

**12** Prep football:  
**18** Big River Rivalry  
2021 at Hermitage H.S.  
noon

**12** Prep swimming:  
**18** Hawk Invitational  
2021 at SwimRVA  
4:30 p.m.

| Youth, High School, College, Recreational & Professional

## KW dominates Graham to win state title

By Weldon Bradshaw  
for the Times-Dispatch

SALEM — What a moment!  
What an experience!  
What a feeling!

Hey, does it get any better  
than this?

“Oh, man,” said King William coach Scott Moore moments after his Cavaliers defeated Graham High 48-21 Saturday on the glistening turf at Salem City Stadium to claim the Class 2 football championship. “For high school football? For my coaching career? No, it doesn’t. This is the peak of the mountain.

“I came back to my alma mater late in my career. It happened to coincide with a great group of athletes. I give all the credit to them and my assistant coaches. I just got the privilege of being able to coach this team.”

On a cool, windy afternoon under overcast skies and amidst a brief but intense third-quarter downpour, Moore’s guys followed the script they’ve used to compile a 13-1 mark and leave those intent on thwarting their high-octane spread attack in their wake.

Demond Claiborne, a 5-11, 190-pound running back who mixes speed, power, and craftiness, rushed 29 times for 244 yards and three touchdowns and caught three passes for 105 yards and another score. His four TDs give him 52 for the season and leave him third (behind Elijah Davis of Heritage and TreVeyon Henderson of Hopewell) on the Virginia High



Dave Lawrence/The Local  
Above, King William’s Cavaliers celebrate with their championship trophy after their 48-21 victory over Graham in the VHSL Class 2 football championship game at Salem City Stadium Saturday. Left, King William running back Demond Claiborne (right) embraces teammate Emmett Shortt as time runs out.

for 93 yards and two more TDs.

And the Cavaliers’ four-man front defense, which had the responsibility of containing a quick, fast, and diversified attack featuring running the explosive Xayvion Turner-Bradshaw and strong-armed quarterback Zack Blevins, allowed the G-Men from Bluefield (13-1) just 47 yards and two first downs on 23 plays in the second half.

School League single-season list. Roberson, a 5-11, 190-pound high football IQ, completed

Quarterback Jayveon with poise, toughness, and a high football IQ, completed 7-of-13 passes for 170 yards and two scores and rushed 16 times

## Cavaliers passed multiple tests in victory

By Dave Lawrence  
Sports Editor

SALEM — King William had a great team last year, but possible COVID-19 exposures, not any opponents, knocked them out of the playoffs. The 2020-21 team never got the chance to see how far it could go.

This year, the Cavaliers had a normal season. No COVID cancellations. They had a tough schedule and were tested and retested by adversity on the field. Many, if not most, of the team’s key players play both ways, and they have never been shy about taking or giving out hits.

Saturday, in the Virginia High School League Class 2 state championship game, the toll of a long season was showing. The team’s studs were tired. They were sore. Sometimes they needed the attention of their train-

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“Our defensive coaches worked overtime this week to prepare,” said Moore, a 1986 King William alumnus now in his second year coaching the Cavaliers after serving 19 years as line coach at Hermitage. “They call it going to the lab. When they go to the lab, they come up with their schemes.

“Then they came in and made great halftime adjustments, and the kids went out and executed.”

Claiborne’s first TD, a 77-yard sprint around left end, came at 6:43 of the first quarter after the Cavaliers stopped Graham three-and-out and forced a punt.

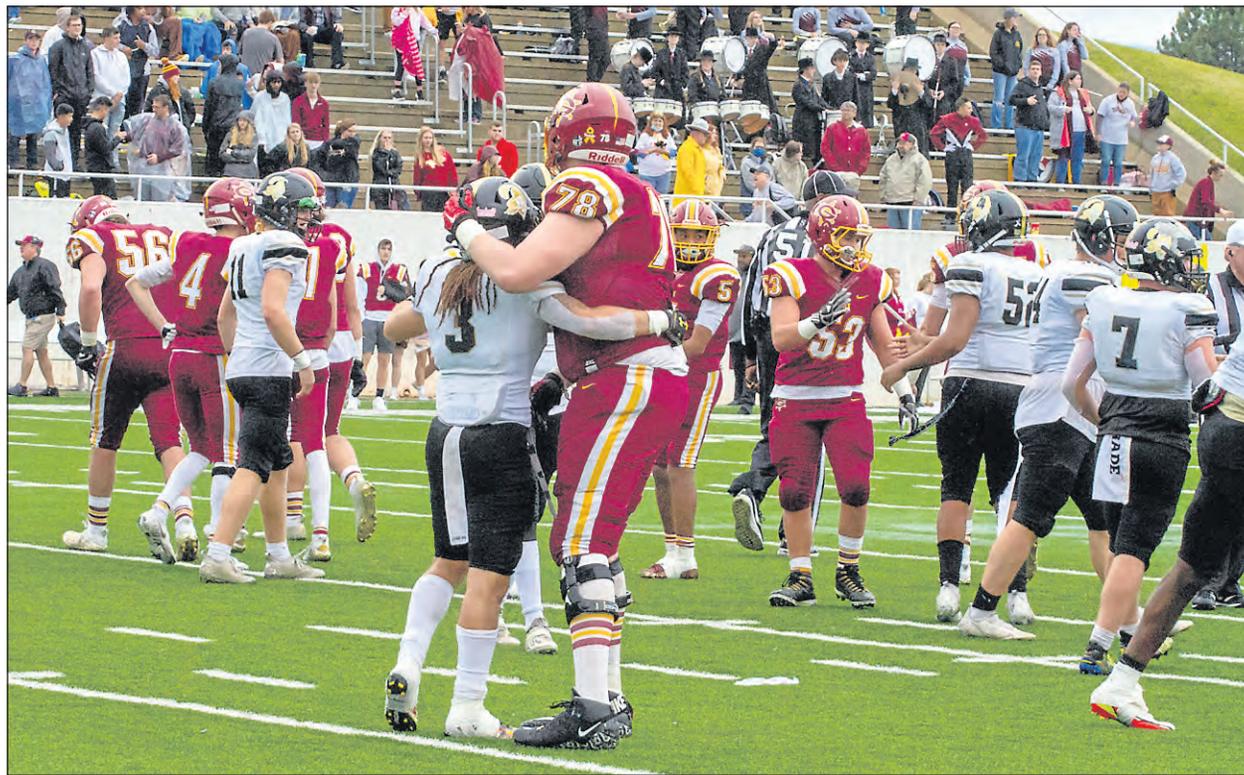
“Their linebackers were great,” Claiborne said. “They were filling their gaps, so I just sucked them in so my O-line could get a hand on them. I stayed focused. When I saw the cut, I made it. No thinking.”

After Robinson’s PAT run put KW up 8-0, Graham responded when Turner-Bradshaw raced 65 yards on an end-around and Ben Morgan kicked the point-after to cut the difference to 8-7.

With the G-Men keying on Claiborne as best they could, Robinson connected with the Wake Forest commit on a 56-yard catch-and-dash for a score at 1:08 of the first period.

“I was running a route to the flats,” Claiborne said. “They were in man coverage. I just slipped out the backfield. My quarterback hit me right on the money. I knew I had one man to beat. I hit him with a nasty spin move and went for six.”

After Turner-Bradshaw scored on a 3-yard run and Morgan’s kick created a 14-14 tie 7:05 before halftime, Claiborne scored his third TD on 19-yard run. Robinson’s pass to Kavontay Hayes put KW up 22-14 midway through the second period.



Dave Lawrence/The Local

Opponents begin to congratulate each other on a game well played as time runs out in King William’s 48-21 victory over Graham in the VHSL Class 2 football championship game at Salem City Stadium Saturday.

## CAVALIERS

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er and to be helped off the field. A lot of the time, they limped off and limped back onto the field under their own power.

The opposing G-Men from Graham High School were probably feeling much the same way.

The kids pulled no punches. There were hard hits, flaring tempers, emotions flying high only to auger hard into the ground.

But there were also clear

“Our offense is kind of simple,” Moore said of the Cavaliers’ ability to find the end zone by either land or air. “We change the looks up a lot. It’s kind of like a pitcher in baseball, changing speed and location, trying to throw the batters off.

“That’s the kind of offense we run, just give them different looks now and then to see how they adjust.”

moments of grace, such as when King William’s Demond Claiborne — who led everyone with 29 carries for 244 yards and three touchdowns and three receptions for 105 yards and another score — went down with a cramp late in the game. One of his teammates and one of the opposing players both went to him to help relieve the cramp. There were friendly conversations walking back to the line of scrimmage between players who had just spent the previous few seconds pounding away at each other.

And, in the final seconds,

Following Claiborne’s score, Isaiah Stockwell drilled the kickoff off the leg of a front-line Graham return man, Charles Watkins recovered on the KW 49, and five plays later Robinson raced 29 yards on a keeper for a score.

“You never know during the course of the game what’s going to shift the momentum,” Moore said. “Sometimes you just get

rather than scramble for a few more meaningless points, the Graham coach had his team take a knee and let the clock run out.

A lot is possible in football, but scoring 27 points in less than a minute is not.

When it was over, these tired, battered, walking wounded from King William High School had fought their way to a well-deserved state championship. These kids were both mentally and physically tough. No matter how sore they were, no matter how exhausted they were, when their number was

a break like that. That’s one of those things, when opportunity presents itself, you have to capitalize on it.”

Though the G-Men cut their deficit to 28-21 just 22 seconds before the break on an 8-yard Blevins-to-Aiden Wallace TD pass, they would not threaten again.

“We have a dynamic offense,” Robinson said. “When

called, they did what needed to be done.

Was it worth it?

After the trophy presentation, team members were running all over the place greeting family and friends. Someone caught up with Claiborne, who spent much of the second half looking worn out — when he wasn’t breaking big plays.

“Hey! Hey Demond! Having fun yet?” the person asked.

“Yeah,” Claiborne answered with a big smile.

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the running game’s going, it opens up the pass. When the pass is going, it opens up the run. Our focus is speed and get to the edges. They contained the edges for a little bit. Once the coaches made adjustments, it opened up for us, and we took off.”

The Cavaliers amassed 502 yards (337 rushing, 170 passing). In their dominant second

half, they outgained the G-Men 217-47 and scored three times, a 37-yard jaunt by Robinson at 4:31 of the third quarter, Claiborne’s 1-yard run (following a 59-yard sprint to the 1 on the previous play), and a 5-yard Robinson-to-Hayes connection 54 seconds before the celebration began in earnest.

“They were trying to get No. 8 (Turner-Bradshaw) outside on the sweep, but we adjusted at halftime and shut it down,” said Trenton Johnson, a 6-0, 190-pound junior defensive end of King William’s second-half defensive excellence. “We shut down their pulling guards and kept them from getting outside and went from there.”

This is the Cavaliers’ second state title. They earned their first in 2000.

“You don’t get but so many chances like this,” Moore, the coach, said. “When you get them, you have to take advantage of them. Today, we did.”

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**King William 14 14 6 14 — 48**  
**Graham 7 14 0 0 — 21**

KW — Claiborne 77 run (J. Robinson run)  
G — Turner-Bradshaw 65 run (Morgan kick)  
KW — Claiborne 56 pass from J. Robinson (pass failed)  
G — Turner-Bradshaw 3 run (Morgan kick)  
KW — Claiborne 19 run (Hayes pass from J. Robinson)  
KW — J. Robinson 29 run (pass failed)  
G — Wallace 8 pass from Blevins (Morgan kick)  
KW — J. Robinson 37 run (pass failed)  
KW — Claiborne 1 run (run failed)  
KW — Hayes 5 pass from J. Robinson (Claiborne run)

### RUSHING

KW: Claiborne 29 carries-244, J. Robinson 16-93, Roane 1-1, Shelton 1-minus 6; GRA: Turner-Bradshaw 10-122, Clements 19-76, Meadows 1-1, Blevins 6-(minus 31).

### PASSING

KW: J. Robinson 7-13-170-2-0; GRA: Blevins 3-10-57-1-0.

### RECEIVING

KW: Claiborne 3-105, T. Robinson 2-52, Shelton 1-8, Hayes 1-5; GRA: Brown 1-40, Wallace 1-8, Sarver 1-9.