

# WHERE TO WATCH: A WILLCO WEEK-BY-WEEK BREAKDOWN OF KEY MATCHUPS

By Charles Pulliam • Sports Editor

Another high school football season is upon us and once again, Williamson County programs are the mix with more top talent returning after three separate local teams vied for state titles in 2021.

Where can one find the top games featuring local teams this season? Maybe this will help out:

## **Week 1 Game of the Week – Page at Fairview**

For the eighth consecutive season the Battle of 840 between Class 5A Page, which played for its first state championship last season, and the always tough Yellow Jackets of Class 3A Fairview will battle to begin a new year.

New Patriots starting quarterback Colin Hurd made a splash stepping in for injured starter Jake McNamara last year and scoring three touchdowns in leading Page to a 28-20 victory. Fairview is 2-5 in seven season openers in the rivalry, winning at home 18-3 in 2020 and 13-10 in 2016.

Chris Hughes is entering his 14th season leading the Yellow Jackets, while Page coach Charles Rathbone is going into his 12th year coaching the Patriots. Their relationship alone is worth the watch considering the weight of the see-saw, cross-county rivalry that goes beyond classification.

Week 1 also pits two of the top seniors in the state as recent Mississippi State commitment Chris Parson of Ravenwood will get a visit from Ole Miss commit and Montgomery Bell Academy QB Marcel Reed. The Big Red cruised to a 56-28 win at home last year.

Other notable matchups include Christ Presbyterian Academy's visit to Independence and Nolensville's trek to Battle Ground Academy.

## **Week 2 Game of the Week – CPA at Brentwood Academy**

The Lions rallied for a wild 21-17 win in the first meeting between the two storied Division II programs last year at CPA, but needed a goal-line stand to cement the victory. After forfeiting a 17-7 lead, Brentwood Academy positioned itself inside the CPA 5-yard line before the Lions defense forced a fumble and recovered the ball at the 1 with just nine seconds to play.

Besides the late-game drama, CPA has finished the last four seasons playing in the DII-AA state championship game. Brentwood Academy is trying to get back into the DII-AAA title tilt after winning four straight championships from 2015-18.

Franklin visits Page in Week 2 as another major in-county affair, while BGA crosses the interstate to visit Ravenwood in a rematch of last year's thrilling 35-31 Raptors win thanks to a late Parson score. Don't fret where to go too much, because at least BGA at Ravenwood is on Thursday.

## **Week 3 Game of the Week – Independence at Centennial**

Just about everyone dips into league play in Week 3 and this Region 7-6A matchup is one that carries plenty of weight in terms of seeding. The Cougars have gained confidence after a 6-4 season a year ago, but missed the playoffs thanks to setbacks against the upper-half of the region, including a shutout loss in Thompson's Station.

Will the Cougars have what it takes to gain more momentum, especially in region? How will new coach Scott Stidham and the revamped Eagles offense manage their first league test? This is one to check out.

A couple other major Region 7-6A contests include Brentwood at Sum-



PHOTO BY CHARLES PULLIAM

Ravenwood's Mason Green, a 6-foot-3, 225-pound senior, will be among the leaders up front for the Raptors.

mit and Ravenwood at Franklin, while CPA visits BGA in DII-AA's Middle Region and don't forget about the always entertaining Bishop's Cup as Pope John Paul II visits Father Ryan.

## **Week 4 Game of the Week – Oakland at Ravenwood**

There's only one game that truly stands out on Sept. 9.

Ravenwood coach Will Hester has once again stacked a schedule and this year it includes a visit from two-time defending Class 6A champion Oakland. The Patriots entered 2022 riding a 30-game winning streak and have played for a state title in four of the last six seasons.

The Raptors reached the finals in 2019 and with Parson guiding a potent offense, Ravenwood has high hopes this season, plus they are favored to win Region 7-6A.

## **Week 5 Game of the Week – Brentwood at Ravenwood**



PHOTO CHARLES PULLIAM

The Summit students have cheered on the Spartans in three consecutive BlueCross Bowl championship football games.

It's The Battle of the Woods week. What more do you need to say?

Ravenwood snapped a three-game regular season slide against their arch rivals last year with a 21-16 victory at BHS. Thanks to that win, the all-time series is knotted at 11-11. Who will break the draw?

Once again, there are two other Region 7-6A meetings on Sept. 16 with Centennial hosting Summit and