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2021 Fall FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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- **Pahokee Blue Devils**



August 2021
A Special Supplement to

**Lake Okeechobee News
& Caloosa Belle**

2021 Fall FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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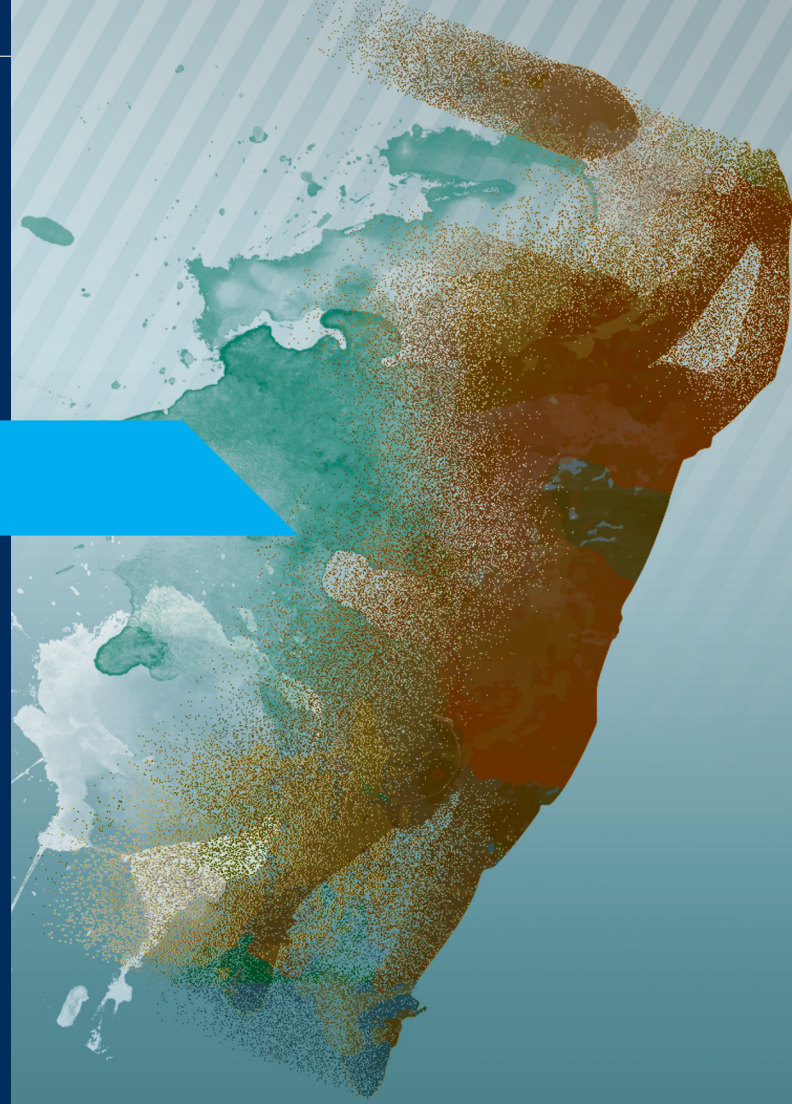
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2021 Fall

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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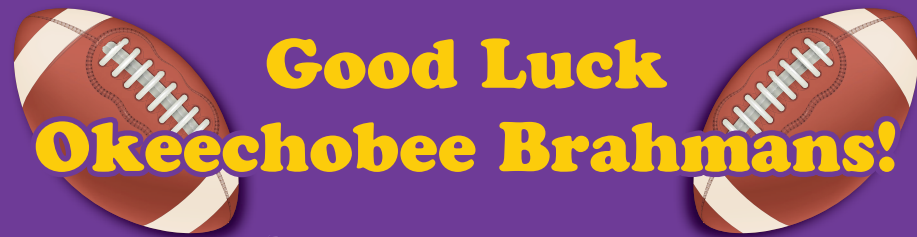
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Each team buzzing with the possibility that this could be their year. Their year to win a district championship. Their year to bring home a state championship. But before school administrators can start clearing off a spot in the trophy case, first its time to get to work. Training camps, practice, weight lifting, and football drills. And you can't let your academics drop in the process of all that training. The grind of football has turned into a year-round project for great teams. If you're not getting better, you're getting worse.

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Game day atmosphere & food power rankings



Richard Marion is a sports writer and food expert with over 30 years of experience eating food. He has tasted a wide variety of food, such as pizza and even sushi. These gameday food and atmosphere rankings are based on extensive travel and attendance of football games around Lake Okeechobee.

Hamburgers, hot dogs, nachos, an ice cold soda.

Food at high school football games in south Florida just hits different sometimes.

And there are some truly great options when it comes to what you can find at football games around Lake Okeechobee. Using a highly scientific method of game day atmosphere along with months of painstaking research on menu selection, here are the official power rankings of best game day food around Lake Okeechobee in 2021.

1

Clewiston

Folks, you just haven't lived a fulfilled life until you've smelled the grills at a Clewiston High School football game. It's enough to make a man cry. As halftime approaches cooks in Clewiston start putting their grills into overtime, searing some absolutely perfectly burgers. The layout of the grills downwind from spectators is genius and borders on criminal.

2

Glades Central/Pahokee

Truly the closest you're going to get to an NFL tailgating experience at the high school level. If you haven't been to a Muck Bowl, you need to go. You won't regret it.

3

Okeechobee

Okeechobee High School's atmosphere on game day is great. The OHS Band is one of the best around the lake. But they don't have a signature food that stands out. Perhaps if they had something in their concession stand with a fun name, like, I don't know...The Okeecheesee Burger, it could push them over the top. For example The Okeecheesee Burger could have two slices of cheese, one on top of the meat and one on the bottom. And also a spicy cheese dip on the side to dip your burger in.

4

Glades Day/Moore Haven

Similar to Okeechobee, there's nothing that stands out as a signature item or wow factor. OHS's massive and talented band gives them the slight edge above these two through pure atmosphere. In previous years, Moore Haven's burgers have also been fantastic. But with the team rebuilding in 2021, how will the concessions stand respond?

Pahokee putting 2020 in the rear view mirror



After advancing all the way to the state championship in 2019, the Pahokee Blue Devils, along with all the schools in Palm Beach County, found themselves sitting out the FHSAA playoffs in 2020 due to COVID-19

Instead, schools from Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach competed in a tri-county football league. Some teams thrived in the format. But the Blue Devils took a step back. Pahokee went 2-4 last year including a brutal 38-0 loss to Glades Central in the Muck Bowl. Following the season Pahokee head coach DJ Boldin stated he was moving on to coach wide receivers at Lake Erie College.

Taking the reigns of the program heading into 2021 is former defensive coordinator Emmanuel Hendrix. Hendrix is a longtime Blue Devil and graduated from Pahokee in 1998.

Throughout their early practices in 2021 Hendrix has put the Blue Devils to work. Both the defensive and offensive lines got plenty of action in training camp, with coaches putting an emphasis on physicality.

The team is looking to build on their successful showing in their spring game in May 2021 which saw them beat St. John Paul II 20-14. The Blue Devil defense dominated St. John Paul, holding them scoreless





until there were just six minutes left in the fourth quarter.

Offensively the Blue Devils have a freshman transfer at quarterback, Austin Simmons. Simmons already has offers from Florida Atlantic University and Purdue. For a while, it looked like the Blue Devils would miss out on having Austin on their squad this year. The FHSAA initially had said Simmons was to sit out this year due to allegations that documents were falsified that allowed him to play as an eighth grader for Charles W. Flanagan High School last year. But after re-examining the case, the FHSAA downgraded the sanctions from an entire year to only five contests.

Since Simmons is also competing in track and meets count towards the contest total, he could be on the field under center for the Blue Devils by week three.

Pahokee will be playing a few Lake Okeechobee teams beyond the annual Muck Bowl against Glades Central. The Blue Devils are scheduled to face Okeechobee, Moore Haven and Clewiston this year.

But, obviously, that Muck Bowl matchup against the Raiders is circled on the calendar. It is every year.

The Blue Devils are ready to put 2020 behind them, and what better way to bounce back than a Muck Bowl win followed by a playoff run?



Blue Devils Schedule

Date	Opponent
8/27 6:30p	@ Wellington (Wellington, FL) Location: Wellington High School
9/3 7:00p	@ Moore Haven (Moore Haven, FL) Location: Moore Haven High School
9/10 6:30p	Palm Beach Lakes (West Palm Beach, FL) Location: Pahokee High School
9/24 6:30p	Palm Beach Gardens (Palm Beach Gardens, FL) Location: Pahokee High School
10/1 7:00p	@ Okeechobee (Okeechobee, FL) Location: Okeechobee High School
10/8 6:30p	Treasure Coast (Port St. Lucie, FL) Location: Pahokee High School
10/15 6:30p	Lake Worth (Lake Worth, FL) Game Details: Homecoming
10/22 7:30p	@ Clewiston (Clewiston, FL) Location: Clewiston High School
11/5 6:30p	Glades Central (Belle Glade, FL) Game Details: Muck Bowl





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Brahmans have a winning mindset in 2021



The Okeechobee Brahmans turned a few heads last year when they managed to put together their first winning season since 2016.

The Okeechobee Brahmans turned a few heads last year when they managed to put together their first winning season since 2016.

From 2017 through 2019, the team had only won five games total. And in 2018, the Brahmans lost every game they played. Heading into 2020, with added obstacles due to COVID-19 pandemic, no one could've blamed the team if the status quo of the previous four years held.

But the Brahmans opened up their season with a big win over Moore Haven, and if you were one of the Okeechobee faithful who made the trip to the south of the lake for the game, you could tell things were different.

Things were clicking in a way they just hadn't in the last few seasons, especially on offense.

The Brahmans rode the momentum from that win all the way to a playoff berth.

In the offseason Okeechobee head coach Ty Smith moved to Illinois to take a position at Reed-Custer High School, and former coach and athletic director Kenny Buckner stepped into the position.

Buckner is no stranger to high school sports around Lake Okeechobee, having spent at Glades Day and Moore Haven in his career.

"This is my 39th year being involved with high school athletics," said Buckner. "So it's not like I'm just jumping back in. I did sit back and try to look at what we've done the last few years overall. Offensively, defensively, the whole nine yards. The offense we're trying to



**Okeechobee
Brahmans**



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15.OCT - PORT ST LUCIE ***

22.OCT - SOUTHFORK ***

29.OCT - SUNCOAST *PINK OUT* ***

5.NOV - CLEWISTON

WHITE = AWAY GOLD = HOME *** = DISTRICT GAMES

THE
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OF THE
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Brahmans
Schedule

his career.

“This is my 39th year being involved with high school athletics,” said Buckner. “So it’s not like I’m just jumping back in. I did sit back and try to look at what we’ve done the last few years overall. Offensively, defensively, the whole nine yards. The offense we’re trying to install is very simple and once they figure it out I think the kids will be really excited. They like it right now, but once they get some more experience they’ll see how much success they can have with it.”

“They seem to be buying in to the new offense we’re installing,” said Buckner. “It’s still early but the offense is coming together. We’re getting there.”

After missing last year, the Okeechobee Clewiston rivalry is back on again this season. The Tigers and Brahms will meet on the last game of the regular season on Nov. 5. Historically the rivalry has been one-sided, with Clewiston bullying the Brahms throughout the decades. This year should be another tough matchup for the Brahms as the Tigers look to have their best squad in years.

For now, Okeechobee has one goal. Get back to the playoffs again this year and put together a run for a title.

“We ought to have a good football program every year,” concluded Bucker about the Brahms. “Our goal is to win a district championship. That’s what we’re working towards.”



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Moore Haven Terriers are underdogs as they rebuild in 2021



Moore Haven Terriers

Moore Haven is heading into 2021 with a lot of questions.

The Terriers were by far the football program most effected by the COVID-19 pandemic last year. They ended up only playing three games in the regular season in 2020 due to exclusions related to COVID-19, winning one and losing two. Despite that the Terriers still managed a playoff berth and actually won a game in the quarterfinals due to a team having to forfeit. Eventually they'd go on to lose 49-18 in the semifinals to Champagnat Catholic.

After the season, Terrier head coach Brent Burnside announced he was moving on from the program and taking a position with East Lee County High School football. Burnside was one of the last remnants of a Terrier coaching staff that had helped Moore Haven achieve an undefeated regular season in 2017 under head coach Max Manin. In 2019 Manin accepted a position as an assistant football coach at St. Augustine High School and his defensive coordinator, Burnside, was promoted to head coach.

Burnside announced he was leaving the team in April. But Moore



Haven didn't announce his replacement until late June.

The Terriers tapped former Okeechobee Brahman offensive coordinator Joe Smith to lead the program.

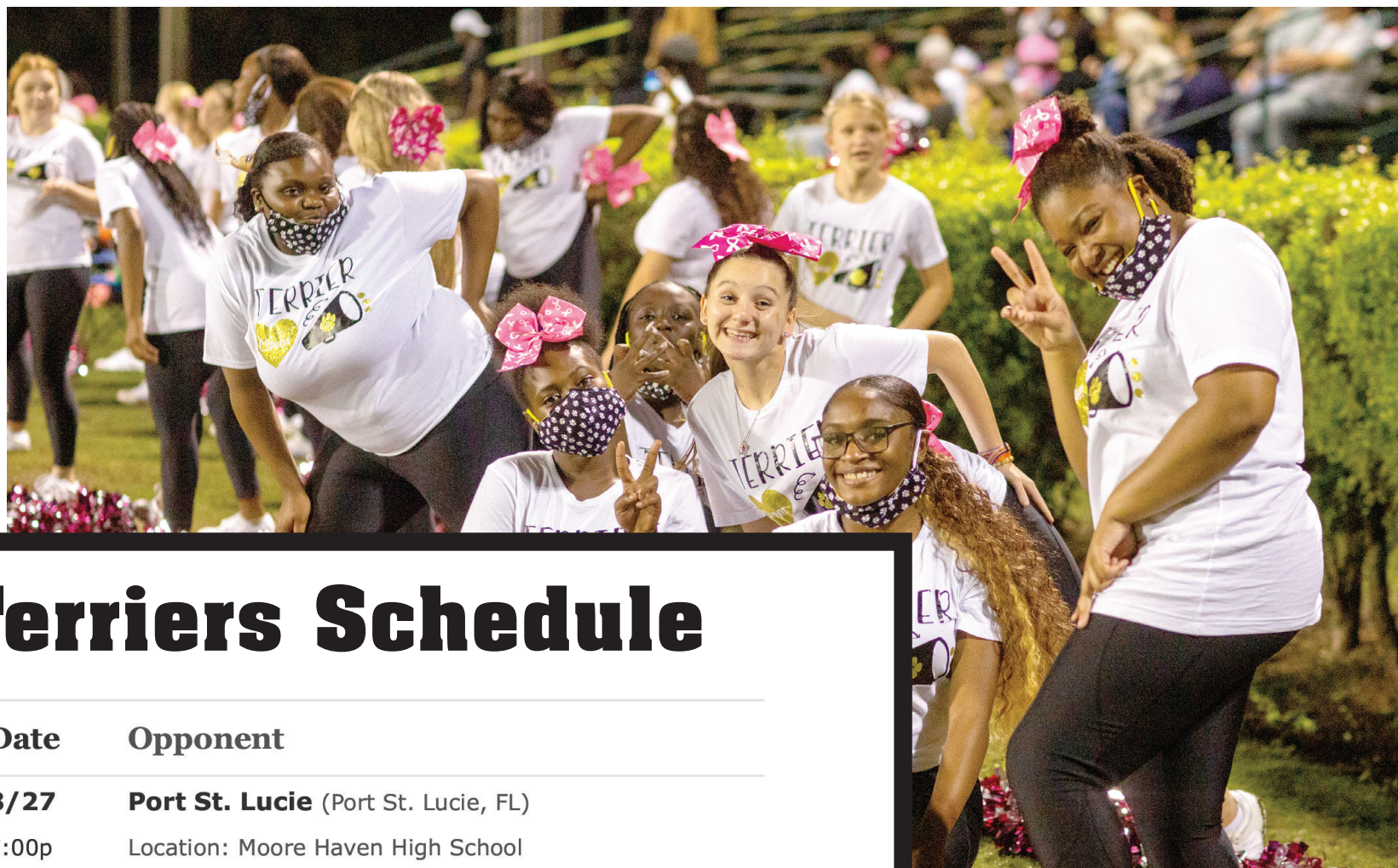
Smith spent nine years coaching football at OHS, starting as a defensive backs and wide receiver coach before becoming the offensive coordinator. During his time with the team OHS has had all-state athlete Bubba Fludd, all-time Brahman leading rusher Veyon Washington, Division 1 prospect Jay'quavious Thomas, and 2020 honorable mention all-state quarterback Lee Edwards.

The Brahmans finished the regular season with a 62-27 blowout over Terrier rival Glades Day. If Smith can produce those kind of results over the Gators while he's with Moore Haven, there will be a lot of happy Terrier fans south of the lake.

But still, Smith took over the team very late in the game. Combined with the fact that the Terriers already missed much of last year, Moore Haven football is in a shaky position headed into this season. It's hard to build a brand new team and culture from the ground up, especially when you only have about a month and a half to do it.

Then again, that spirit of being an underdog has always permeated the culture in Moore Haven. All the great Terrier teams in the past were scrappy, undersized, and overlooked. But they'd still show up and run for 300 yards on your defense.

Maybe people writing off the team this year means the Terriers have them exactly where they want them. Stay tuned.



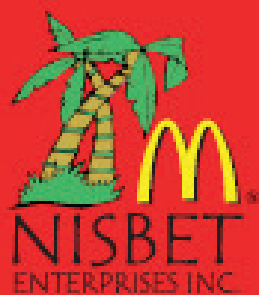
Terriers Schedule

Date	Opponent
8/27 7:00p	Port St. Lucie (Port St. Lucie, FL) Location: Moore Haven High School
9/3 7:00p	Pahokee (Pahokee, FL) Location: Moore Haven High School
9/10 7:30p	Fort Meade (Fort Meade, FL) Location: Moore Haven High School
9/24 7:30p	@ Avon Park (Avon Park, FL) Location: Avon Park High School
10/1 7:30p	Glades Day (Belle Glade, FL) * Location: Moore Haven High School
10/8 7:30p	@ First Baptist Academy (Naples, FL) Location: First Baptist Academy
10/22 7:00p	Palm Beach Christian Prep (Greenacres, FL) Location: Moore Haven High School
11/5 7:00p	LaBelle (LaBelle, FL) Location: Moore Haven High School



Schedule Legend

District Game = *



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LaBelle Cowboys plan to pick up where they left off



Last year the LaBelle Cowboys looked to be on the verge of making a run in the playoffs.

Then COVID-19 derailed their momentum.

The Cowboys jumped out to a 5-2 start in their 2020 campaign, notching wins over Evangelical Christian, Estero, Mariner, Southwest Florida Christian, and DeSoto County. But shortly after that DeSoto game a player on the junior varsity squad tested positive for COVID-19, and the Cowboys had to suspend team activities.

LaBelle would've been cleared to play just in time for their playoff game against Hardee on Nov. 13, but with so little time to actually prepare for the game the decision was made to forfeit. The Cowboys would've had only one day of practice in over three weeks entering the playoff match.

Former LaBelle Cowboy Matt Davidson took over the reigns as coach of the program after a talented 2018 senior class graduated and moved on. Those seniors propelled the Cowboys all the way to an 8-4 record and a ticket to the regional semifinal in 2018. Losing them was a big blow for Davidson, who had been the coach of the junior varsity program. But it's something every football program has to go through and overcome.



**LaBelle
Cowboys**



The Cowboys finished 2019 with a 2-8 record, but that 2-8 record on its face was deceiving. Many games in 2019 were closer than you would think. The Cowboys lost two games by only one point in 2019. In 2020 it looked like they had found a way to take that extra step to get on the winning side of those close games. And for it all to end the way it did was heartbreaking.

LaBelle had five players go on to sign letters of intent following the 2020 season. Adam Reinbott, Jonathan Munson, Jaylon Gallegos, Kade Logsdon, and Elvis Casanova will all go on to represent Cowboys athletics at the next level.

LaBelle kicked off their preparation for this season with a Fall Camp Lock In. Players and coaches stayed on campus for about 30 hours in the beginning of August, participating in 7 on 7 competitions and lineman dodgeball. The kids also met and heard a message from former NFL safety Nate Allen.

The Cowboys will face two other area teams on their schedule in 2021, Moore Haven and Clewiston. The Tigers have gotten the best of the Cowboys in the previous two Hendry County Bowls, and it'll be another tough matchup this year. Clewiston may be one of the better teams in the area this season and should be a good early test for the Cowboys when they host the Tigers on Sept. 10.

The 2021 season should be an opportunity for the Cowboys to pick up where they started.





Cowboys Schedule

Date	Opponent
8/27 7:00p	@ Neumann (Naples, FL) Location: Neumann High School
9/3 7:00p	@ Lemon Bay (Englewood, FL) Location: Lemon Bay High School
9/10 7:00p	Clewiston (Clewiston, FL) Location: LaBelle High School
9/17 7:00p	Bonita Springs (Estero, FL) * Location: LaBelle High School
10/1 7:00p	Estero (Estero, FL) * Location: LaBelle High School
10/8 7:00p	Southwest Florida Christian (Fort Myers, FL) Game Details: Homecoming
10/15 7:00p	Mariner (Cape Coral, FL) * Game Details: Senior Night
10/22 7:00p	@ Cypress Lake (Fort Myers, FL) * Location: Cypress Lake High School
10/29 7:00p	@ Island Coast (Cape Coral, FL) * Game Details: Senior Night
11/5	@ Moore Haven (Moore Haven, FL)



Schedule Legend

District Game = *



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Glades Day Gators finding their groove



The Glades Day Gators have gone through some growing pains in the last two years.

The Gators were another team hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it wasn't as bad as Moore Haven, the Gators still ended up missing much of training camp and the early season due to exclusions from the virus.

Glades Day finished with a 2-6 record in 2020, but showed a lot of mental toughness throughout the season.

Junior quarterback Dylan Wilkins showed some flashes of greatness during 2020, and provided leadership on the field as the team navigated adversity. He's returning this year as a senior, and was chosen as one of ESPN West Palm's Top 63 players in the area.

Eighth grade wide receiver Hardley Gilmore turned a few heads last year. It seemed like whenever the Gators needed a clutch play, Gilmore would pull through with an amazing catch right on cue. But he won't be on the Glades Day sidelines in 2021, as he's transferred to the Benjamin School in North Palm Beach.



**Glades
Day
Gators**



Running back Damian Cunningham is back in his senior year. He also showed flashes in 2020 and could play a key role in the Gators success.

One game that's always fun is when Glades Day takes on Moore Haven. The Terriers have dominated the rivalry in recent years, but with Moore Haven going through a rebuilding process, this could be the year Glades Day finally gets some revenge. The two teams will meet up on Oct. 1 in Moore Haven.

The Gators are due for some good luck. They were really only one or two plays from being 4-4 during a season wracked by COVID-19. Who knows how things would've played out if the team had a proper training camp in 2020. And they appear to have a good core group of players to make a run this season.

After two years of adversity and growth, 2021 might be the year of the Gators.





Gators Schedule

Date	Opponent
8/27 7:00p	@ Neumann (Naples, FL) Location: Neumann High School
9/3 7:00p	@ Lemon Bay (Englewood, FL) Location: Lemon Bay High School
9/10 7:00p	Clewiston (Clewiston, FL) Location: LaBelle High School
9/17 7:00p	Bonita Springs (Estero, FL) * Location: LaBelle High School
10/1 7:00p	Estero (Estero, FL) * Location: LaBelle High School
10/8 7:00p	Southwest Florida Christian (Fort Myers, FL) Game Details: Homecoming
10/15 7:00p	Mariner (Cape Coral, FL) * Game Details: Senior Night
10/22 7:00p	@ Cypress Lake (Fort Myers, FL) * Location: Cypress Lake High School
10/29 7:00p	@ Island Coast (Cape Coral, FL) * Game Details: Senior Night
11/5	@ Moore Haven (Moore Haven, FL)



Schedule Legend

District Game = *



FLORIDA CRYSTALS

Wishing our hometown teams a successful season!



Glades Central High School Raiders



Glades Day High School Gators



Pahokee Middle-Senior High School Blue Devils






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Glades Central plans encore to amazing 2020 season



The Glades Central Raiders absolutely thrived in 2020.

While Pahokee struggled in the tri-county format that Palm Beach schools participated in during 2020, the Raiders dominated. Glades Central steamrolled opponents, sometimes winning by 40 points or more.

First year Raiders coach Rashad Jackson had no spring game, and very little time with his team over the summer. But you could hardly tell with Glades Central's performance on the field.

The pièce de résistance though, was their 38-0 shutout of Pahokee in the Muck Bowl.

The Raiders managed to go undefeated until they fell to the Dillard Panthers 33-6 in the tri-county semifinal, finishing with a 5-1 record.

Now, they're attempting to recreate that success in 2021.

They've got the tough schedule to match their state champion expectations, playing many playoff caliber teams throughout their season. And they also have a new quarterback. Senior Garrison



Glades Central Raiders

GLADES CENTRAL RAIDERS FOOTBALL

GC 2021 SEASON SCHEDULE GC

#WEBACK2021

#RAIDERSNATION

HOME	AWAY
20 AUG PALMETTO RIDGE NAPLES	27 AUG PALM BEACH LAKES
3 SEP PALM BEACH GARDENS	17 SEP SANTALUCES
10 SEP ATLANTIC (DELRAY)	10 OCT BOOKER T WASHINGTON
1 OCT CAROL CITY (MIAMI) *HOMECOMING	22 OCT VERO BEACH
14 OCT DWYER *SENIOR NIGHT	5 NOV PAHOKEE (MUCK BOWL)
29 OCT MIAMI PACE	

ALL HOME GAMES KICK OFF @ 6:30

Kepley transferred in from Oceanside Collegiate Academy. Kepley led his team to a 6-1 record in his junior year, throwing for 17 touchdowns and only one interception.

But news broke late that could throw a wrench in the Raiders' promising season.

Glades Central's principal, Melanie Bolden-Morris, sent an email out to parents and students on Aug. 16 announcing head coach Rashad Jackson and one varsity player would miss the kickoff classic game against Miami Palmetto.

Bolden-Morris said the decision was based on forthcoming sanctions expected to be levied by the Florida High School Athletic Association. But since the investigation is ongoing, no other details were provided about the sanctions.

Nothing like a little drama to start the season, right?

Those forthcoming sanctions cast a shadow on the upcoming season for Glades Central. The Raiders will have to hope whatever it is will play out similar to the situation that just happened with Pahokee's brush with the FHSAA, where their sanctions were only in effect for a certain number of games as opposed to a whole season.



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Clewiston Tigers are going to be a force to be reckoned with in 2021



The Clewiston Tigers have made back-to-back playoff appearances in 2019 and 2020, and they don't plan to break that streak headed into this season.

The Tigers are coming off a 6-1 regular season in 2020. And went on to beat Glades Central in the 2021 spring game 21-14.

In the opening possession of the third quarter of the spring game, the Tigers took the lead on a 30-plus yard touchdown catch by Chauncy Cobb. Cobb also helped seal the win with a 20-yard run in the fourth quarter that helped the Tigers run out the clock.

The Tiger defense was swarming in the second half. Glades Central's offensive line really struggled to block the Clewiston defensive line. It was a big showing against a good Raiders squad,

"Our kids were ready for this game," explained Walker after the game. "It's a rivalry game. It doesn't matter if it's a spring game, regular season, or playoffs.

Our kids get jacked up to play Glades Central. I'm just proud of the way they competed."

Now, as the Tigers prepare for their 2021 season, they're looking to build on that success.



**Clewiston
Tigers**



CLEWISTON HIGH SCHOOL



ENGAGE, INSPIRE, AND CHALLENGE EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY!

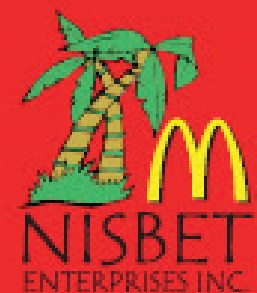
“We’re out here getting in some great condition right now,” said Tigers coach Pete Walker as his players practiced in August. “A lot of reps. A lot of guys getting better already. Even from four days ago we’ve come a long way.”

Walker made returned to coach the Tigers in 2019 after a two-year hiatus. They were a young team that year, and faced all the adversity that comes from that. But still, they finished with a 6-6 record, and a playoff berth thanks to a win over Okeechobee in the final game of the regular season.

That young team came back in 2020, a little older, and a little wiser. And they managed to only lose one game during the regular season.

Chemistry is one of the most underrated aspects to a good football team. And the adversity the team went through in 2019 helped give the Tigers a talented core of players with good chemistry. With many players returning in 2021, it’s hard not to see Clewiston as potentially being one of the best teams around the lake this year.

“We’re excited about it,” said Walker. “It’s football season.”



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CLEWISTON HIGH SCHOOL



2021 SCHEDULE VARSITY

AUG 20.	John Carroll- KICK OFF CLASSIC	AWAY	7:00
27	Frostproof	AWAY	7:30
SEPT. 3	Bartow	HOME	7:30
10	Labelle	AWAY	7:00
17	Calvary Christian	HOME	7:30
24 OPEN	OPEN		
OCT. 1	Avon Park	AWAY	7:30
8	Cypress Lake	HOME	7:30
15	Cardinal Newman	AWAY	7:00
22	Pahokee	HOME	7:30
29	Arch Bishop McCarthy	AWAY	7:30
NOV. 5	Okeechobee	HOME	7:30



JUNIOR VARSITY

AUG. 26	Okeechobee	HOME	7:00
SEPT. 2	Avon park	AWAY	7:00
9	Labelle	HOME	7:00
16	Lake Placid	HOME	7:00
23	Sebring	HOME	7:00
30	Labelle	AWAY	7:00
OCT. 7	Lake Placid	AWAY	7:00
14	Okeechobee	AWAY	6:00

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