

LONG
COUNTY

BLUE
TIDE



Time to bounce back

Blue Tide ready to move forward after disappointing 2-8 season

STORY BY BY MIKE RIDDLE • PHOTO BY PATTY LEON

At this time last year, the Long County High School football team was full of optimism and looking forward to the upcoming season. The team was coming off a 2012 season in which it had put up its best overall record (5-5) and best 2-AA Region mark (4-5) in school history.

The Blue Tide began their 2013 season by winning their first game, and fans in Long County were talk-

ing about the playoffs. But then the wheels fell off for the Blue Tide as they dropped eight of their final nine games to end the season with a 2-8 record.

Now in 2014, they are hoping to bounce back and get close to that 5-5 mark or possibly even notch their first winning season.

LONG COUNTY continues on 3

2014 LONG COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL COACHES



Left to Right: Eric Sizemore (chaplain), J. T. Brown, Paul Austin, Eric McNair, Ron Flott (Head Coach), Deshon Brock, Jeff Miller, and Mitch Nobles.

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Team looks to bounce back after 2-8 season

LONG COUNTY

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Head coach Ron Flott said that a host of returning starters will be lining up for the Blue Tide this year, so he is very excited about the upcoming season. He also said he is optimistic about his team's potential after fielding 65 players in the spring game and seeing the aggression they showed on the field.

"We are looking forward to the 2014 season and can't wait to suit up in the fall," Flott said.

But while he is excited and optimistic, he also acknowledged that the team is still very young and that most of his starters are underclassmen.

The Blue Tide only won two games last year, but they easily could have been a .500 team. Their two wins in 2013 were against Lanier County and Jeff Davis High School. They lost to Atkinson County, but only by a touchdown, and when they played playoff-bound Metter High School, they were tied with less than six minutes to play, so both of those games were winnable. Long County also played tough against Toombs County and Bacon County, so despite having

eight losses, a break or two here or there could have led to another 5-5 season.

But good teams usually make their own breaks, so if the Blue Tide are going to have a shot at a .500 season or a winning record and possibly making the playoffs, they will have to become a better team.

To be regarded as a better team, they will need to win their games against the weaker teams in the 2-AA and play mistake-free football when they take on the stronger teams.

One thing is certain: Excitement is in the air in Long County, and the fans and the team are ready for some football.



After the high of a record-breaking season in 2012 and the low of a 2-8 season in 2013, the Tide are ready to become a more consistent team.

Patty Leon

Blue Tide offense needs to maintain possession, put up more points

Long County aims to run first, pass second with wing-bone offense

BY MIKE RIDDLE
Coastal Courier correspondent

In years past, the Blue Tide offense was known for putting up a lot of points. Unfortunately for the team, the defense also allowed a lot of points — more than the offense could cover, in most cases.

When head coach Ron Flott came to the school three years ago, he brought the wing-bone offense with him. The goal was to run the ball more to keep the opposing offenses on the sideline.

In 2011, his first year as the head coach, the Long County offense averaged 11 points per game while the defense gave up 33 points. That year, the team didn't win a game.

However, in 2012, the Long County offense averaged 26 points a game, and the defense only allowed 20 points. That year, the team went 5-5.

Last year, the team took a step backward, as the offense only put up 16 points a game, and the defense allowed 31 points. The Blue Tide's record in 2013 was a dismal 2-8.

If Long County is going to be successful in 2014, it will have to do what it did two years ago: move the chains and keep opposing offenses on the bench.



Photos by Patty Leon

The Long County offense will be looking to repeat what it did in 2012: maintain possession of the ball and keep opposing offenses on the sideline.

With the wing-bone offense as their primary formation, the Blue Tide will be looking to run first and pass second.

In the wing-bone offense, there are four potential runners in the backfield. It's advantageous because it forces a defense to be disciplined in covering gap assignments. If one defensive lineman or linebacker is out of place, the running back can break into the secondary for a big gain.

The defense also can force a team with a



weaker front to pull up its safeties and cornerbacks closer to the line to stop the run, leaving the secondary open for a pass.

However, if the wing-bone offense is going to work, the offensive line has to win the battle in the trenches with each blocker being able to dive, trap and cross-block while maintaining good footwork.

The offensive ground game will be led by junior Brenden Scott, who rushed for over 600 yards last year. Scott also won the team's

Projected starters on offense

- **H-Back:** Brendon Scott
- **B-Back:** Jaquarius Harrison
- **A-Back:** Keishawn Wagner
- **QB:** Brett Blake
- **TE:** Darvis Holmes
- **T:** Reid Goode
- **G:** John Benevides
- **C:** Deondre Reddick
- **G:** Javonte Harris
- **T:** Vaughn Kelly
- **WR:** Shavon Davis
- **ATH:** Elijah Wright

outstanding back award and made the 2013 2-AA All-Region Second Team.

On the offensive line, Javonte Harris will be the lone starting senior. He will have help from six underclassmen — Darvis Holmes, Reid Goode, John Benevides, Jonathon Holton, Deandre Reddick and Vaughn Kelly — all of whom have varsity experience and had good spring camps.

Meanwhile, Jamin Davis and second-team all-region player Keishawn Wagner will split time at the A-back position.

The wide receiver positions are still up for grabs, but Flott said Shavon Davis, Stephen Adderly and Jack Lauver are all pushing to start.

Lining up behind center and calling the plays for the Blue Tide will be Brett Blake.

Long County defense aims to improve

Coach Ron Flott to focus on fundamentals, depend on 4 returning linebackers to solidify defense

By MIKE RIDDLE

Coastal Courier correspondent

The Blue Tide defense has a history of not being able to stop opponents. When the defensive stats were added up at the end of each year, Long County often found itself in the cellar of the 2-AA standings.

Two years ago, all of that changed. In head coach Ron Flott's second year, the Blue Tide used the 50 defense and moved up into respectability. The defense finished sixth in the region that season after allowing only 20 points per game. That same year, the team recorded its first shut-out and held three teams to one touchdown.

In 2012, the Blue Tide finally showed that they could shut down some teams and play quality defense.

However, the Tide took a big step backward last season. They gave up over 31 points per game, and in four of their games, they gave up over 40 points. They only held two teams to less than 14 points, and those were the two games they happened to win.

So, in 2014, Long County will be looking to improve its defense. Flott said the keys to being successful on defense this season are focusing on the fundamentals and making sure players are in the right spots on the field.

He said he will continue to use the 50 defense as the team's primary set. In that defense, there is a nose guard, two defensive tackles and two defensive ends. It is a defense primarily designed to stop the run and requires the secondary to play smart and disciplined. This is one area where the team struggled last year: giving up big plays when running backs and receivers reached the second level.

Flott said he will be depending heavily on four returning line-



backers to solidify the defense this season. Mykoel Stanley and Armando Toledo, who both made the 2-AA All Region Second Team last year, will be starting at linebacker. Michael Abram and Jamin Davis will be starting as outside linebackers.

Last year, the defensive line was one of Long County's strongest areas. But after losing several seniors to graduation, the Blue Tide will be looking to find the right players to fill those gaps. Vying for playing time will be Michael Ross, Jonathon Holton, Andrew Jones, Miguel Flores and Kyree Coprick.

The secondary will be anchored by all-region first-team cornerback Dequan Glover. Oth-

Projected starters on defense

- **NG:** Michael Ross
- **RE:** Jonathon Holton
- **LE:** Andrew Jones
- **RDog:** Jamin Davis
- **LDog:** Michael Abram
- **SLB:** Mykoel Stanley
- **WLB:** Armondo Toledo
- **CB:** Dequan Glover
- **CB:** Deondre Volcy
- **FS:** Tarique Carpenter
- **SS:** Keishawn Wagner

ers seeking time in the secondary include Keishawn Wagner, Tariq Carpenter, Deondre Volcy and Stephen Adderly.



After taking a step backward last season, the Blue Tide defense will focus on the fundamentals to try to hold opposing offenses to fewer points.

Photos by
Patty Leon

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Above: The success of the Long County football team likely will depend on how the seniors, shown here with team chaplain Eric Sizemore, perform throughout the season. Left: Long County Blue Tide head coach Ron Flott (left, with whistle) and Sizemore watch as the offense lines up for a play.

Photos by Patty Leon

Senior leadership likely to determine team success

Look for consistency, big plays from these 2 seniors

BY MIKE RIDDLE
Coastal Courier correspondent



DEQUAN GLOVER
Senior cornerback

Dequan Glover

Last season, one of the biggest flaws in the Blue Tide defense was that when running backs and receivers made it to the second level, big plays almost always followed. For the Tide to be successful in 2014, the secondary will have to be more disciplined and smart. Last year, Dequan Glover made the 2-AA All Region First Team as a cornerback, and if Long County is going to have a successful year, he will need to be even better this year.



MYKOEEL STANLEY
Senior linebacker

Mykoel Stanley

Mykoel Stanley made the 2-AA All-Region Second Team as a linebacker last season. This year, it's clear he needs to lead the defense as he lines up as the strong-side linebacker. Stanley has had a great summer, and he is primed to have his best season as a member of the Blue Tide. He will have to fight off double teams this year, but if last year is any indicator, that won't be a problem. Stanley isn't afraid to lay a big hit on a running back, and he should be one of the best defensive players in the region. If the Blue Tide are going to be successful, he will have to play up to his full potential.

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Schedule includes some new teams, old rivals

BY MIKE RIDDLE
Coastal Courier correspondent

The season kicks off Friday, so here is a week-by-week breakdown of the Blue Tide's varsity schedule:

WEEK 1 VS. TATTNALL COUNTY (4-6 in 2013): Two years ago, the Battle Creek Warriors moved from Region 2-AA into Region 1-AAA. Since that move, they have struggled to regain the dominance that they carried over the smaller schools. Last year, they finished with a 4-6 mark, and two of their wins came against single-A schools. The gap between Long County and its cross-county rival has narrowed, but the Blue Tide still will have to play very good football to have a chance against the Warriors. *Tattnall County leads the series, 4-0.*

WEEK 2: OPEN

WEEK 3 VS. METTER HIGH SCHOOL (7-4 in 2013; lost in first round of playoffs): The Tigers made the playoffs last year and notched wins against solid teams like McIntosh County and Toombs County. They were a solid team in 2013, but not in the class of Vidalia or Benedictine. Two years ago, the Blue Tide manhandled the Tigers, 49-7. Last year, the two teams were tied with less than six minutes to play before Metter posted two late scores to win the game, 14-0. If Long County is going to have a successful year and move toward a winning record, this is one of the games the Blue Tide will have to win. *Series tied, 1-1.*

WEEK 4 AT JEFF DAVIS (1-9 in 2013): Last year, the Yellow Jackets opened the season with a shutout over Atkinson County. After that, they dropped nine consecutive games. Long County and Jeff Davis will be looking at this game as one that either team can win. Both teams know each other well after facing off six times. Last

year, the Blue Tide won, 47-14, and unless they make several mistakes in their matchup this year, Long County should win again this season. *Long County leads series, 4-2.*

WEEK 5 AT BACON COUNTY (4-6 in 2013): Last year, the Red Raiders beat the teams that they were supposed to beat and lost to the teams that they were expected to lose to. On paper, the Red Raiders will be the better team when the Blue Tide play them in September. If the Blue Tide are going to take that step to the next level and begin to challenge teams in Region 2-AA, they will have to win a game or two against teams that they are supposed to lose to. The Raiders will go into this game as the favorite, but if the Blue Tide play to their potential and get a break or two, they can win this game. *Bacon County leads series, 2-0.*

WEEK 6 VS. VIDALIA HIGH SCHOOL (10-2 in 2013; lost to Laney High School, 22-13, in the second round of playoffs): Week 6 is homecoming for Long County High School. No one can say that the Blue Tide picked a pushover to play in front of the returning graduates. Vidalia clearly was the second-best team in Region 2-AA last year, and the Indians will be vying for the top spot again this year. The Blue Tide probably will not match up well against the Indians, and it may be a long night for the home team. Football is a game in which any team can win on any given night, but if the Blue Tide are going to have any chance at winning, they will have to play perfectly and the Indians will have to make some mistakes. *Vidalia leads series, 4-0.*

WEEK 7 VS. NEW HAMPSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL (first year playing at varsity level): The Phoenix come to Ludowici in Week 7, and there are a lot of questions surrounding the team. This is the school's first year playing football at the varsity level; last

2014 VARSITY SCHEDULE		
DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Aug. 29	Tattnall County	Ludowici
Sept. 5	OPEN	N/A
Sept. 12	Metter	Ludowici
Sept. 19	*Jeff Davis County	Hazlehurst
Sept. 26	*Bacon County	Alma
Oct. 3	*Vidalia (HC)	Ludowici
Oct. 10	New Hampstead (RN)	Ludowici
Oct. 16	*Groves	Garden City
Oct. 24	*McIntosh County (SN)	Ludowici
Oct. 31	*Bryan County	Pembroke
Nov. 7	*Benedictine	Savannah
NOTES		
• All games start at 7:30 p.m.		
• * denotes 2-AA region game		
• HC denotes homecoming night		
• RN denotes recreation night		
• SN denotes senior night		
2014 JUNIOR VARSITY SCHEDULE		
DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Sept. 4	Tattnall County	Reidsville
Sept. 11	Brantley County	Ludowici
Sept. 18	Metter	Metter
Sept. 25	Jeff Davis County	Ludowici
Oct. 9	Pierce County	Blackshear
Oct. 16	OPEN	N/A
Oct. 23	Bryan County	Ludowici
Oct. 30	Liberty County	Hinesville
NOTE		
• All games start at 5 p.m.		

year, the team went 4-3 playing a JV schedule. When a football program is in its early stages, the team often struggles to find wins. Little is known about New Hampstead, but one thing is for sure: The Blue Tide will not want to lose to a team that is playing in its first season. In short, Long County will be looking for a win. *Never played.*

WEEK 8 AT GROVES HIGH SCHOOL (1-9 in 2013): For years, Groves took a beating in Region 3-AAAAA. Last year, its lone

victory came against Windsor Forest, which went 0-10. This season, the Rebels moved down to Region 2-AA. They're excited about the move and looking to pick up some wins. Long County will need to go into this game playing good football, because at the AA level, Groves will be a much better team. Anyone who doubts that should look at Benedictine Military School's history as an example. *Never played.*

WEEK 9 VS. MCINTOSH COUNTY (5-5 in 2013): An old

nemesis comes to town Week 9 when McIntosh County walks on to Veterans Field. The Blue Tide have played the Buccaneers 10 times and never won, but in recent years, the gap between the two schools has been closing. The Buccaneers are coming off a disappointing season that they regarded as a failure, so they will be looking to prove that it was a fluke. Long County is getting closer and closer to McIntosh County, but the Blue Tide are still a year or two away from being on a level playing field. Long County does have a chance in this game, but the ball will have to bounce its way. *McIntosh County leads series, 10-0.*

WEEK 10 AT BRYAN COUNTY (8-3 in 2013; lost in first round of playoffs): Over the past four years, Long County and Bryan County have alternated who wins their matchup each season. Last year, the Redskins won, so if recent history tells us anything, the Blue Tide should bounce back this year. This game is turning into quite a rivalry, and based on the rivalry's history, this should be a good game that probably will go down to the final quarter. Both schools will be looking to win this matchup. *Bryan County leads series, 6-4.*

WEEK 11 AT BENEDICTINE MILITARY SCHOOL (13-1 in 2013; lost to Lamar County, 10-7, in the state semifinals): The Cadets were the cream of the crop in Region 2-AA last season, evidenced by their trip to the semifinals in the state playoffs. BC will have a tough time duplicating last year's success, but the Cadets still will be vying for the top spot in the region standings. This is another game where the Blue Tide probably won't match up well. Like the Vidalia game, the only way Long County will have a chance against BC is if the Blue Tide play perfectly and the Cadets make several mistakes. *Benedictine Military School leads series, 4-0.*

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