

Lofty goals are the status quo for Aliquippa

By Noah Hiles
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

After playing the entirety of last season without a home field, the much needed renovations to Aliquippa's Carl A. Aschman Stadium will be completed by the start of the Quips' 2023 campaign. The venue known as "The Pit" will now feature a turf field, an electronic scoreboard and a large set of bleachers located on the hillside closest to the school.

Perhaps the only thing that won't be different on Friday nights in Aliquippa is the high set of expectations many have for Mike Warfield's team.

One doesn't have to be a high school football expert to be aware of the Quips' dominance in District 7. The program enters its 2023 campaign looking to play in its 16th-straight WPIAL championship contest and third-straight PIAA final. Unlike the stadium, there is no rebuilding in Aliquippa — just an annual reload of talent.

In the past two seasons, the Quips' path to success was blazed by the trio of Neco Eberhardt, Jason McBride and Post-Gazette Class 4A Player of the Year Naquan Crowder. The three offensive and defensive line standouts gave Aliquippa an advantage in the trenches few opponents could handle.

"We can't deny that our 2023 senior class was a big presence," Warfield told the Post-Gazette, "but Aliquippa isn't going to allow you to make any excuses. I think once they graduated, we knew we had to move on. We're already passed that. I think the kids understand what's ahead of us. They've definitely put in the work and they'll be ready."

While Warfield believes his team will still be solid up front, thanks to a reliable rotation of players hungry to establish themselves, the true talent in this year's group can be found at the skill positions.

The Quips are headlined by junior running back Tiqwai "Tikey" Hayes, a four-star recruit with offers from Ohio State, Michigan, Penn State and Pitt, among many others. Hayes burst onto the scene in 2021 as a freshman, earning PIAA Class 4A Player of the Year honors en route to leading his team to a state championship. He was equally effective last fall, rushing for 1,981 yards and scoring 33 total touchdowns.

In year three for the Quips, Hayes will once again look to light up the scoreboard and stat sheet, all while holding a bigger role as a team leader.



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Aliquippa's Tikey Hayes, left, and Arison Walker celebrate their team's victory against Central Valley in the WPIAL Class 4A championship last year at Acrisure Stadium. It was the Quips' record 19th WPIAL title.

"I know that's something I need to be for this team this year," Hayes said. "The young guys on this team, they look up to me and I want to give a good example, just like the older guys on the team did for me in the past two years."

Hayes is flanked in the backfield by three-year starting quarterback Quentin "Cheese" Goode. However, Warfield says there is a chance sophomore Marques Council Jr. will also receive opportunities to run the team's offense this fall.

"There's nothing that Cheese has done wrong," Warfield said. "I just think it's time for Marques to get his shot as well. He's very talented. I think both are going to help us this year."

Meanwhile, on the other side of the ball, the Quips' defense features numerous problems for opponents, including senior linebacker Cameron Lindsey, who verbally committed to Pitt this summer, and three-star senior cornerback Brandon Banks, who committed to Yale.

Warfield told the Post-Gazette that this year's team reminds him of his 2018 group, which won a state championship in Class 3A during his first year at the helm of the program. While the 2023 Quips are up one classification higher, their goal remains the same.

"The target on our backs is always big," Lindsey said. "The standard is getting to that state game and trying to win it. We don't get rings for WPIAL championships. As coach Mike says, 'WPIAL championships aren't good enough.' We want to be the best."

Inside the Parkway

ALIQUIPPA

Coach: Mike Warfield

Years at school: 6

2022 record: 13-1

Returning starters: Offense 5, Defense 3

Key returners: Tiqwai Hayes (5-10, 190, Jr., RB), Cameron Lindsey (6-1, 205, Sr., RB-LB)

McCreary (6-1, 265, Sr., OL-DL)

CHARTIERS VALLEY

Coach: Aaron Fitzpatrick

Years at school: 2

2022 record: 2-8

Returning starters: N/A

Key returners: N/A

MONTOUR

Coach: Lou Cerro

Years at school: 19

2022 record: 7-5

Returning starters: Offense 7, Defense 7

Key returners: Daniel Batch (5-11, 195, Jr., WR-DB), Jake Wolfe (6-1, 185, Sr., QB-DB)

NEW CASTLE

Coach: Stacy Robinson

Years at school: 2

2022 record: 1-9

Returning starters: Offense 4, Defense 5

Key returners: Kyrell Harris (6-0, 170, Jr., QB-DB), Malik Jefferson (5-10, 200, Sr., RB-DB)

WEST ALLEGHENY

Coach: Dave Schoppe

Years at school: 4

2022 record: 7-4

Returning starters: Offense 4, Defense 4

Key returners: Brock Cornell (5-11, 180, Jr., RB-DB), A.J. Hughes (6-0, 245, Sr., OL-DL), Roman Police (6-0, 180, Jr., RB-OLB)

AMBRIDGE

Coach: Sherman McBride

Years at school: 3

2022 record: 2-8

Returning starters: Offense 9, Defense 9

Key returners: Adam Fernandez (5-9, 160, Jr., RB-WR-DB), Grant Uvodich (5-10, 175, Sr. WR-DB)

BLACKHAWK

Coach: Pat Feeley

Years at school: First season

2022 record: 4-7

Returning starters: Offense 6, Defense 7

Key returners: Dontae Campagna (5-9, 170, Sr., WR-DB), Maurice Watson-Trent (6-0, 190, Sr., RB-DB)

CENTRAL VALLEY

Coach: Mark Lyons

Years at school: 14

2022 record: 11-2

Returning starters: Offense 5, Defense 5

Key returners: Mason Dixon (5-10, 200, Jr., RB-LB), Nick

Once again, some of Aliquippa's stiffest competition resides in Beaver County. After losing to the Quips in the WPIAL Class 4A final last fall, Central Valley will look for its revenge this year.

Most of the known playmakers from the Warriors group that won PIAA Class 3A titles in 2020 and 2021 are

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