

## WILDCATS

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to do, but he's come a long way from where he was last year. If he does become the epitome of a team player, he can become the kind of player who can take over a game. He has all the tools to do it. The only thing that's missing is maturity, and he's working on that."

Maturity isn't an issue with senior outside linebacker Kelvin Jackson. Lindsey said Jackson missed only three voluntary workouts this summer and has worked hard to help the Wildcats win.

Jackson started his career as a defensive back as a sophomore, but he moved to linebacker last year. Lindsey said Jackson has always put the team first.

"I don't know if Kelvin prefers playing linebacker or defensive back because he doesn't complain when he gets moved around," Lindsey said. "He's a team player. If I needed him to play quarterback, he could go over there and pick it up pretty quick. For Kelvin, just being able to get on the field is enough for him."

Jackson said he has always been a "team-first" player, but an incident this summer showed him how important it is to enjoy life and football.

For veterans, John Carpenter was an institution. He was one of Lindsey's assistants and helped many of the players he coached in the classroom.

"He would make you work in class, but he'd be the first to start joking around with you

after class," Jackson said. "It was easy to give him respect on the field because he gave you respect right back. He didn't belittle you and talk bad about you. He wanted you to become a better player and a better person."

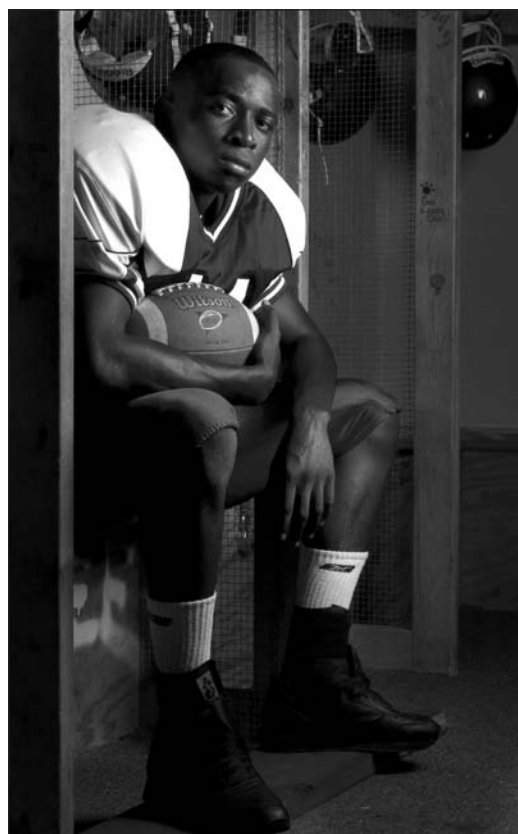
Carpenter was killed June 16 on Interstate 75 in Manatee County. A vehicle had swerved to miss a dog and when Carpenter swerved to miss that vehicle, his sports utility vehicle flipped several times and he was thrown from the vehicle.

Even though he had been teacher at Wildwood for only two years, Carpenter made a profound impact on many of the players he coached.

"He was only 26 years old," senior offensive lineman Mitch Williams said. "His life was just beginning. We can all take something from Coach Carpenter's death, but I think the big lesson is to be the best person you can be and live life to the fullest."

Davis said the team has dedicated the season to Carpenter and the school has dedicated a bench on campus to him.

"We know the best 11 players will be on the field, and we all want to be there," senior offensive lineman Jonathan Rivera said. "The easiest way to be one of the best 11 is to reach for excellence. That was Coach Carpenter's goal every day he was with us. If we can get there, he can watch down on us and enjoy our first winning season here with us."



Wildwood junior running back Tory Davis has returned to the Wildcats with a different attitude and a mind-set that he will help the football program compete for the Class 2B-District 5 title this season.

DAVID MANNING  
Staff Photographer

## THE VILLAGES

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end Clayton Osteen as primary leaders. Both players have been with the program since its inception.

Pettus said they do whatever is asked of them without complaint and use their work ethic to set an example for their teammates.

"Kenny plays the least glamorous position in the backfield, but he never gets discouraged at not getting the ball a lot," Pettus said. "He understands what we're doing here and how important his role is to our success. Kenny is a football player. He shows up for every practice and does his job."

"Clayton is the same way. After we switched him and Kaleb Webb in the offseason, making Kaleb a linebacker, Clayton spent the spring and summer learning the position. He could've pouted and sulked, but he knew (the position change) was the best thing for our team, and he was very unselfish about putting the team ahead of himself. A team can never have enough players like that."

Dyson, a captain, believes his teammates look up to him for leadership. He knows the team would suffer if he was a malcontent and complained about his lack of carries.

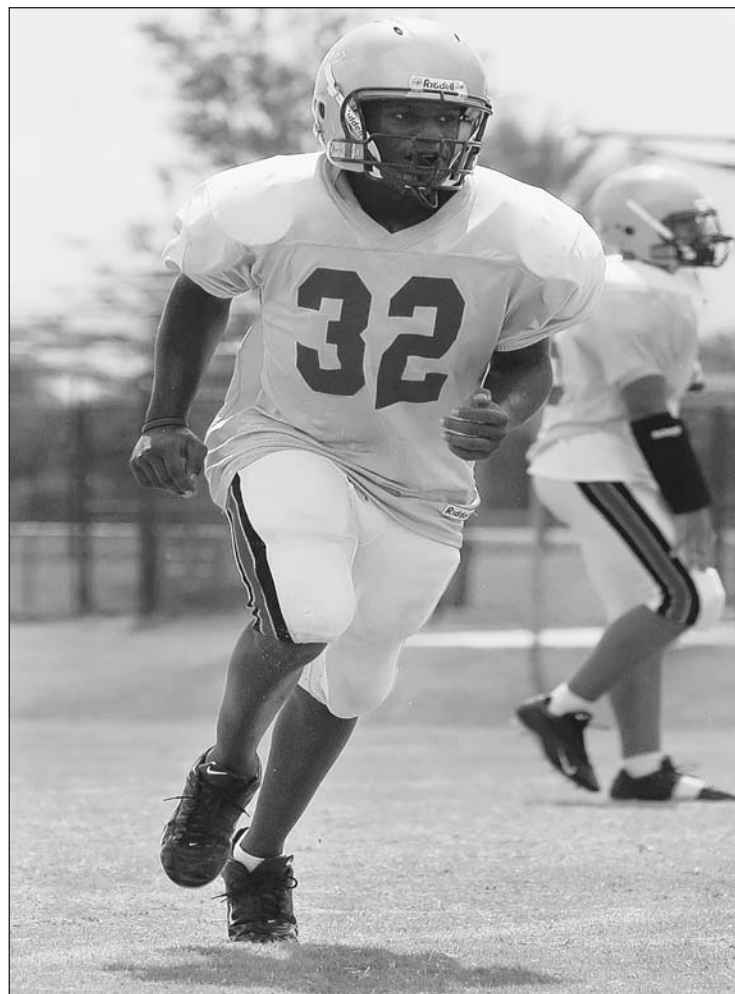
He understands a fullback in the Buffalo's run-oriented offense is an important cog and his efforts are not unnoticed.

"If I make a kick-out block that starts a big gain, my teammates realize what happened," Dyson said. "The coaches do, too. I want this team to win, and if being a lead blocker is the best way I can contribute to our success, that's what I'll do."

"We've made a lot of progress in four years here, and we didn't accomplish what we have by worrying about who's getting the ball and how much they're getting it. We all have jobs to do and everyone has to make a contribution if we're going to win."

Osteen said he welcomed the switch to defensive end. At 6-foot-3 and 220 pounds, he is strong enough to handle the rigors of playing on the defensive line and is quick enough to challenge any opposing offensive lineman.

Even though linebacker is a more glamorous position on many teams, Osteen knew



C.D. McGONIGAL Staff Photographer

Senior running back Kenny Dyson will have to shoulder a bigger role after Ricardo Gillard graduated and Derrick Dempsey transferred to Ocala Trinity Catholic.

the switch was necessary for the Buffalo to continue their winning ways. He never sought the limelight on the field and prefers to be a quiet leader instead of an attention-attracting vocal one.

The only lights Osteen said he worries about on a football field are the ones on the scoreboard.

"We're establishing a winning program here, and I'm so proud that I've been able to be a part of getting it off the ground under Coach Pettus," Osteen said. "We never pictured ourselves as a district champion in our third season, but we worked hard every day at practice and did our jobs. I'm a better football player now than I was as a freshman, and I give a lot of credit for that to our coaches and the way we do things here. If everyone listens to the coaches and does their jobs on the field, we can be successful. The players that don't want to do things our way won't be here for long. Nobody is more valuable than the team."

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The home team (coach, parent, player or scorekeeper) is responsible for calling in results of each game or match or meet.

We accept call-ins until about 10:30 p.m. After that, we can't guarantee your results will get in the next day's paper.

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