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Jefferson Football Back to Business

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

the 1980s. After a stint away from the school, he returned as head coach and led the Demos to a 44-27 record in his six seasons.

The move from Roosevelt was one Stoudamire didn't look for, but didn't resist when the opportunity arose.

"I had a great group of players at Roosevelt, and a great group of coaches so it was a tough decision," he said. "But, I told them this is where my coaching career started, this is the community where I live, and it's got a special place in my heart. The lure of coming back was just a little too much."

Stoudamire said he's seen the program advance in its team unity quickly after his return became public knowledge July 28. His hiring came in a summer when the school replaced its athletic director as well. Falisha Wright moved into that position at the same time Stoudamire returned.

Once hired, Stoudamire found a core of assistant coaches that includes DeAngelo Bell, who played under him through 2010 before a college career at Montana Tech. His other assistants are Alexander Johnson, DeAngelo Edwards, Jon Simpson, Tony Van Zant, and the school's wrestling coach Montral

Brazile.

"There were a lot of kids who were kind of down because they didn't know who their coach was going to be," Stoudamire said. "But things are going well, and the vibe here gets better every day."

"I'm trying to make things fun, too, so it's not just focused on practicing hard for two, three, four hours. We put things in the middle of practices to be fun. We keep things moving, so there's not a lot of standing around."

The Demos reached the Class 5A playoffs in all six seasons under Stoudamire, and won at least one playoff game in the first five seasons. In 2012, Stoudamire left to run the team at Benson, but low player numbers caused that program to struggle and he resigned after having won just one game in three seasons.

Continual low numbers have caused Benson to eliminate football altogether.

Low numbers caused Cleveland to move to just a junior varsity schedule this fall, leaving the PIL with seven varsity teams.

Jefferson has not had a problem attracting players, especially freshmen. Coaches were expecting as many as 50 players to be on the sideline for either a varsity or junior varsity game.

"We probably have enough kids for just a freshman team," Stoudamire said, "but that's a hard thing to schedule these days."

Stoudamire isn't just bringing decades of experience coaching high school players, but also a year of coaching women's players, too. He started the Oregon Ravens women's team this year, leading a team of 32 players to a 1-5 record in the 20-team Women's National Football Conference.

"Anyone who writes a story about me needs to promote my women's team," he said proudly.

The league schedule ran from May through June, and included road games for the Ravens at Seattle and San Diego.

Williams said he's looking forward to not only playing, but playing against Roosevelt, Oct. 7.

"That's the one game I really remember from last season," he said of the Demos' 32-14 win. "It was a crazy game on the field, and then we had all that rain."

Fair said having his senior season return to the normal schedule is a big lift. And, he's ready for crowd noise.

"It's going to be great to get on the field again," Fair said, "and show everyone what we can do; what Jefferson football is all about."

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