

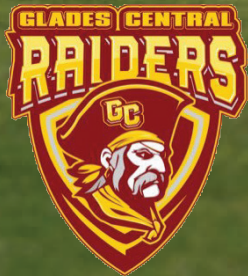


2023 Fall

FOOTBALL PREVIEW



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August 23, 2023 • A Special Supplement to **Lake Okeechobee News**



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CONTENTS

Pg.2

Florida heat another hurdle for football teams around Lake O

Pg.3

Brahman football team gearing up for 2023 season

Pg.6

OHS schedule breakdown

Pg.9

OHS Brahman Football Schedules

Pg.12

Glades Central Raiders looking to bounce back in 2023

Pg.13

Glades Central Raiders & Glades Day Gators football schedules

Pg.14

Glades Day Gators ready to bite back in 2023

Florida heat another hurdle for football teams around Lake O

On the first day of school in Okeechobee County, the heat index reached nearly 120 degrees. That kind of heat can feel oppressive just walking outside, but it adds another layer of adversity for football teams practicing in the area.

“It’s been really hot,” said OHS sophomore Fred Hill. “We’re getting used to it and conditioned to it, because it’s going to be like this in games too.”

To deal with the heat, coaches have started moving practices to earlier or later in the day to avoid the midday highs. Increased water breaks are becoming more common to help athletes stay hydrated before, during, and after all practices and competitions.

The National Weather Service has issued heat alerts in Florida 50 times since June. In July, the water temperature near the Florida Keys hit “hot tub temperature,” reaching 101.1 degrees Fahrenheit.

“I’ve reached out to some of the guys I’ve coached with in Texas and Arkansas and they’re going through the same thing,” said Brahman football coach BJ Pryor. “You have to make adjustments.



Brahman players seek refuge from the brutal heat during an August practice.

We had extra water out there, and if they got hot, we took the shoulder pads off and made them sit in the shade. You have to adjust to it because on gameday, it could be just like this.”

During Okeechobee’s practice on Aug. 12, the team brought out a tent to provide shade for players during breaks. The team may also start bringing out an ice bucket for players to get into to cool down.

“Adjustments have been made and we’re going to have to keep monitoring it,” explained Pryor.

The Florida High School Athletic Association requires all coaches in the state to complete a course on heat acclimation and heat illness prevention created by the National Federation of State High School Associations. Some of the priorities taught in the course include:

- Knowing the importance of having and implementing a specific hydration plan, keeping athletes well hydrated, and encouraging and providing ample opportunities for regular fluid replacement.

- Knowing the

importance of appropriately modifying activities in relation to the environmental heat stress and contributing individual risk factors to keep athletes safe and performing well.

- Knowing the importance for all members of the coaching staff to closely monitor all athletes during practice

- Knowing the importance of, and resources for, establishing an emergency action plan and promptly implementing it in case of suspected EHS or other medical emergency

2023 Fall FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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Brahman football team gearing up for 2023 season

The Okeechobee High School Brahman football team took the field bright and early on Aug. 12 to prepare for their upcoming season.

It's a season the Brahman are hoping will be a turning point in the football program. Okeechobee is coming off a 1-8 season last year, and after a strong showing in the spring game against Hardee, there's hope the Brahman will be adding some more notches to the win column this season.

"The energy is just different," said Brahman senior Carriss Chilsom-Johns. "We just have a lot of people that are hungry and ready to win."

The Brahman had an impressive 28-6 spring game against the Hardee Wildcats back on May 19. Johns had two touchdowns in that game, including a 50-yard screen pass from fellow senior Ni'Marion Bryant. Bryant also had a 45-yard touchdown run in the game.

Head coach BJ



The Brahman practice extra-point kicks on August 12 in preparation for the new season.

Pryor wants more of that kind of offensive performance in the future.

"I thought the offense gelled real nicely," said Pryor

of the game against Hardee. "We got a quarterback in Nemo Bryant who is doing a fine job and learning to progress through his read well.

"We're doing a good job on learning what the opposing defenses are doing so our quarterback knows where the opportunity is."

Sophomore linebacker Matthew May says it feels like the team has a higher confidence level headed into the new season.

"We've been

working our butts off since spring," said May. "I think we're going to have a good season."

One upcoming opponent brought up
 ■ See **Brahman** on page 4

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A few Brahmans pose for a picture on the team's media day.

Brahmans

▪ From page 3

by multiple Brahman players and coaches in the early practices were the Sebring Blue Streaks. The Brahmans are set to host the Blue Streaks on Oct. 27 at OHS this season. And last season's 42-0 loss left a bad taste for many of Brahmans.

"We kind of got demolished by them last year," said junior guard William Crum. "We're looking forward to hitting again."

That 42-0 win over Okeechobee helped Sebring secure their second consecutive district championship.

That kind of sustained success is something many in Okeechobee are hoping to replicate.

"They're a team we aspire to beat," said assistant coach Garth Striebel. "All the cogs and wheels are in place for us to bring a lot more energy and wisdom to that game."

Okeechobee is hosting a kickoff classic against Palm Beach Lakes on Aug. 17. The Brahmans' regular season starts with two back-to-back road games. Okeechobee plays DeSoto County on Aug. 25, and Vero Beach St. Edward's on Aug. 31. Their first home game of the regular season will be against Ambassadors Christian Academy on Sept. 8.



Quarterback Ni'Marion Brant rolls out of the pocket.

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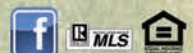
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2023 Brahman schedule breakdown

The Okeechobee High School Brahman football team opens this year with back-to-back road games, but will get two of their final three games at home. Last season's district champion, the Sebring Blue Streaks, will be making the trip to Okeechobee this year for what promises to be a tough test for the Brahmans. Let's dive into the 2023 schedule and see what awaits Okeechobee this season.

St. Edward's Pirates

AUG. 31 AWAY

Okeechobee is on the road for the first of three Thursday games this season. The Pirates went 4-4 last season and 7-3 in 2021. Head coach Richard Schofield who is entering his third season leading the program. The Thursday games give both teams one less day of to prepare, so the goal in this game (well, every game) is to limit mistakes and take care of the football.



DeSoto County Bulldogs

AUG. 25 AWAY

The Brahmans and Bulldogs will face off in a rematch from last year's season opener. Last year, the two teams were evenly matched for most of the game. But two crucial plays were what turned the game in the Desotos' favor. The Bulldogs returned a kickoff for a touchdown and had a last second Hail Mary for a touchdown at the end of the first half. Okeechobee wins that game without those two mistakes. The rematch offers the Brahmans a chance at redemption.



Ambassadors Christian Academy Stallions

SEPT. 8 HOME

The Brahmans finally host their first home game of the regular season on Sept. 8 when the Ambassadors Christian Academy Stallions come to Okeechobee. The Ambassadors Christian Academy Stallions football program is relatively new, with the 2023 year being only its third season. The team is building experience. After going 0-10 in their first year, the Stallions increased their record to 3-7 last season.



See Page 8 for the rest of the OHS football team's opponents



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South Fork Bulldogs

SEPT. 14 HOME

The South Fork Bulldogs and Okeechobee Brahms were district rivals only a few short years ago until a realignment saw the Brahms move away. The Bulldogs finished 2-8 last season. The last time the two teams matched up the Bulldogs managed to eke out a 14-6 win. South Fork senior Jonas Barros looks to be a leader for the team this season. The edge rusher already secured his first offer and was selected as part of ESPN West Palm's Top 63 players.



Fort Pierce Westwood Panthers

SEPT. 28 AWAY

The Brahms will be on the road following their bye week to take on district foe Westwood. District games are always circled on the calendar. Last season the Brahman offense was out of sync for most of the season due to missing play time to canceled or rescheduled games. But they looked much better when they played the Panthers. Westwood was ultimately able to take a 21-14 win in that game. The Brahms will have a chance to return the favor, this time at Fort Pierce.



Immokalee Indians

OCT. 6 HOME

The Indians lost their defensive coordinator, Steve Howard, during the off-season after he was hired to become the head coach of Ida Baker. Immokalee defeated Okeechobee 35-21 last year, which was impressive considering the Indians had to drop out of classification the previous season due to a lack of players. Immokalee head coach James Delgado helped the program bounce back from that declassification to a 4-5 record last year.



Port St. Lucie Jaguars

OCT. 13 AWAY

The Jaguars are another team that shared a district with Okeechobee for a few years, so these two teams have had plenty of back-and-forth battles. Port St. Lucie head coach Chris Dent accepted a position with Chowan University Hawk football program back in February. Former John Carroll Catholic assistant coach Kimberry Lubin was selected to lead the team this season. The Jaguars had finished with a 5-5 record in 2022.



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See Page 9 for the rest of the OHS football team's opponents

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OHS Brahman Football Schedules

Lake Placid Dragons

OCT. 20 HOME (HOMECOMING)

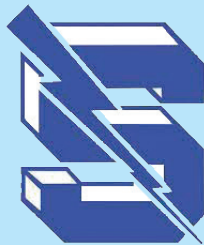
The traditional homecoming bonfire will still be smoking at OHS when the Lake Placid Dragons come to town to face the Brahmans. If the game is anything like last year's, then the hometown crowd is in for a show. The Brahmans tied the game up 16-16 late in the fourth quarter of last season's game. But just when it looked like the teams were headed to overtime, the Dragons scored a touchdown in the final seconds to win 22-16. The rematch could be a fun one.



Sebring Blue Streaks

OCT. 20 HOME (SENIOR NIGHT)

Last year's district champion will be in Okeechobee for the Brahman football team's senior night. Multiple Brahman players have pointed to last year's loss against Sebring as the one game that bothered them the most. The Blue Streaks dominated Okeechobee 42-0. Sebring is a powerhouse, and will be a great test for the Brahmans.



Clewiston Tigers

NOV. 3 AWAY

It's not a season of Okeechobee Brahman football without the annual Battle of Lake Okeechobee. The Tigers and Brahmans have battled for decades. The Tigers have dominated this rivalry. Old timers around Okeechobee have countless stories of getting pushed around by Clewiston in their days. And although there have been some exceptions, that story has held true in recent years. Longtime Clewiston coach Pete Walker stepped down from coaching duties last season. His replacement? Former CHS Tiger Andrew Powell.



Varsity Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Site	Time (PM)
8/25/23	DeSoto County Bulldogs	Away	7:30
8/31/23	St. Edward's Pirates	Away	7:00
9/8/23	Ambassadors Christian Academy Stallions (Veterans)	HOME	7:30
9/15/23	South Fork Bulldogs (GO GOLD)	HOME	7:00
9/28/23	Westwood Panthers	HOME	7:00
10/6/23	Immokalee Indians (PINK OUT)	HOME	7:00
10/13/23	Port St. Lucie Jaguars	Away	7:00
10/20/23	Lake Placid Dragons (HOMECOMING)	HOME	7:00
10/27/23	Sebring Blue Streaks (SENIOR NIGHT)	HOME	7:00
11/3/23	Clewiston Tigers	Away	7:30

Junior Varsity Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Site	Time (PM)
9/7/2023	Port St. Lucie Jaguars	HOME	6:00
9/13/2023	South Fork Bulldogs	Away	6:00
9/21/2023	Sebastian River Sharks	HOME	6:00
9/28/2023	Lake Placid Dragons	Away	6:00
10/5/2023	Sebastian River Sharks	Away	6:00
10/12/2023	DeSoto County Bulldogs	HOME	6:00
10/18/2023	Jensen Beach Falcons	Away	6:00

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Glades Central Raiders looking to bounce back in 2023

The Glades Central Raiders aren't looking for a repeat of their 2022 season.



The Glades Central Raiders want 2023 to be their revenge tour.

Raiders were coming into that season facing their seventh coaching change since 2008.

Back in 2020 Rashad Jackson was hired to lead the team, and helped the Raiders to a 5-0 record during a season that was shortened by the pandemic.

In 2021, however, the team hit a speed bump. The Raiders finished with a 6-6 record, and were knocked out in the

regional semifinal by Lakewood. And after shutting out Pahokee the previous year, Glades Central had the tables turned in 2021, losing Muck Bowl 28-0.

Jackson also served a six-game suspension in the beginning of the year after the Florida High School Athletic Association ruled that new quarterback transfer Garrison Kepley received an "impermissible benefit" when he joined

the Raiders. Kepley was suspended for five games, and the Raider offense was never able to get in sync.

Jackson was let go at the end of the season. And Glades Central started the process of putting together a rebuild.

Travis Moore was hired as the new head coach of the Raiders. Moore had experience as an assistant coach at Coral Springs Charter and Westminster

Academy as well as Westover in Georgia.

The team finished with a 2-8 record last year, including a 46-14 loss to Pahokee in the Muck Bowl. But now, the Raiders are hoping their 2023 season will be a revenge tour.

The Raiders open the season at home against the Seminole Ridge Hawks on Aug. 24 at 6:30 p.m. Last year the Hawks jumped out to an early lead 14-6 in the first half. Glades

Central kept things close in the second half but couldn't seal the deal. Four of Glades Central's losses last year were one-score games.

On Oct. 12 former coach Rashad Jackson returns to Glades Central when the Raiders host his new team, the Inlet Grove Hurricanes. During last year's match between the two teams, both defenses were dominant. The Raiders notched six sacks and

the Hurricanes forced five fumbles. Inlet Grove won that game 10-6.

The annual Muck Bowl against the Pahokee Blue Devils is set for Nov. 3 at 6:30 p.m. The Blue Devils will host the game this year, and will have a new head coach. Matthew Sparrowhawk was selected as the new head coach of Pahokee after the school let go their former coach, Emmanuel Hendrix.

See Page 13 for the season schedule

Glades Central Raiders 2023 Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Site	Time (PM)
9/1	King's Academy Lions	Away	7:00
9/8	American Heritage Patriots	HOME	6:30
9/14	Palm Beach Gardens Gators	HOME	6:30
9/22	Dwyer Panthers	HOME	6:30
9/28	Benjamin Buccaneers	HOME	6:30
10/12	Inlet Grove Hurricanes	HOME	6:30
10/20	Suncoast Chargers	HOME	6:30
10/27	Atlantic Eagles	HOME	6:30
11/3	Pahokee Blue Devils	Away	6:30



Glades Day Gators 2023 Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Site	Time (PM)
8/25	LaBelle Cowboys	Away	7:00
9/1	Somerset Academy - Canyons Cougars	Away	7:00
9/7	Jupiter Christian Eagles	HOME	7:00
9/15	Marco Island Academy Rays	HOME	7:00
9/22	Oxbridge Academy ThunderWolves	HOME	7:00
10/5	Canterbury Cougars	Away	7:00
10/12	Southwest Florida Christian Kings	HOME	7:00
10/20	Archbishop McCarthy Mavericks	HOME	7:00



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Glades Day Gators ready to bite back in 2023

The Glades Day Gators will be kicking off their 2023 season against the LaBelle Cowboys on Aug. 25 at 7 p.m.



The Glades Day Gators are ready to hit the ground running in 2023.

The Gators are coming off a season where they finished 2-7. The Gators were rebuilding after losing one of their best players. Dylan Willkins led the Gators as quarterback, averaging 36-point per game in his two years under center. When Wilkins graduated in 2022, the Gators turned to freshman Jyron Hughley. The Gators

deployed a more run-based offense last year to take advantage of Hughley's speed.

In May, Hughley announced he would be transferring to Cardinal Newman for his sophomore year.

LaBelle was also going through a rebuild last season. The Cowboys brought in a new head coach, Maurice McClain, to lead the team. LaBelle

secured a 4-4 record, but finished strong with big 60-point wins over Jordan Christian Prep and Sports Leadership & Management.

The Gators' first home game of the season is on Sept. 7 when they host the Jupiter Christian Eagles. Glades Day won last year's matchup 30-21, with the defense securing two interceptions. Jupiter

Christian captain Daniel Licata had one touchdown catch in the game, and is back leading the Eagles again this year. The Gators will have to limit Licata in order to get back-to-back victories over Jupiter Christian.

The last regular season home game for Glades Day is against Archbishop McCarthy on Oct. 20 at 7 p.m. The last time these two

teams faced each other Archbishop managed to eke out a 21-14 win. The Gators had a 14-7 lead at halftime thanks to two touchdown passes from junior Marquis Clarke, but Archbishop fought back in the second half to retake the lead 21-14.

Still, the Gators had the ball with a chance to tie the game in the final minutes. Glades Day marched all the

way to Archbishop's 1-yard line, but couldn't punch it in and turned the ball over on downs. The rematch this season should be a fun one.

This season Glades Day opted to leave Florida High School Athletic Association state series to be a part of the Sunshine State Athletic Association (SSAA) 11-man league.

See Page 13 for the season schedule

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