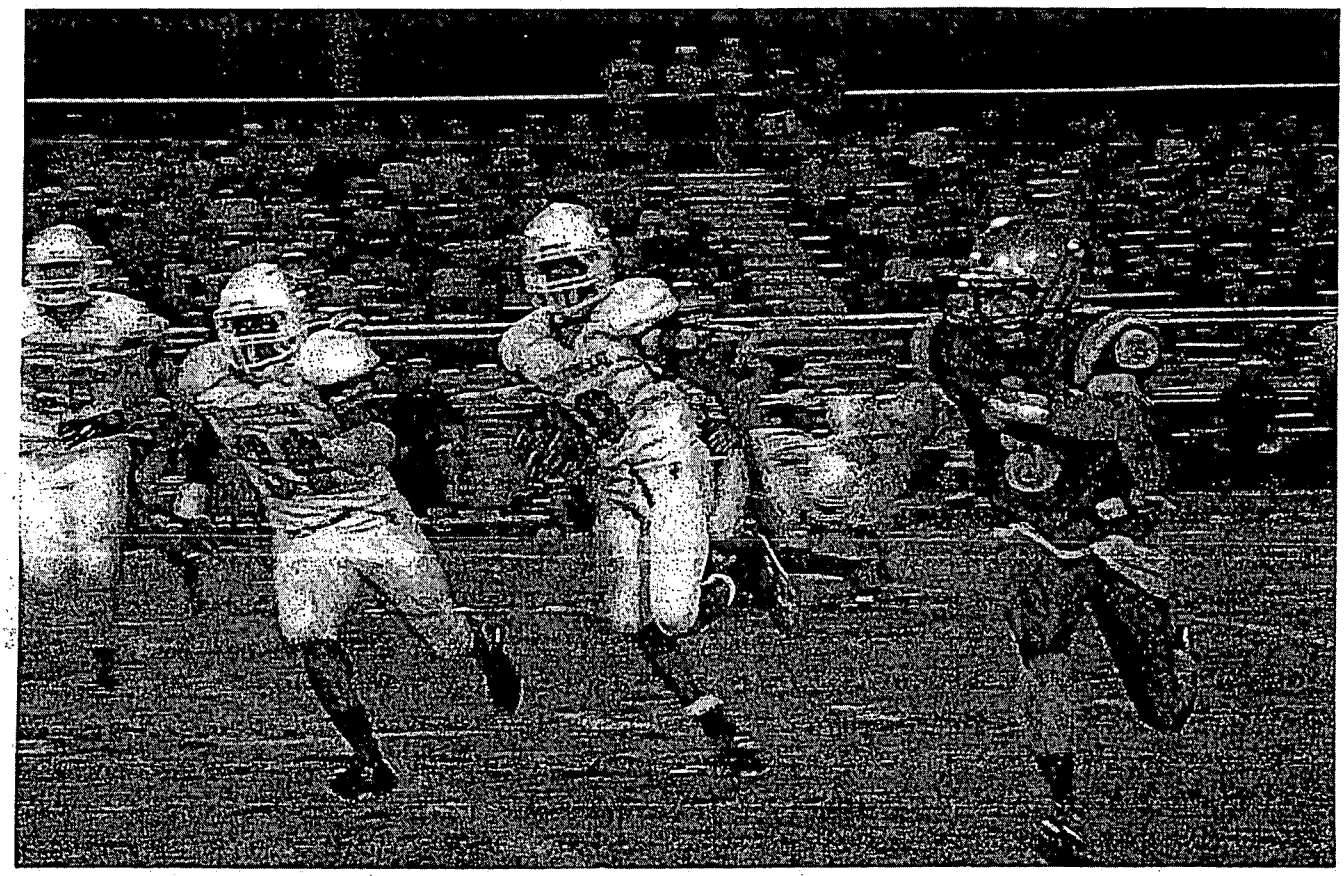
http://www.berkeleyind.com/archives/stags-rack-wolves/article_af4da6b3-974e-55ee-ba0f-312903b8b2f2.html

Stags rack Wolves 31-12

By Dan Brown The Independent Oct 1, 2013



Quarterback Joseph Dress is not expected to miss much time after going down with an ankle injury of the first quarter of Berkeley's 31-12 win over Timberland.

Timberland Coach Art Craig didn't mince words following the Wolves 31-12 loss to Berkeley Friday night in Moncks Corner.

""You can't turn the ball over sixteen times and expect to win football games."

The Wolves (3-2) turned the ball over six times, four interceptions and two fumbles giving Timberland 16 turnovers in the last two years against Berkeley (2-3).

Berkeley's Josh Simmons returned an interception for a touchdown and recovered a fumble, and Diamonte Harley picked off two passes. The picks give Harley six interceptions in five games for the Stags.

"It was important for our defense to play well after last week," said BHS Coach Jeff Cruce. "We stole the momentum with the turnovers and were able to put some points on the board when we needed them."

The Wolves hit the ground running as Bernard Harmon capped a seven play, 65-yard drive with a nine yard run to put Timberland on top 6-0.

After both teams exchanged punts, the Stags found life, marching 70 yards in eight plays, the drive capped by a Matthew Harkness to D.J. Witherspoon 10-yard touchdown pass to put Berkeley on top 7-6 after a Vance Bailey kick.

The wheels came off the Timberland wagon less than a minute later as Simmons picked off a Ryan Hood pass, the first of four interceptions on the night, and galloped untouched 56 yards for the score. Bailey's kick made the score 14-6 with 2:23 remaining in the first quarter.

"We have to have our players step up and take ownership of these games or else we're going to keep repeating the same mistakes we make," Craig said. "We had about an eight-minute funk in the second quarter, and I challenged the guys to come out and play hard in the second half, and they did that.

"We're just having problems putting the ball in the end zone right now."

The Stags drove the dagger in the Wolves' heart in the second quarter when the Stags on fourth-and-eight, faked a punt, and Bailey hit Tirahn Bradford with a pass for a 36-yard gain to the Timberland four-yard line.

One play later Josh Sellers drove up the middle for a touchdown. Bailey's PAT gave the Stags a 21-6 lead heading into the locker room.

Berkeley would take it to the house in the second half, adding a pair of fourth quarter scores to put the game away. Bailey showed he could score with his foot as well, connecting on a 36-yard field goal to make the score 24-6 early in the fourth quarter.

Harmon added his second touchdown of the night on a three-yard run. Timberland recovered the ensuing onside kickoff but a fumble recovery by James Ancrum deep in Wolves territory killed the drive.

Jamal Bowman iced the game on the next play, scoring on a 10-yard run.

"Both teams played hard out there tonight," said Cruce. "It was important to come out here and get the win with the region schedule starting next week."

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