

2011 Long County High School Football 2011

Blue Tide Preview

A supplement to the Coastal Courier



Flott wants to build winning tradition at Long County High School

BY MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

Talk long enough to new Long County High School head football coach Ronald Flott and he always seems to come back to one topic.

Winning.

"I want to build a winning tradition at Long County," Flott said. "We will prepare to win every game. Preparing for second place isn't doing much."



Flott

Flott comes to a program that enters its tenth year of existence after football was brought back at the school in 2002.

Since then, the Blue Tide have gone through a number of changes. The school moved from Region 1-A into 2-AA. Coaches and athletic directors have come and gone.

The one consistent thing has been the team's inability to put together a winning season — or to even break .500.

In 2007 and 2008 the Tide came close to ending what has become a nine-year streak of losing seasons, but finished 4-6 both times.

Enter Flott, who has an overall record of 49-43 and was named the 2002 Coastal Empire Coach of the Year by the Savannah Morning News after guiding Southeast Bulloch to an 8-3 record. He also earned Region 3-A Athletic Director of the Year in 2003.

So how does Flott plan on turning the tide at Long County?

"I don't worry about wins. I'm here to compete in every game," he said. "We will prepare our team to win every game and I want the players to give me 100 percent. If we do this, we should win the games we're supposed to, and also win one we're not supposed to every now and then."

But Flott said establishing a winning tradition will take more than grueling weeks of practice and dedication from the team.

He said the entire community also has to buy into winning and support the program.

"We need monetary help from businesses and individuals who can help us out. We also need help from parents in supporting the program and making sure they get their kids to practices," Flott said. "A winning football program takes dedication from the entire



Long County High School football players get fired up while first-year coach Ronald Flott looks on. (Patty Leon photo)

community."

When you talk to Flott, you see a twinkle in his eye when he's talking about the kids out on the field executing the Xs and Os.

"I'll tell you, I'm excited about being here," he said. "I'm especially excited to be working with this group of young men. They show up every workout and they're taking some hard coaching really well. It's fun to be out here with them."

Long County's record since restarting football in 2002

Year	Record	Coach
2010	1-9	Kyle Wilson
2009	0-10	Kyle Wilson
2008	4-6	Kyle Wilson
2007	4-6	Kyle Wilson
2006	2-8	Kyle Wilson
2005	2-8	Kyle Wilson
2004	0-10	Carl Pollack
2003	0-10	Carl Pollack
2002	0-10	Carl Pollack

Source: Georgia High School Football Historians Association

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Offense: Blue Tide to use wing-bone to turn the tide

BY MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

The ground game is making a comeback in Long County under new head coach Ronald Flott and offensive coordinator Jeremy Scott.

After years of spread offense and a wide open aerial attack, the Blue Tide will be running the much more conservative wing-bone offense.

In the wing-bone, there are four potential runners in the backfield: a fullback, two halfbacks and the quarterback. When run effectively, it can take advantage of defenses

es that are undisciplined, inexperienced or weak in covering gap assignments.

“One of the strengths of the offense is that a lot people touch the ball, so more players are involved in the game,” Flott said. “Running it can also force the opposing team to pull their secondary in, so it also can help your passing game.”

At the collegiate level, Wofford College runs the wing-bone to near perfection. The Terriers averaged nearly 300 yards a game on their way to a quarterfinal appearance in the FCS playoffs. They ran for more than 200 yards in their season-ending loss to Georgia Southern.

Flott said each running back has to be willing to put the team ahead of individual accolades in order for the offense to work.

“All of the running backs have to be unselfish and all have to be able to block for whoever is carrying the ball,” he said. “In this offense everyone also has to be very physical.”

For the wing-bone to work, the offensive line has got to win the battle up front. That means good footwork and good upper body movement, and offensive linemen have to be able to effectively drive, trap and cross block. Though the offense can be potent, it does have drawbacks.

“Usually the defense will stack the box to try to stop you, so when you use it, you have to be able to throw the ball too,” Flott said, noting the Blue Tide will have to get positive yardage on first down to avoid long third down conversion attempts.

What’s more, Flott said that though he wants his team to have the ideology of run first and pass second, he won’t be afraid to put the ball in the air.

“Passing will be a part of our game plan, but what I want to do is not be forced to pass when I don’t want to pass,” Flott said. “If we can run the ball like I hope to be able to, then we can throw when we want to.”

Hall, Golden among leaders

BY MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

For the Blue Tide to be successful, these players have to have good seasons.

• **Jeffery Hall, junior, DL-OL:** If there is one player who can make an impact on both the defense and the offense, it is Hall. This junior has the size, quickness and strength to wreak havoc on opposing quarterbacks, and to protect his own if he is asked to do so.

“Jeffery is a free spirit that likes to play any sport, especially football. He’ll give you all he has and he will be one of our key players on defense,” coach Ronald Flott said.

• **Luke Golden, junior, WR-LB:** Golden can do just about everything, but the two areas where he excels are at wide receiver and linebacker. As a receiver, the junior runs smart, disciplined routes and rarely drops a ball. On the defensive side he is smart and not afraid to use his whole body to make a play.

“Luke was on the field a lot last year as a sophomore. He does everything correctly and he will be on the field a lot again this year,” Flott said.

• **Jacob Turner, junior, QB:** Last year, Turner was both a first-year varsity starter and a first-year starter at quarterback, and he looked the part at times. With a year of experience under his belt and with three running backs to hand the ball to in the wing-bone offense, Turner should be much better.

“I have thoroughly been pleased with his effort,” Flott said. “He didn’t miss a single workout over the summer and he also went to camp at Georgia Southern...he’s doing a great job.”

• **Patrick Howard, senior, OL-NG:** In 2010 Howard showed that he has quick feet and good balance on the offensive and defensive line. This year he will once again be asked to play on both sides of the ball.

“He is potentially one of the best pulling guards that I have ever coached,” Flott said.

• **Kwanzi Lattimore, senior, WR-DB:** Lattimore saw action on both sides of the ball in 2010. This year he will need to find the open seam and make catches when he has the opportunity.

“Kwanzi has been working really hard. He hasn’t missed any workouts and he will have an impact on the offense,” Flott said.

• **Deonte Ellis, junior, DB-WR:** With the Blue Tide playing the 50 defense, teams are going to attempt to get their passing game in gear. Ellis will play a big part in preventing that from happening.

“We are expecting Deonte to be a big part of our defense,” Flott said. “He has been very consistent so far and playing well in the secondary.”

• **Tyler Smith, senior, OT-DT:** Smith is expected to help anchor both sides of the line for the Blue Tide.

“Tyler will be one of our guys who will be getting substantial playing time both ways,” Flott said.

Players to watch in 2011



Long County quarterback Jacob Turner will lead the wing-bone offense of first-year coach Ronald Flott. (Patty Leon photo)



Long County High School coaches watch as players run through tackling drills at a recent practice. The Blue Tide will use a 50 defense this fall. (Patty Leon photo)

Defense: Stopping the run a priority for Long

BY MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

In football, at any level, you have to be able to stop the run. In high school football, you really have to be able to stop the run.

To do that, Long County High School football coach Ronald Flott and defensive coordinator Mitch Noble will be using a 50 defense in 2011.

In the 50 defense, the basic formation employs a nose guard lined up directly across from the center, two defensive tackles on the offensive tackles or slightly to their inside and two defensive ends, who

usually line up on the outside.

The defense's primary goal is to establish a wall of defenders at the line of scrimmage in an attempt to stop the run.

"Some of the strengths of the defense are that you have good leverage with it and it funnels everything towards the inside," Flott said. "You have a lot of guys in the box, so it is hard to run against it."

The five defensive linemen have fairly simple jobs, Flott said, but the rest of the unit has to be on its toes and able to react quickly.

"The linebackers have to see the receivers and be able to move quickly and make

their adjustments and the secondary has to do the same," he said. "Another issue can be if the offense goes to a single-back formation or empty set (only the quarterback is in the backfield), they (linebackers and secondary) have to make quick adjustments."

The biggest key to the 50 defense is keeping opposing running backs from getting into the defensive backfield.

Still, defensive backs not only have to be able to tackle, but also have to make sure the play stays in front of them. Defensive linemen, on the other hand, have to be mobile enough to help the secondary finish off

tackles.

Stopping opposing running backs before they get to the secondary is a key to the 50 defense's success, but the secondary also has to be able to make tackles and avoid giving up big plays.

Obviously, when one team tries to stop the run, the other will try to pass. In those instances, the defensive line's job is to pressure the quarterback while the defensive backs have to play tight coverage.

"It's not a hard defense. As a matter of fact it is one of the simplest defenses out there," Flott said. "But with it you have to play physical and smart."

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Schedule: 2010 was tough, 2011 won't be any easier

BY MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

The 2010 season for the Blue Tide was a tough one.

After coming out of the gate with an impressive 20-7 win over Bryan County, the team dropped their next nine games to finish a dismal 1-9. Even more depressing was that after Long County's lone win over BCHS — the Redskins went on to finish 0-10, by the way — the Blue Tide were outscored 360-58.

If you're doing the math, the Blue Tide fell by an average score 40-6 over its last nine games. The team also finished dead-last in tough Region 2-AA.

Coach Kyle Wilson resigned and the school hired Ronald Flott to turn the program's fortunes around. Fortunately for the new head coach, success may not necessarily be measured in wins during his first year because the schedule is again tough.

Here's a week-by-week look at the Blue Tide's schedule.

Week one at Bryan County High

School (0-10 in 2010): When the Blue Tide open the regular season Aug. 26 in Pembroke, they face the one team they beat last year. It's a safe bet the Redskins will look at the Long County game as one they should win. But though the Tide should be the stronger team, Flott said he doesn't see it that way.

"We're not looking past Bryan County or anyone else," Flott said. "As far as I'm concerned every team we face this year is a strong team."

Week two vs. Southeast Bulloch (2-8

in 2010): The Blue Tide open their home schedule on Sept. 2 against the visiting Yellow Jackets. Southeast Bulloch won 23-12 last season in a competitive contest. Flott said he'll have the Blue Tide ready, but said he expects SEB to be ready, too.

"Pat Collins does a great job every year and Southeast Bulloch will be much improved," Flott said.

Week three at Wayne County High

School (5-5 in 2010): The rivalry between Wayne County and Long County is renewed on Sept. 10 at Jaycee Stadium in Jesup. It has heated up in recent years when it comes to baseball and basketball.



But the teams met for the first time on the gridiron last season and the Class AAAA Yellow Jackets ran away with a 41-0 win. This year's game will not be any easier. In addition to having to deal with a team that has more depth, the Tide also have to deal with quarterback Greyson Lambert, the state's top quarterback prospect. Lambert committed to Virginia, so the pressure's off him and this game will definitely be one of the most difficult on Long County's schedule in 2010.

Week four at McIntosh County

Academy (7-5 in 2010): The Blue Tide open Region 2-AA play Sept. 17 in Darien against McIntosh County Academy. Last year the Buccaneers won 40-7 on their way to their seventh straight playoff appearance.

Week five vs. Vidalia (8-4 in 2010)

Long County plays host to a traditional state football power when Vidalia comes to town Sept. 23. The Indians joined 2-AA last season and made themselves right at home, finishing the year with a 6-1 region mark and advancing to the Class AA playoffs. Long County fell 47-0 to Vidalia in their first matchup and the Indians are expected to again be one of the top teams in Region 2-AA this fall.

"We can't worry about who we play against, whether it is McIntosh County or Vidalia," Flott said. "They're all going to

Blue Tide linemen work on hand drills during a recent practice. Long County again faces a tough schedule and will work on improving and playing hard every snap. "We can't worry about who we play against," said first-year Blue Tide coach Ronald Flott. (Patty Leon photo)

be good teams. We have to have the mindset when we go into every game to play hard every snap and then at the end of the game, we'll see how we did."

Week six, open: The Blue Tide won't play Sept. 30, but Walker Middle School and Lewis Frasier Middle School from Hinesville will play under the Friday night lights at Veterans Stadium. Kickoff of that special contest is at 6 p.m.

Week seven, at Pierce County (2-8 in

2010): The Blue Tide take on the Bears in Blackshear on Oct. 7 in a contest between teams looking to improve over 2010. Pierce County beat Long County 32-7 last season and played well against Brantley County, McIntosh County and Vidalia — meaning the Bears were better than their record. Worth noting: Pierce has 18 seniors back.

Week eight, at Brantley County (4-6 in

2010): The Tide is back on the road again in week eight, traveling to Nahunta to take on Brantley County. The Herons are one of the few programs in the region Long County has had some success against.

Blue Tide won the matchup in 2007 and 2008, but in last year's game Brantley County pulled away for a 37-12 win. The Herons also had the most potent offense in the region last year, averaging 30 points a game, so they can move the ball and

201 Results

Aug. 26 vs. Bryan County, won 20-7
Sept. 3 vs. Southeast Bulloch, lost 23-12
Sept. 10 vs. Wayne County, lost 41-0
Sept. 17 vs. McIntosh County, lost 40-7
Sept. 24 vs. Vidalia, lost 47-0
Oct. 8 vs. Pierce County, lost 32-7
Oct. 15 vs. Brantley County, lost 37-1
Oct. 22 vs. Appling County, lost 35-0
Oct. 29 vs. Tattnall County, lost 49-6
Nov. 5 vs. Toombs County, lost 49-14

punch it in the end zone.

Week nine, vs. Appling County (4-7 in 2010): Appling County comes to town Oct. 21. The Pirates finished 4-6 last season and, by Pirate standards, it was not a successful year. After going 19-4 in 2008 and 2009, Appling will want to bounce back in 2011 and will probably be one of the teams in contention for the playoffs.

Week 10 at Tattnall County (10-2 in

2010): Long County travels to Reidsville on Oct. 28 to take on the Battle Creek Warriors, another 2010 playoff team. Tattnall won last season's matchup 49-6 on their way to 7-0 region mark. The defense-minded Warriors were the stingiest team in 2-AA in 2010, allowing 13 points a game. They're expected to be tough again.

"We are in a very tough region," Flott said. "All of the teams are coached well and we play in South Georgia, where football means a lot."

Week eleven, vs. Toombs County (4-6

last season: Long County wraps up its regular season on Nov. 4 against visiting Toombs County. The Bulldogs won the first matchup between the schools 49-14 in 2010. Many observers expect Toombs to better last season's subpar performance.

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Long County expects special teams to play a big role in 2011. (Patty Leon photo)

Special teams: Tide want kicking game to factor in

BY MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

If first-year Long County High School football coach Ronald Flott has his way, Blue Tide special teams will truly be, well, special.

"They're (special team big plays) game changers," Flott said. "You score a touchdown and then kick the ball off and let the other team run a touchdown back, then not only have you let them score, you also have given them the momentum and you've lost the momentum that you had by scoring in

the first place."

Flott said he believes special team plays make up about 25 percent of the game, which means they require attention during practice. Otherwise, teams can get caught on the wrong end of big plays.

"They almost always are big plays and when your talking about 25 percent of a game, if you lose a battle 25 percent of the time in a game, you're probably going to lose that game," Flott said. "I consider them a very important part of our game plan and us being successful on them will be vital to our success this year."

Mike's Take

Region 2-AA still one of the toughest in Georgia

Some football teams in Georgia make the state playoffs because they dominate a weak region.

That's not the case in Region 2-AA.

When state power Charlton County, which has four state titles to its credit, left the region in 2009 due to reclassification, some thought Region 2-AA would lose some of its luster. That hasn't been the case.

Appling County and McIntosh County Academy have each gone 23-11 over the past three seasons and each program has multiple playoff appearances.

Tattnall County and Vidalia have also compiled winning records while in 2-AA — the Warriors are 17-6 with a pair of state appearances and the Indians are 15-8 with two trips to the postseason.

Though none of these teams have yet been able to break through and get to the state finals, creating the stir that Charlton County did for so many years, what these teams have done is become known for their hard-hitting style of play.

Pierce County and Brantley County haven't had the success of the region's

top programs, both schools have proven they can play with anybody and be a spoiler by pulling the occasional upset.

Brantley County has also fielded a potent offense in recent campaigns, as the Herons led 2-AA in scoring with more than 30 points a contest.

Even Toombs County and Long County have shown that on any given night they can put fear in opponents by playing hard and never giving up.

In 2011 the teams that should contend for the top spot in 2-AA are McIntosh County, Vidalia, Tattnall County and Appling County; but don't be surprised if, come September, there is a surprise team like Long County or Pierce County vying for the playoffs or playing spoiler.

Riddle covers Long County sports for the Coastal Courier.



Mike Riddle



Blue Tide linemen prepare to hit during a recent practice. The Blue Tide play in one of Georgia's top Class AA regions, even with the absence of longtime high school super power Charlton County. Appling County, McIntosh County Academy, Vidalia and Tattnall County have all had success in getting to the state level. (Patty Leon photo)

2011 Blue Tide Coaches



Back row: (left to right) DeShone Brock, WRs and DBs; Steve Hilgenberg, DBs; Ryan Bailey, DEs; Mitch Nobles, LBs; Ron Flott, Head Coach, Heremy Scott, OL; Joseph Austin, RBs, Eric McNair, OL; Jerry Murray, DL

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2011 Long County Football Roster



NO.	NAME	GR	POS.	NO.	NAME	GR	POS	NO.	NAME	GR	POS
1	Johnnae Jones	12	WR/DB	23	Tyshawn Johnson	11	TE/DE	53	TJ Sims	10	OL/DL
2	Josh Berry	11	RB/LB	25	Levi Bell	9	WR/DE	54	Tyler Groover	11	OL/DL
3	Vanda Vareen	10	RB/LB	26	Malik Williams	10	RB/DB	55	Cody Smiley	10	OL/DL
4	Delante Singleton	9	QB/DB	27	Francisco Mejia	10	WR/DB	56	Jeffrey Hall	11	OL/LB
5	Malik Gipson	9	RB/DB	28	Kwanzii Lattimore	12	WR/DB	57	Jose Sanchez	9	OL/DE
6	Miguel Hernandez	12	K	29	Armondo Toledo	9	RB/DE	58	Nick Stock	10	OL/DL
7	Deondre Watkins	9	RB/DB	30	Brandon Adkins	12	RB/DB	59	Shawn Wilson	11	OL/DL
8	Deonte Ellis	11	RB/DB	31	Jallell Braggs	11	RB/DB	60	Logan Simmons	9	OL/DE
9	Jermaine Gibbs	12	RB/DB	32	Alberto Nevarez	11	K	61	Jose Hernandez	9	OL/DL
10	Jacob Turner	11	QB	34	Jamie Blanchard	11	WR/DB	62	Miguel Flores	9	OL/DL
12	Yusaf Gooding	11	WR/DB	36	Michael Abram	9	TE/DE	63	Delavin Hampton	11	OL/DL
13	Luke Golden	11	TE/DB	37	Dequan Glover	9	RB/DB	65	CJ Stephens	9	OL/DL
14	Daryl Taylor	11	RB/DB	40	Reggie Campbell	9	RB/DB	67	Tyler Smith	12	OL/DL
15	Irmal Coney	12	RB/DL	42	Darius Woods	10	TE/DE	68	Michael Stanley	9	OL/DL
17	Fred Nelson	11	RB/LB	44	Tristan Goodro	10	TE/DE	70	Nick Rorro	9	OL/DL
19	Nicholas Hatterer	9	RB/DB	45	Cody Fleck	10	RB/DE	71	Chris Carter	9	OL/DL
20	Zack Lewis	9	RB/LB	50	Patrick Howard	12	OL/DL	73	Raymond Messa	10	OL/DL
21	Caleb McRae	9	RB/DB	51	Randall Behrendt	10	OL/LB	75	Evan Strickland	10	OL/DL
22	Ramonie Farlow	10	RB/DB	52	Javonta Harris	9	OL/LB	77	Darius Francis	10	OL/DL

2011 Long County Football Schedule

- Aug. 26, Time 7:30 p.m., Long County at Bryan County (3E-A)
 - Sept. 2, 7:30 p.m., Long County hosts Southeast Bulloch (3-AA)
 - Sept. 9, 7:30 p.m., Long County hosts Wayne County (2A-AAAA)
 - Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. Long County at McIntosh County Academy (2-AA)*
 - Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. Long County Hosts Vidalia (2-AA)*
Homecoming
 - Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m., Long County at Pierce County (2-AA)*
 - Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m. Long County at Brantley County (2-AA)*
 - Oct. 21, 7:30 p.m. Long County hosts Appling County (2-AA)*
 - Oct. 28, 7:30 p.m. Long County at Tattnall County (2-AA)*
 - Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m. Long County hosts Toombs County (2-AA)*
- All home games at Veterans' Field.
 — Games in bold are home games.
 * Denotes Region game



Blue Tide seniors have taken a leadership role at practice as Long County High School undergoes a coaching change. (Photo by Patty Leon)

Under the lights: Long County to hold four special Friday nights in 2011

BY MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

Friday nights in Ludowici are always fun with Blue Tide football back on tap, but four of those nights will be even more special.

On Sept. 23, when the Vidalia Indians come to town, all Long County Recreation Department football players, cheerleaders and coaches who wear their uniforms will be admitted at no charge. Before the game the players and cheerleaders also will line up as the Blue Tide players take the field.

On Sept. 30, the Blue Tide will be off, but the football action will continue at Veteran's Field when the Walker Middle School Wildcats get to play under the Friday night lights. The future Blue Tide players will take on Lewis Frasier Middle School from Hinesville.

On Oct. 21, it's homecoming, which

means the 2011 Long County High School homecoming queen will be crowned. All Long County alumni are encouraged to come out and cheer for the Blue Tide as they take on the Appling County Pirates.

On Nov. 4, the Blue Tide will take to the field for their final regular season game. That means it's senior night. Those seniors who are members of the football team, cheerleading squad and the band will be honored at halftime for their achievements.

JV schedule

Sept. 1 at Brunswick, 5 p.m.

Sept. 8 vs. Brantley County, 5 p.m.

Sept. 15 vs. Tattnall County, 5 p.m.

Sept. 22 vs. Pierce County,, 5 p.m.

Sept. 29 at Jeff Davis, 5 p.m.

Oct. vs. McIntosh County, 5 p.m.

Oct. 13 vs. Appling County, 5 p.m.

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