

Summit Academy players to face learning curve



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While it's nice to revel in victories and reach milestones, Summit Academy's mission goes deeper than what's on the wins-and-losses ledger.

The school for court-adjudicated youth in the little town of Herman in Butler County looks at accomplishments in a different vein.

“We look at behavior first, and acting appropriately and disciplined,” said 17th-year coach Steve Sherer, also the school's principal. “We're looking for them to demonstrate sportsmanship and what it means to be part of a team.”

Roster turnover from year-to-year is a constant, and 2016 is no exception. Only a junior varsity player from last year, Marcel H., returns for the upcoming season.

While the priorities are different than other schools, players wouldn't mind walking off the pastoral setting that is Summit's home field with a victory more often.

The Knights have lost 19 straight games, with the last win being school's all-time greatest victory Oct. 26, 2013 — a 36-20 decision over Freeport that clinched the school's only playoff berth.

Summit could be helped by the new classification realignment. The Knights are now in the Class A Big 7 Conference, dropping down from the Class AA Allegheny Conference.

“It does help,” Sherer said. “Our numbers are down over the last year. Moving down can make us more competitive.”

It will be the third different conference in as many seasons for the Knights.

At quarterback this year will be Tacore P. (6-2, 230).

“He's got a real strong arm,” Sherer said of Tacore P. “He's pretty smart defensively, and he'll help us out at safety.”

Also contributing will be wide receivers Ray G., Tyler H. and Caleb J.

The veteran coach also said linebacker/center Jermaine C. has emerged as a team leader and much will be expected from Isaiah F. and Demetrius H.

There are 23 players out for the team, but only six have played football.

So that makes the task for Sherer and his assistants tougher, teaching the nuances of the game.

“We're excited about the season,” Sherer said. “It's a new group of kids, and we're looking forward to starting the season.”