

# Sports



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.

TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

**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,

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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.