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Woodward academy football

2023 Class 6A runner-up Woodward Academy drops to 5A this season, under the Georgia High School Association's two-year realignment. The War Eagles are in Region 4, joined by Arabia Mountain, Chamblee, Decatur, Dunwoody, Lakeside (DeKalb), Shiloh and Tri-Cities.Aside from it region games, two of WA's non-region games are against teams that finished '23 ranked in the High School Football America 300, powered by NFL Play Football.Woodward Academy, which finished No. 122 in the nation last year, opens with No. 65 Carrollton on August 16. After traveling to Collins Hill on August 23, the War Eagles will battle No. 147 Marist in a battle of War Eagles.8/16Carrollton8/23At Collins Hill8/30Marist9/13Shiloh9/20At Chamblee9/27Arabia Mountain10/04At Tri-Cities10/11Dunwoody10/25At Decatur11/01At Lakeside, DeKalb (A)Read more Georgia high school football news Photo Credit: Bill Yoder Warren Bond Photography Woodward is not hiding from anyone, and they shouldn't. They're experienced and have a state-title-game-loss-sized chip on their shoulders. The War Eagles dropped from Class 6A to 5A this season and in the team's first two weeks, they will face two of the best teams from Class 6A, the state's new highest class. The season-opener against Carrollton could shape up to be one of the best regular season games this year. Coach John Hunt took over at Woodward in 2011 and has won eight region titles but after the49-29 loss to Thomas County Central in last year's 6A championship game, the War Eagles were left wanting more.GET MORE LOCAL SPORTS NEWS: Subscribe to Sideline, a weekly newsletter about sports. Click here.Returning experience could get Woodward back in the same position this season. Senior quarterback Landon Walker returns after going 107-of-182 passing for 1,437 yards and 15 touchdowns last season. Walker split duties with the graduated Griffin Marshall last year. The team's top rusher from last year, Lucas Farrington (11 TDs), transferred to Walton High School in Cobb County. In the receivers' stall, Ben Grice led production last season with 11 touchdown receptions but has since graduated. Senior Josiah Abdullah had 52 catches for 786 yards and 10 touchdowns last season and returns alongside Jerome Bettis Jr. (4 TDs), Farrington (2), and London Merritt. The team graduated its leading tackler Andrew Hines III but returns Tyree Myrick who had 63 solo tackles, 19 assists, and nine tackles for loss last season. Head Coach: John HuntCoach Record: 131-362023 Record: 12-32023 Region Record: 7-02023 Region: 3-6A2024 Region: 4-5AStadium Name:Graham Hixon Field at Colquitt Stadium2024 Schedule:8/16 vs. Carrollton8/23 @ Collins Hill8/30 vs. Marist9/13 vs. Shiloh9/20 vs. Chamblee9/27 vs. Arabia Mountain10/4 @ Tri-Cities10/11 vs. Dunwoody10/25 @ Decatur11/1 vs. Lakeside I journeyed to the southside Monday evening and felt the temperature drop as the jets climbed into the sky from nearby Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The Woodward Academy War Eagles were hard at work with head coach John Hunt. It's the week of the 14th game of the season and his team is still playing. "What has given us a lot of consistency through the years is defense," says Hunt. "It has been our anchor this year. This year we have been fighting the injury bug. To sum up this group, it has been great defense and resiliency. Just battling through some adversity." Even before the injuries came, the Class 6A No. 10 War Eagles knew there would be challenges. Their schedule included a powerhouse from a neighboring state and a metro area titan that they may get to face again. "That was intentional," recalls Hunt. "Our region is not the strongest, so for our non-region schedule I wanted to play some good quality teams that were well-coached. We played Trinity Christian. They are a well-coached team, and it was challenging for us. Then we went up to Tennessee to play McCallie... enough said there! They are a great team and they thumped us pretty good, but it was a great little learning experience for us. Then we come back down here and have a tremendous, equal battle with Marist. We basically had that game won. We were in field goal range, but we ended up fumbling the ball, going into overtime and losing. So, we had some bumps early in the season." The loss to Marist was way back on Sept. 8 and the War Eagles haven't lost a game since. There has been a rash of injuries that have limited the availability of team leaders like senior center and defensive tackle Bradley Smith and senior quarterback Griffin Marshall. It has made for a challenging season for a squad that seemed destined to do great things during the off season. "I was really happy with our off season," recalls Hunt. "Going back to January and our lifting, it was well attended. The summer was strong, and well attended, that is what made things so confounding with the injuries. They guys really put in the work to get here, during the off season." So, it has been a season of next-man-up for Hunt's team and it served them well through playoff wins over Evans and Houston County. That brought on last week's quarterfinal showdown with No. 1-ranked Gainesville. Preparing during the Thanksgiving holiday week is nothing new for his crew. "It was our eighth time in 10 years to practice on Thanksgiving week," says Hunt. "We did the same schedule that we had the other seven times. The thing we did a little bit different because we're so beat up, we really took it easy on them. We didn't pound the kids at all. Which really goes against my grain. Not that I'm a big pounder or grinder, but I do know that Tuesday and Wednesday are our fast days and there is usually some contact there. We toned it down in order to try and get some guys healthy and not get anyone else hurt. It was successful in that light, but I think it showed up on Friday night. Our offensive line played perhaps our poorest game of the year. Gainesville has a great defensive line. They give a lot of people problems, but we had so many mental errors. This week we have to practice harder and just keep our fingers crossed." The Red Elephants brought a talented team and a 12-0 record to College Park last Friday, but it was Woodward Academy that struck the first blow. Josiah Abdullah got the War Eagles on board early. "We started the game with a kickoff return for a score," recalls Hunt. "It truly was a team win. Our defense gave up those two scores early, but they settled in and basically shut them out for two and a half quarters. Our special teams were solid. Hudson Hanges, our kicker, hit a school-record 49 yarder. We were down by 10 in the second half, and I came out and told coach (Bill) McGarrath and coach (Ryan) Davis, our defensive coordinators, that I was going to find a way to get more than 10. The defense held and we got the ball with about 3½ minutes to go. Our back-up quarterback Landon Walker was spot on. We put together a drive. We were able to hit two big plays and score a touchdown. We just hung in there." Hanging in there is what can make the difference in a season ending and a season continuing. This week's more demanding practice could be just the thing Woodward Academy needs for a semifinal showdown with No. 4 Douglas County. The Tigers outlasted Lee County last Friday and now stand at a perfect 13-0. "They have a high-powered offense, led by a dynamic quarterback," says Hunt. "I know this, 13 and 0 is a perfect season and that's hard to do on any level. I got to 13 and 0 twice and ended up getting beaten both times in the semis. It's hard to do. You have to give them credit for that. They have had a heck of a season so far." This is new territory for Douglas County, who last played in a semifinal game in 1988.According to Georgia High School Football Historians Association, this will be the fourth time that John Hunt has led Woodward Academy to the semifinal round. It's the experience that may make a difference this week. "Last year we met up with Langston Hughes and they were... Langston Hughes," recalls Hunt. "We have been in these situations before. The difference this year is our defense. Defense wins championships. Another thing is that we didn't turn the ball over Friday night. So, I hope we play that formula. It isn't sexy, but it was working for us. Hopefully that will continue." @ Sequoyah ChiefsFollowers15Full StandingsKeep This Page Updated "About a year ago, I successfully discharged from Woodward Academy. Today, I was trying to find the phone number so I could get in touch with some of my old staff. They are some of my biggest supporters and they are always ready to help when I need it. When checked online, I noticed a lot of negative reviews coming from parents and other parents commenting on not wanting to send their kids there as a result of reading some of these reviews. These parents who are being dissuaded from getting their children help for their behavior need to keep in mind that the parents didn't stay at this facility. Of course, there are one or two stories that have some basis in the truth, but the majority of them come from kids who went to the Academy and just didn't like being told what to do. Many of the kids in placements such as Woodward have a lot of problems dealing with authority (which is one of the reasons a lot of them end up there in the first place). These reviews from their parents are simply a reflection of the stories that their kids have told them. The stories themselves are often exaggerated and twisted in a way that makes the facility and the staff that work there seem awful. I can tell you with absolute certainty that most of these stories are not true. The staff at Woodward do not go out of their way to mistreat kids or put them in restraints for no reason. In fact, the staff use restraints as a last resort. I saw a review by Ben Cornick that said a relative of his was put into an unlawful restraint simply because he was asking too many questions. I will say that the restraints used are legal and every single staff member has to complete weeks of training on how to properly and safely restrain an aggressive youth. In the case of Ben's relative, there are obviously large pieces missing from the story. I would not be the man I am today (I am still in high school, but that's not the point), if it wasn't for the staff at Woodward." Carrollton Trojans quarterback Julian Lewis (10), a University of Southern California commit, will lead his team into its 2024 season opener with a clash in College Park, Ga. against Woodward Academy. The game will be broadcast live on ESPN 2. / John David Mercer-USA TODAY SportsPublished Aug 16, 2024|Modified Aug 16, 2024 National Rank#49State Rank#60NewsScoresScheduleRosterAlumniData provided byAll times are in Coordinated Universal TimeView Full ScheduleWoodward Academy, located in College Park, Georgia, is a prestigious private school known for its rigorous academics, competitive athletics, and vibrant extracurricular programs. Offering a variety of AP and honors courses, the school prepares students for higher education and future success. Woodward's athletic teams are highly successful, often achieving state championships and fostering school pride. Emphasizing leadership, community service, and personal growth, the school ensures students are well-rounded and ready for future challenges.Official Website@WAWarEagles@woodwardwareaglefootballView Full Football RosterView All Top Football Alumni ATLANTA, Ga. (Score Atlanta) - After their first matchup over a century ago in 1922 that ended in a 6-6 tie, Woodward Academy and Decatur High School have only faced off seven times since. On Friday, the two programs will square off again at Decatur.Woodward Academy is on a five-game win streak against the undefeated Decatur Bulldogs, this time the teams will meet in a Class 5A-Region 4 showdown. The game will be broadcast live on the Peachtree Sports Network starting at 8 p.m., and will also stream live on the Atlanta News First app. From home, download the free ANF+ app anywhere you stream — FireTV, AppleTV, Roku and YouTubeTV — simply by searching for "Atlanta News First" on those platforms. If you are on the go, you can download Atlanta News First for free in the app store on your Apple or Android device. You can also watch live here on the WANF - Special Events channel.>> WATCH LIVEThe matchup between the two programs will be the 2024 Georgia High School Football Hall of Fame Game where the 2024 induction class for this year's inductees will be in attendance. Two of this year's inductees, Trinity alumni Jack Pitts (Trinity was absorbed by Decatur in 1968) and legendary college football head coach, Frank Broyles will be honored at a point throughout the game, as well as multiple inductees will be interviewed throughout the broadcast on the Peachtree Sports Network.The War Eagles hold a six-game win streak against Decatur, winning the last matchup between the two, 34-7 at Decatur to open up the 2015 season for both teams. The teams played for four seasons straight from 2012-2015 before region realignment forced them not to play against each other for almost a decade. Overall, Woodward leads the series 6-1-1 and is looking to extend its win streak against the Bulldogs to seven games after they square off on Friday night. Woodward Academy head football coach, John Hunt, is 4-0 in his time at Woodward when facing Decatur, winning the last four matchups from 2012-2015.For Decatur, this is the first time since 2021 that the Bulldogs are 8-0 and are looking to continue their perfect season against a tough Woodward football team that has won its last five games after losing its first three. The two programs sit at No. 1 and No. 2 atop the Class 5A-Region 4 with the Bulldogs and the War Eagles both sitting at a perfect 5-0 against regional opponents, the only two teams still undefeated in the region.Hunt is in his 14th season leading the Woodward Academy football program and holds a record of 136-39 with the team. His War Eagles faced a tough opening to the season featuring three consecutive losses against top opponents such as Carrollton, Collins Hill and Marist. After their first three games where they averaged under 10 points, the War Eagles have hit their stride, rattling off five consecutive victories, averaging a little over 37 points per game.Leading the way for the Woodward Academy offense is Navy-commit, Landon Walker who has thrown for a little under 1,500 yards through eight games. Walker has been able to spread the ball around to his pass catchers as five of them have accounted for over 10 receptions on the season. The senior has thrown for 17 touchdowns on the season, averaging a little over two passing touchdowns a game while effectively using his legs in the ground game, totaling just under 280 yards and four touchdowns, leading the team in rushing yards.The passing game the War Eagles have is a huge part of their offense. Senior wide receiver and Virginia-commit, Josiah Abdullah leads the team in receptions, yards per game, touchdowns and yards on the season. His 628 receiving yards through eight games is close to double the next highest, as well as his eight touchdowns have made him someone to keep an eye on in the Woodward offense.Along with Abdullah, 3-star wide receiver and Notre Dame-commit Jerome Bettis Jr. has been someone to watch for the War Eagles on the offensive side of the ball. Bettis is second on the team in all receiving stats with his five touchdowns and just over 370 receiving yards, creating a consistent option on the outside. Bettis' father famously earned the moniker "The Bus" during his NFL career with the Pittsburgh Steelers.Both Abdullah and Bettis average close to 20 yards per catch, proving their effectiveness down the field for Woodward Academy.On the defensive side of the ball, junior 4-star cornerback Blake Stewart has been piling up offers from schools all around the country including programs such as Florida, Auburn, Georgia Tech, Missouri and Georgia with plenty more ahead in his future. The junior has totaled close to 50 total tackles on the season, averaging close to six per game along with a tackle for loss, four pass deflections and two interceptions leading the backend for the War Eagles defense.Along with Stewart in the backend, sophomore strong safety Elijah Lyles has been a huge part of the defense, leading the team in total tackles with 65 on the season to go along with four tackles for loss and two interceptions on the year, tied for highest on the team with Stewart and Bettis. Lyles leads the team, averaging eight tackles a game. Linebackers, Rocco Xerogeanes and Caleb Bell have combined for over 100 tackles on the season with both of them averaging over six tackles a game. The two have combined for four sacks and six tackles for loss, creating mayhem in opposing backfields."Decatur is a big team and certainly a physical team on offense," said Hunt. "There's not a lot of smoke and mirrors or anything, they just pound the rock and they have a big running back. They just have a tough and hard-nosed team."William Felton is in his fifth season leading the Decatur football team where he has led them to the postseason in each season he's had the keys to the program. Felton has made the second round of the playoffs twice in five years, tied for the farthest a Decatur team has reached in the postseason since 2003. Last season, Felton and the Bulldogs made it to the first round of the postseason where they were eliminated by Ware County. The Bulldogs have been playing with some fire this season as they have remained a perfect 8-0, averaging over 35 points per game during their eight-game win-streak.The Bulldogs are coming off of a 5-6 season where they were eliminated in the first round but are back with a vengeance and a much more experienced roster. "We had a bunch of young guys at the time that stayed with the program and have continued to progress year to year," said Felton. "It has come to a point now where they are now the seniors and they are fully aware and understand what we expect out of them in regards to performance and executing the schemes and things of that nature."Senior quarterback Barron Scott, leads a Decatur offense who has totaled close to 2,500 yards on the season through eight games. Scott has thrown for over 870 yards with 11 touchdowns through the air and three by using his legs on the ground. The production from the Bulldogs has come from all over as they have six pass catchers who average over 10 yards a reception.The receiver-duo of junior Cameron Frazier and senior Jersharius Lawrence have been the leaders in the passing game for the Bulldogs, combining for 478 yards on 27 receptions and four touchdowns. Lawrence is averaging over 21 yards a catch, with a long of 74-yards on the season.The running game has been a huge piece of the Bulldogs offense, led by sophomore running back Darius White. White has accumulated 845 rushing yards on the season to go along with 13 touchdowns, making himself a threat to reach the endzone every time he has the ball. His 114 carries on the season lead the team by a wide margin, with White averaging over 105 yards per game on the ground. White has been a huge part of the Bulldogs success this season, providing a change of pace for the offense.On defense for the Decatur, senior cornerback, Duke-commit Kaleb Lanier has been important for the Bulldogs, registering 28 total tackles to go along with a sack and four interceptions. Lanier will have his hands full on Friday night with a Woodward Academy offense that lives on attacking through the air. Lanier and the Bulldogs have allowed just over 13 points per game on average this season.Senior outside linebacker, Ethan Johnson has a team-leading 59 tackles on the season. His nine tackles for loss to go along with three sacks and three interceptions show how versatile the senior can be on the field. The 3-star linebacker has brought in offers from schools such as Kansas State, Army and Temple with his exceptional play during his final season of high school football.Leading the front seven for the Bulldogs is senior defensive end Quay Hood who has been a force on the defensive line for Decatur. Hood is second on the team with 41 total tackles, second to Johnson, and has a team-leading 12 tackles for loss with six sacks and an interception on the year. Hood will be someone the Woodward offense has to locate on every play in order to run their offense efficiently before he gets into the backfield to make a play.Copyright 2024 WANF. All rights reserved.