

# Sports



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Members of the 1995 Windsor High School varsity football team join in the middle of the school's football field during halftime of the Dukes game Thursday night, Aug. 31, to receive recognition — via a listing of accomplishments and a commemorative No. 1 Windsor jersey — as being the most successful varsity football team in school history. Joining the team members are cheerleaders, student-athletes, administration, faculty and staff members who were with WHS in 1995.

**BY TITUS MOHLER  
STAFF WRITER**

The Windsor High School varsity football team's home opener on Thursday evening, Aug. 31, yielded tears of joy for a variety of reasons.

The game was the setting for a reunion and celebration of the most successful varsity football team in the school's history — the 1995 Dukes.

The game was also the setting for the sweetest taste of success that the school's modern varsity football program has experienced in years.

**A JOY-INSPIRING VICTORY**

The 2023 Dukes held a 20-14 lead at halftime against visiting King and Queen Central High School on Thursday and then pulled away in the second half for a 41-14 blowout victory — the varsity program's first win since 2019, according to MaxPreps.com.

Benjamin DuBois, who is in his first year as head coach of the Dukes after



Torrance Saunders carries the Windsor Dukes banner as he helps lead fellow members of the historic 1995 Windsor High School varsity football team onto the field Thursday evening, Aug. 31, during the 2023 Dukes' home opener.

servicing as offensive coordinator last season, acknowledged that his team started a little slow on Thursday, something they are trying to fix.

But he noted that his players' spirits were bol-

stered by the greats from the 1995 team cheering them on from the sidelines, along with all the fans in the stands.

"With us being so young, nerves are a big deal for us, so once they settled in,

I just felt like they played a great game," DuBois said.

"I was so proud of them, I had to walk away last night. I kind of started tearing up a little bit."

And he said he wasn't the only one.

"Most of these kids have been in the program since they were eighth-graders, so they've gone four years without a win, and now, for them to get one, it got to a couple of them too," he said.

DuBois participated in a halftime presentation to the members of the 1995 team, and then he re-joined his team as halftime continued.

He shared what he told his players to help them go on to score 21 unanswered points in the second half.

"I said, 'Look, y'all see it works. It's worked for two weeks,'" he said, alluding to the Week 1 game in which the Dukes lost but managed to produce 36 points. "I said, 'We've just got to hunker down and stick with what we planned and do it the way we worked on it all week.' I said, 'And if you do those things, no penalties and no turnovers,' I said, 'We'll be fine.' I said, 'The only way they got back in the game was a turnover.' I said, 'If we don't do that,' I said, 'we'll be fine.' And

they bought into it."

He said he had to back them off in the fourth quarter because they were still running full speed with the game clearly in hand.

"I'm so proud of them," he said. "One of the things I felt last year was when times got tough, they kind of gave up. And this year, they're not giving up for anything."

**A JOY-INSPIRING TEAM**

The 1995 Dukes became the first 10-win varsity football team in the school's history, finishing 10-3 overall.

The '95 Dukes were the first football team in school history to win a regional championship, defeating Surry County High School in the Virginia High School League Region A final, 20-13.

The Windsor squad was also the school's first football team to reach the VHSL state playoffs.

The team's head coach,

SEE WINDSOR, B3



The Windsor High School Marching Dukes stand at the ready in the moments leading up to the Windsor varsity football team's home opener on Thursday, Aug. 31.



Windsor High School sophomore Gavin Marshall runs forward to execute the kickoff shortly after the Dukes had taken a 14-7 lead in their home opener Thursday, Aug. 31, against King and Queen Central High School.



At left, members of the historic 1995 Windsor High School varsity football team — from left, David Bickley, Wayne Briggs and Steven Harold — serve as honorary captains during the coin flip for the 2023 Dukes' home opener on Thursday, Aug. 31. The 2023 Dukes captains include, from left, senior Criss Mosley, senior Zachary Gilmore, sophomore Jeremy King and senior Jamari King.



Defending King and Queen Central High School wideout on Thursday, Aug. 31, is Windsor High School sophomore safety Hudson Williams.

# WINDSOR: Some '95 players have children on the '23 team

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Tommy Austin, and its players were invited by the school to an event celebrating them Thursday.

There were festivities leading up to the game, including tailgate and meet-and-greet events.

Members of the 1995 team in attendance took the field with the 2023 squad before the start of the game.

Wayne Briggs, David Bickley and Steven Harold, who were '95 standouts, served as honorary team captains alongside the 2023 team captains for the coin flip.

At halftime, all the members of the 1995 Dukes that were present were introduced individually.

They were joined on the field by cheerleaders, student-athletes, administration, faculty and staff members who were with Windsor High in 1995.

A moment of silence was held to remember players, coaches and administrators from the school in 1995 that have since passed away.

The announcer then highlighted individual honorees from the '95 football squad, which drew 13 all-district selections, four all-region hon-

ors and an all-state selection.

Leading the way for the '95 Dukes was Wayne Briggs, who set school rushing and scoring records with 2,334 yards and 39 touchdowns. He was named to the all-state, all-region and all-district first teams that year.

Underscoring just how potent the '95 Dukes' run game was, the announcer also noted that David Bickley rushed for more than 1,000 yards that same season.

"The 2023 Windsor High School football team, athletic department and administration would like to thank Coach Tommy Austin and the 1995 football team for setting the standard of excellence for Windsor High School and performing on the field the Windsor Way," school officials said in a statement.

At the conclusion of the halftime celebration ceremony, the 1995 players were presented with a framed No. 1 Dukes jersey that school officials said will be displayed in the school to commemorate their success in '95.

On Friday, Sept. 1, DuBois reflected on how the reunion/celebration went when he said, "Coach Tommy Austin messaged



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Members of the 1995 and 2023 Windsor High School varsity football teams gather on the field ahead of the Dukes' home opener Thursday, Aug. 31, and wave the team's banner before the crowd on hand.

me this morning, and he said, 'Coach, I never thought it would have went across like it did.' It meant so much to them, which in turn meant a lot to our team, because believe it or not, some of the guys that were on the '95 team have kids on our team now.

"So before the game

started, we were all in the locker room, and they were taking pictures together, the sons and dads," DuBois added.

Comparing the '95 and '23 rosters, he said he saw a lot of similar last names and added that the familial connections included uncles and cousins too.

"They were just coming

from everywhere, so it felt really like family," he said.

DuBois said the reunion/celebration event started off as him simply wanting to reunite and highlight the 1995 football team.

"And then it just got legs and it just kept growing and kept growing," he said, as WHS cheerleaders, team managers, volleyball players, administrators, teachers and staff mem-

bers from 1995 joined in. "I think if we had went another month, we probably would have had 200 people out there, because they were calling people all over the country and all that stuff, and even the ones that couldn't make it, they actually did a livestream so that they could be a part of it. So it was really special for everybody. People were tearing up and crying."



Windsor High School senior wide receiver Jamari King angles for more yards against visiting King and Queen Central High School on Thursday, Aug. 31, during the Dukes' 41-14 blowout victory. The win was Windsor's first since 2019, according to MaxPreps.com.



Windsor High School sophomore quarterback Jeremy King carries a tackler forward as he advances with the ball amid the Dukes' 41-14 blowout of visiting King and Queen Central High School on Thursday, Aug. 31.



Windsor High School sophomore running back Carl Powell aims to rack up some yards after a catch Thursday night, Aug. 31, against King and Queen Central High School.

**PREMIER AUCTION**  
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SUBMITTED | KENDALL EDWARDS

## Courtland Ruritans award four scholarships

The Courtland Ruritan Club awarded its annual scholarships to four Southamptton High School seniors at its monthly meeting on Aug. 3. Courtland Ruritan Club Scholarship Committee Chairman Kendall Edwards, pictured on the far right, is joined, from left, by Bill Wright Memorial Scholarship recipients Madelyn Brown, Kylie Bray and Cameron Jenkins. Not pictured is Avery Bowen.

**NOV. 7<sup>th</sup>, VOTE TO RE-ELECT**  
**Josh Wyche**  
**SHERIFF**  
 SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY / FRANKLIN

**Education:**

- Southampton County Public Schools K-12th grade & FHS Graduate 1980
- AAS Degree of Criminal Justice Camp Community College
- Graduate of the 237 FBI National Academy - Quantico, VA
- Completed many educational courses related to law enforcement

**Organizations:**

- Former President of the Robert A. Hill, Sr. F.O.P
- Southern States Police Benevolent Association
- Member Courtland Rescue Squad
- President of the Voices of Harmony Quartet Singing Group

**Member of the Following Boards:**

- FBI NAA • Crater Criminal Justice Academy • Western Tidewater Regional Jail • Meherrin Drug Task Force
- VA. Sheriff's Association Legislative
- VA. Sheriff's Institute • Brother's Keepers

**I am very passionate about serving and protecting the citizens of Southampton County and the City of Franklin. I have served in law enforcement for the past 38 years I am committed and looking forward to continuing to do so for another 4 years if re-elected!**

**VOTE TO RE-ELECT**  
**Josh Wyche**  
 (Paid for and authorized Josh Wyche for Sheriff)