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2026

GRIDIRON GUIDE

CALHOUN YELLOW JACKETS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Info, stories, schedules, photos and roster from Calhoun High School Yellow Jacket Football and info on the Marching Yellow Jackets and Football Cheer

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Team Preview: Calhoun Yellow Jackets

Yellow Jackets ready for a big season; seeks successful run in new region



CHS Head Football Coach Clay Stephenson. All Photos: ANDY BAXTER

Brandi Owczarz, Managing Editor
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The 2025 football season was another successful one for the Calhoun High School Yellow Jackets and their fans - winning the 7-AAA Region Championship.

In the 2026 season, the Jackets have moved up to region 7-AAAA, but the plan for the Yellow Jackets and their head coach, Clay Stephenson is another region title and a return to the State Championship game to bring home another title; the last time Calhoun was in the State Championship Game was 2024.

Stephenson is beginning his 23rd year of coaching in various capacities at Calhoun High School of the powerhouse Yellow Jacket football program, his eighth year as head coach. During his years with the Yellow Jackets, Calhoun has won 18 total region championships, 4 state championships (2011, 2014, 2017, 2024), and finished as state runner-ups 6 times.

Last year, Stephenson's Jackets went 9-3 overall, 6-0 in 7-AAA finishing 1st in the region.

Stephenson has his team laser-focused on the task at hand: concentrating on one game at a time and making another appearance in this year's State playoffs.

Coach Stephenson talked to the Gordon Gazette about the upcoming season, the preparations the team has made and his expectations for the team.

What did the summer program involve for your team, what was the participation like and how much progress did the kids make?

We had a really good summer. We spent a lot of time in the weight room, and on the field conditioning. We do not do as much X/O stuff because we are focusing more on being in shape and trying to be ready for acclimation period. Participation was good, and I thought we made a lot of progress.

How did you keep your team motivated and encouraged during this time?

I don't think this group needs a lot of extra motivation. We won the region last year, but our season ended a little earlier than we wanted, so they are ready to kickoff this year's season. Our theme this year is C.O.R.E. - Commitment, Ownership, Resilience and Excellence. We have really stressed showing up every day, competing and doing things consistently.

Reflecting on last season, what do you hope to build on to carry into this season?

I want us to carry over the confidence and experience from last year while becoming more

consistent. We have a tough schedule early, so we will find out quickly where we stand and where we need to improve.

Were there any impact players from last year that graduated where you have a player stepping up to take the lead in that role this year?

Justin Beasley was a three-year starter and broke all of our CHS receiving records. You do not replace a player like that with one guy. We have a talented group of skill players that will all pitch in on the offensive side. Defensively, we lost all of our leading tacklers, so we have a lot of holes to fill on that side of the ball.

What are the biggest keys for this team to focus on in order to have success this season?

Consistency is probably the biggest thing...we have talented skill players, but football is still won up front, so both lines have to continue developing. We also have to take care of the football, tackle well, and make sure we are solid on special teams. .

Who are some of the impact players for your team in 2026?

Trace Hawkins gives us a lot of experience at quarterback. Hudson Chadwick and Isiah Nalls are the returners at running back and we have a handful of other guys who will get meaningful carries as well. Hudson Oliver and Kayden Langston will be important returners up front, and defensively we have Drew Huff, Jackson Williams, Jordan Garza, Jack Dean returning. We also have several younger players who I think people will know a lot more about as the season gets going.

Who do you think your toughest opponents in your region will be this year?

I think the region will be competitive. Heritage and Northwest Whitfield both had good teams last year, and Adairsville is always physical and well coached. With only five region games, every one of them carries a lot of weight, so there really is not much room for error.

What are your overall expectations for what this team can accomplish for the 2026 season?

The expectation is always to compete for a region championship and put ourselves in position to make a run in the playoffs. I think we have enough talent to be a really good football team, but we still have to get a lot better in some areas. Our non-region schedule will test us early. If we keep improving and are playing our best football late in the year, I think this team has a chance to accomplish a lot.

- KEY PLAYERS
- TRACE HAWKINS
- ISIAH NALLS
- HUDSON CHADWICK
- HUDSON OLIVER
- KAYDEN LANGSTON
- DREW HUFF

2026 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Loc.
Aug. 21	Jefferson	HOME
Aug. 28	G.A.C.	HOME
Sept. 4	Troup County	AWAY
Sept. 11	Dalton	AWAY
Sept. 18	North Oconee	AWAY
Oct. 2	SE Whitfield	HOME
Oct. 9	Ridgeland	AWAY
Oct. 23	Heritage	HOME
Oct. 30	NW Whitfield	HOME
Nov. 6	Adairsville	AWAY
All Games at 7:30 p.m. unless noted.		



Team Preview: CALHOUN YELLOW JACKETS

TEAM PHOTO



ANDY BAXTER

TEAM ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Year	No.	Name	Position	Year	No.	Name	Position	Year
0	Kaamel Baldwin	RB/DB	Sr.	34	AJ Green	WR/DB	So.	75	Tucker Jones	OL/DL	Jr.
1	Richard Clavino	WR/DB	Sr.	35	Aiden Pike	WR/DB	So.	76	Jackson Williams	OL/DL	Sr.
2	Logan Sullivan	WR/DB	Sr.	36	Jared Poole	RB/LB	Jr.	77	Braylin Logan	OL/DL	Jr.
3	Landyn Tibbs	WR/DB	Sr.	37	Aaron Ralec	RB/LB	Jr.	78	Derek Jenkins	OL/DL	So.
4	Bo Queen	TE/DB	Sr.	39	Bradley Laynez	WR/DB	So.	79	Ayden Parish	OL/DL	Sr.
5	Jack Dean	TE/LB	Sr.	41	Brooks Johnson	RB/LB	Fr.	80	Wyatt Alexander	WR/DB	Fr.
6	Logan Speer	RB/DB	Sr.	42	Ryder Roberts	RB/LB	Fr.	81	Jacque Curtis	QB/DB	Fr.
7	Hudson Chadwick	RB/LB	Sr.	43	Nolan Edwards	WR/DB	Fr.	82	Israel Lopez	WR/DB	Fr.
8	Davis Ruddell	WR/DB	Sr.	47	Dax Prokop	TE/DL	So.	83	Gavin Holcomb	QB/DB	Fr.
9	Isiah Nalls	RB/DB	Jr.	48	Edgar Gutierrez	K	Fr.	84	Bennett Erwin	WR/DB	Fr.
10	Drew Huff	QB/DB	Jr.	49	John Dean	WR/DB	Fr.	85	Jake Jones	WR/DB	Fr.
11	TK Christian	WR/DB	Sr.	50	Finn Moore	OL/DL	So.	86	Noah Krout	TE/DL	Fr.
12	Jordan Garza	TE/LB	Sr.	51	Omarion Cook	OL/DL	So.	87	Camden Wiggins	WR/DB	Fr.
13	Elijah Bryant	WR/DB	Jr.	52	Hudson Oliver	OL/DL	Sr.	88	Jarrell Sheppard	TE/LB	Fr.
14	Antonio Wade	WR/DB	Jr.	54	Brody Williams	OL/DL	Fr.	89	Ni'Jay Olmstead	WR/DB	Fr.
15	Tripp Eubanks	RB/DB	Jr.	55	Cooper Coffey	OL/DL	Jr.	90	Nery Ordonez	OL/DL	So.
16	Trace Hawkins	QB	Jr.	57	Kayden Langston	OL/DL	Sr.	91	Trystyn Rodriguez	K	Fr.
17	Blaine Groce	WR/DB	Jr.	58	Jackson Krout	OL/DL	So.	92	Camryn Hill	RB/DB	Fr.
18	Ryder Hood	WR/DB	Sr.	60	Carson Stone	OL/DL	So.	93	De'Arius McConnell	WR/DB	Fr.
20	Lucas White	WR/DB	Sr.	61	Hudson Vaughn	OL/DL	So.	94	Owen Piedrasanta	K	So.
21	Gannon Smith	TE/LB	Sr.	62	Cade Carver	OL/DL	Sr.	95	Christian Arroyave	K	So.
22	Will Hall	TE/LB	Jr.	63	Dillion Webb	OL/DL	Jr.	97	Samuel Hinojosa	K	So.
23	Kaleb Woodard	WR/DB	Jr.	64	Charlie Prater	OL/DL	Fr.	98	Cezar Zavala	K	So.
24	Aidan Lyles	TE/DB	Sr.	65	Taj Guillen	OL/DL	Fr.	99	Abraham Sanchez	K	Sr.
27	Tony Reid	RB/LB	Jr.	66	Dawson Eubanks	OL/DL	Jr.				
28	Mari Roberts	RB/DB	So.	68	Tate Martin	OL/DL	So.				
29	Davi Bueno	WR/DB	Jr.	70	Judd Dean	OL/DL	Fr.				
30	Hayden Shropshire	TE/LB	So.	71	Knolan Adkins	OL/DL	Fr.				
31	Jay'Ceon Williams	WR/DB	Jr.	72	Luis Vigil	OL/DL	Jr.				
32	Gonzalo Pineda	WR/DB	Jr.	73	Sean Hardy	OL/DL	Fr.				
33	Asa Bone	WR/DB	So.								



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Cheer Preview: Calhoun Yellow Jackets



Photo: ANDY BAXTER

2026 CHS Football Cheerleaders include: Lannah Stewart, Breagen Holcomb, Olivia Hall, Lily Stepp, Addie White, Ansley Morrison, Aislin Carter, Payton Epps, Gracey Derrick, Sophia Proffit, Kylei Dyer, Caroline Surratt, Emme Bozeman, Emmie Paradis, Brooklyn Burgess, Briana Alfaro, Camilla Chance and Kamille Woodard.

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Calhoun High School Football Cheer Coach Tracy Lester has her squad ready for the Friday Night Lights at Hal Lamb Field at Phil Reeve Stadium this football season.

Lester, who teaches 8th grade Georgia Studies at Calhoun Middle School, is starting her 10th year as head football cheer coach at CHS. She’s married to Ronnie Lester, has three children Thomas (Kayla), Bailey, and Mattie and two grandchildren Brenley and Kasen. Lester is a graduate of

Calhoun High School, University of Georgia and Piedmont College

This year, Lester will be assisted by Elise Kessler, a teacher at Calhoun Early Learning Academy and community Coach Charzhondra Turner.

The Gazette spoke with Lester about the upcoming football cheer season.

What training and/or camps did the cheer squad participate in before the start of the season?

We had Choreography for 2 days, weekly workouts, FCA Team Building, attended FCA Team

Camp at Emmanuel College and Varsity Day Camp.

How excited is the squad for this year? We are excited to watch our boys compete on Friday nights. It’s been a great summer, but we are ready for games and our own competitions. We want to show how hard we have worked all summer. This team will serve as Friday night spirit cheerleaders and traditional competition cheerleaders. Most of the girls on this team will also compete as Game Day cheerleaders following the traditional competition season. We had a fun summer, and our

seniors have been stepping up and leading this team. The girls have worked hard all summer with workouts and camps, and we are ready to get started.

What are your expectations for the squad this year? My expectations for this team are to give their all every day and to improve each week. We want to place well at the Region competition which will be held at West Laurens High School as well as the State competition in Macon. This team has the skill needed and a great routine.

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Band Preview: Calhoun Yellow Jackets



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Pride of Georgia’s Northland, the Calhoun High School Marching Yellow Jackets.

Brandi Owczarz, Managing Editor
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The Calhoun Marching Yellow Jackets are under the direction of Thomas Osborne, now in his second full year as the Marching Yellow Jackets’ band director. Before that, Osborne greatly assisted with Calhoun’s band program for years, previously serving as the Calhoun Middle School band director.

Mr. Osborne is a Lindale, Georgia native. He is an alumni of Jacksonville State University, where he received his B.A. in Music Education, and University of West Georgia, where he received his M.A. in Music Education. During his time at Jacksonville State, he was a member of the renowned Marching Southerners for five years, where he was named trumpet section leader. He was also a member of the highest caliber of ensembles the university has to offer, such as Chamber Winds, JSU Jazz Ensemble 1, JSU Brass Choir, and JSU Hardcorps Pep Band.

Alongside teaching, he is an active performing musician, playing with several community groups in the Rome area such as Northwest Georgia Winds, the Roman Festival Brass Band, and Clocktower Jazz Ensemble. Mr. Osborne started working with the Calhoun Band back in 2020 during his first year teaching as the Calhoun Middle School Band Director.

Mr. Osborne is married to Aubrey Osborne, also a native of Lindale, Georgia. She is the band director at Coosa Middle School. They have a beautiful 9 month old daughter named Ruby Anne Os-

borne.

The Gazette got to talk with Mr. Osborne recently to learn more about the upcoming marching season.

What music will your halftime show feature?

This year, our band is playing a show entitled The Black and Gold Parade. The theme is meant to celebrate the school’s spirit through music with black and gold themed titles. The opener for the show is Welcome to the Black Parade by My Chemical Romance. The dance feature is 24K Magic by Bruno Mars. The ballad is The Ecstasy of Gold from the movie The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly written by Ennio Morricone, and the closer is Paint it Black by The Rolling Stones. We are trying some brand new things this year, such as implementing a front percussion ensemble, with our band and hope the audience enjoys the fresh new approach to our show!

What did you do to prepare for the season, and will you participate in any competitions this year?

This year, our students have been working harder than ever. We have been rehearsing since the start of July and have made some tremendous progress. We had two weeks of full band camp with instructors hired to help assist our students. We have also had lots of fundraising in order to purchase the flags used by our color guard. Every flag used in the show is a new flag for our school.

We anticipate three contests

this year. The two for sure are Rockmart’s Yellow Jacket Classic on October 10th and Rome’s Peach State on October 24th. The third has yet to be determined at this point, but will likely be earlier in the season.

2026 MARCHING YELLOW JACKETS

Drum Majors: Campbell Nudd, Head Drum Major; Bella Garmon and Noah Riley.

Majorettes: Bailey Hawkins, Bella Webb, Briana Silvey and Lily Myers.

Flute: Ashly Regalado, Baylee Dockrey, Bella Guzman, Evelyn Valentin, Hayleigh Barrett, Jared Brown, Johannah Bunch, Julian Elisa, Meza Brito, Kimberly Olalde-Barragan, Meme Hinckley.

Clarinet: Alexa Morataya, Brittney Reyes, Chelsea Forsyth, Erjon Prenku, Esme Morales, GuadalupeSierra Reyes, Jace Ayala, Jaylene Orozco, Karen Alvisurez, Katherine Castillo, Madelynn Barrios, Madison Hembree, Peyton Gregory, Raegan Dennis, Tito Hernandez, Valerie Arreguin.

Alto Sax: Andy Jaramill, Belinda Domingo, Diego Rivera Carrasco, Dietrich Smith, Emelyn Bravo, Jaime Salazar, Jannali Perez, Junior De Leon Jr., Katelyn (Kate) Ramirez, Linda Ramirez Lima, Maliyah Renfro, Molly Campos, Victoria Ochoa.

Bass Clarinet: Amy Perenich

Tenor Sax: Ricardo Coronel

Bari Sax: Ayden Herod, Citlalli Vigil Jaime.

Trumpet: Aiyana Coyle, Alex

Spears, Audrey Dobbs, Chloe Chambers, Dossen C a n d e r s , Emelyn Zapet, Herman Chen, Jacob Olalde-Barragan, Jaliyah Donaldson, Jayden R o m e r o , Jimena Morales, Karson Thomas, Lincoln Young, Matthew Bicking, Robbie Seritt, Sadie Chumpitaz, Tanisha Venkatesu, Yandel C o r d e r o Brito.

Trombone: Alexander Avery, Brandon Avila, Ian Owens, Isabella Zola, Josue Villarreal, Kymani Jordan, Pablo Roblero.

Baritone: Jniyah B r o w n , Brynnlee Rodriguez, Julia J e n s e n, Sariah Pickett, Timothy Forsyth.

Tuba: Ahmari Thompson, AslannTrice, Brandon Gonzalez, Eiron Laureano Cotto, EmmaGrace Cook, Iris Trinidad, Javon Taylor, JimmyNunez.

Percussion: Ali Torres, Allie Silvers, Ander East, Carter Jones, Cheyenne Spears, Dax Murphy, Dean Worthing, Domonick Jackson, Ester Herrera, Frida Lopez, Jaylen Perez, Krishna Patel, Madelyn Burch, Molly Egenes, Rusty Maldonado, Rylen McKee, Sara Adcock, Zellie Avery.

Color Guard: Abby Ortiz, Annie Eickman, Ariana Perez, AshleyRamirez, Ava Cass, Ayushi Patel, Essence Bryant, Hannah Reed, Iris (Ashly) Reyes, Jayden Hufstetler, Jazzy Rivera, Jillian Bennett, Jocelyn Rosas, Josephine Mendoza, Keidric Johnson Jr, KelseyLopez, Lili Ortiz, Lindsey Cox, Nallely Huijon, Serena Stover, Sury Duran, Valeria Torres.

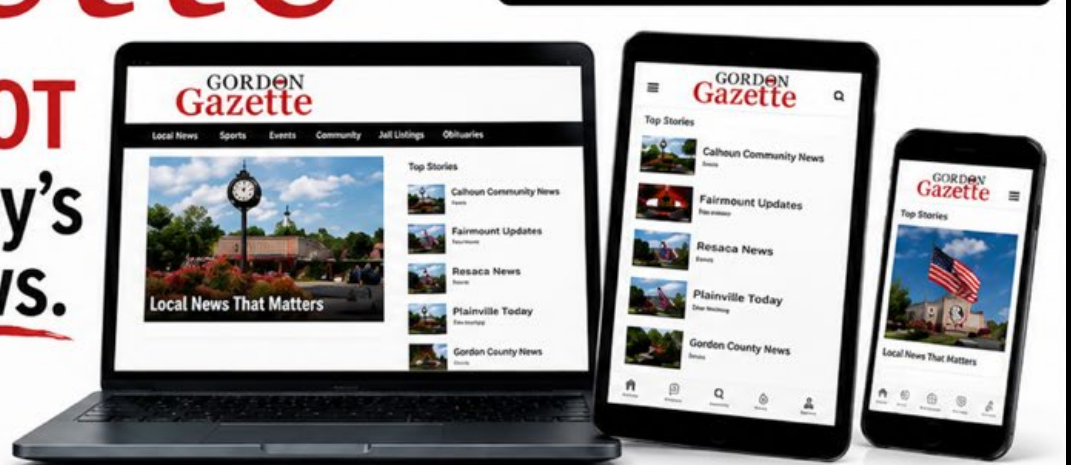


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