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Lift for Life Academy Triumphs Over Bearcats, End the Season 11-1

NOVEMBER 24TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Lift for Life Academy Triumphs Over Bearcats, End the Season 11-1

The Bearcats concluded their 2024 football season with a tough loss to Lift for Life Academy by a final score of 50 - 12. Despite the competitive start, Lift for Life took command in the third quarter, leading to a decisive victory over the Dexter.

"Oh, man, it's been a great year," noted Head Coach Chad Jamerson. "I'm so proud of all that these kids have accomplished this year. It's just, you know, sooner or later the magic, I guess, runs out."

Live for Life elected to kickoff to the Bearcats to begin the game. Unfortunately on the first series of downs, LLA's defensive back Cameron Hurst stepped in front of a Jackson Howard (D) pass and returned it 33 yards for the first score of the game. This gave the Hawks a 6-0 lead as the 2-point conversion failed.

The Bearcats battled back with a strong running game moving the football down the field. At the 1:05 mark in the first Quarter, Devin Turnbo was able to respond with a 5-yard touchdown run to tie the score. The PAT kick by Parker King was wide left and failed, ending the first quarter tied at 6-6.

"I thought the offensive line did a really good job of creating space for (Turnbo) and creating lanes and I thought he ran hard," commented Coach Jamerson. "He ran into a bunch of walls at that second level and that was kind of the story of the day. On offense, we had trouble getting down to the second level with their linebackers."

The speed on the Lift for Life defense was notable from the beginning of the game. The Bearcats saw some offensive holes open up and those holes would close really quickly.

Jamerson added, "We saw gaps and, before you knew it, you could blink and the gap closed. And that's kind of the story, especially the second half in what was typically a 7 to 10 yard run for us turned into two, three, and five yard runs."

Lift for Life came storming back quickly in the second quarter as they got the ball on their own 42 yard line and moved it down the field. Then the Hawks, Marco Jackson took a handoff from his quarterback and ran for a 31-yard touchdown. The Bearcat defense stood strong and denied the Hawks the 2-point conversion, holding the lead to 12-6 with 11:05 remaining in the first half.

The Bearcats continued to move the football on the ground with powerful running of Grams and Turnbo. Jett Grams' 4 yard touchdown run tied the game 12-12 with 4:03 remaining in the half.

At that point, many fans may have felt that two prize fighters were exchanging blows offensively on the football field. However, Lift for Life was not finished. They began a 10 play, 65 yard drive that ended with a QB Mikey Gerdine 37-yard pass completion to Aireon Jones to recapture the lead at halftime 18-12.

The Bearcats have been known all season for the halftime adjustments. But the 2nd half started with each team unable to move the football. Defense appeared to have been a strong adjustment for both teams.

The Bearcats struggled and really couldn't get outside on the Lift for Life Defense. The Hawks had a strong game plan and executed that plan very well.

"They are simply athletes. They were able to make adjustments and they took away our perimeter game and gave us a lot of the interior stuff. We weren't able to get the interior stuff going like we have in the past," said Jamerson.

But with 6 minutes left in the third quarter, Mikey Gerdine delivered a pass over the Bearcat defensive backfield and completed a 55-yard touchdown pass to Daishawn Houston to increase their lead. A 3-yard PAT was good by Phoenix Isaiah and the Hawks lead by a score of 26-12.

With 4:27 remaining in the third quarter, the Hawks Cameron Hurst found his second pick-six of the day and again for a Live for Life tem. The PAT pass from Phoenix Isaiah to Mickell Burden was good making the score 34-12.

Lift for Life continued their dominance throughout the remainder of the contest adding two additional rushing scores by Karnym Johnson and Jayveon Scott making the final score of 50-12.

"Defensively I think they had a really good game plan to take Lee-Michael away from us, and they did," Jamerson noted. "They took away our sweep game and he was able to get a couple counters, but he wasn't able to just do the things that Lee-Michael does."

"They made good defensive adjustments and credit to Life for Life ... They had guys in the right position today." Jamerson continued.

The Bearcats had a total offense of 105 yards compared to 279 yards for the Hawks. Jett Grams was the leading rusher for the ‘Cats with 16 carries for 54 yards. Grams suffered a strained hamstring last week and was felt to be only at about 70% strength for today’s contest.

The end of the Bearcats' remarkable 11-1 season was marked with many highlights including the leadership and play of their 19 senior players. These young men have given a community a 2024 Fall filled with exciting Friday Nights and a record performance only achieved by 3 previous teams at Dexter High School.

Seniors Include: #2 Jett Grams, #7 Lee Michael McDonald, #12 Nolan Alford, #16 Jackson Howard, #20 Rylee Cochran, #21 Joseph Passley, #22 Logan Pullum, #26 Christaan Wirz, #53 Caleb Gott, #54 Zach Billingsley, #56 Caden Lee, #66 Peyton Hartline, #73 Sawyer Rascher, #74 Ethan Glaus, #75 Tyler Spence, #78 Parker King, and #79 Donovan Micheal.

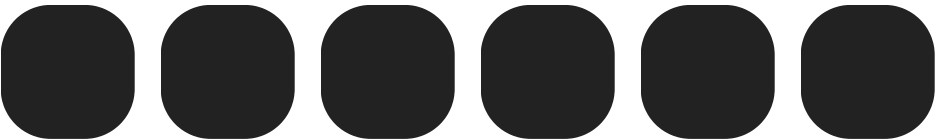
“You could talk all day about the effort and the hard work and the heart of this senior class and everything they did to get this program back on track”, stated Coach Jamerson. “Without those seniors, we don't have 11 wins. We don't win a district championship without their dedication and their hard work. We're not where we are today. So all that credit goes to those guys for trusting the plan and trusting the process and coming out and executing the things that we do.”

The game emphasized the support from the community and the impressive resilience of the team throughout the season. The game served as a poignant conclusion for the 19 seniors playing their final game, with many notable contributors leaving a lasting legacy. In all they scored a total of 500 points this season in twelve games ending with 11 wins and 1 loss. The defense held strong allowing only 146 points all season with 50 of those points from LFL in the last game of the season. The 2024 season will go down in the history books for sure and these young men will have memories for years to come.

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Kealea Powell Commits to Play Volleyball at Crowley's Ridge College

NOVEMBER 20TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Kealea Powell Commits to Play Volleyball at Crowley's Ridge College

Bernie High School senior, Kealea Powell signed to play volleyball at Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, Arkansas.

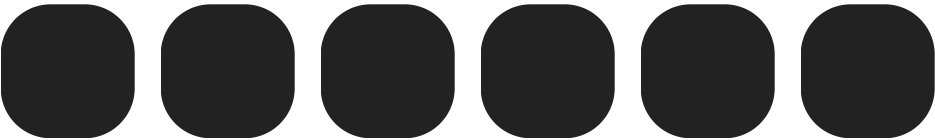
"We are so proud of you, Kealea, and can't wait to see all the amazing things you'll accomplish at the collegiate level," commented head volleyball coach Rachel Vernon, "Way to represent!"

Crowley's Ridge College is a private four year church affiliated, but autonomous co-educational liberal arts college designed to help students grow closer to God while pursuing a college degree with our talented and caring faculty and staff who promote career readiness, lifelong friendships, and a rewarding life.

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Bearcats Rally from Behind to Win First District Title Since 2011

NOVEMBER 20TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Bearcats Rally from Behind to Win First District Title Since 2011

The Dexter Bearcats rallied back from the 13-0 deficit to defeat the Ste. Genevieve Dragons 28-13 earning their first District Championship since 2011 at Charles Bland Stadium.

The Ste. Gen Dragons quickly got on the scoreboard taking an early lead with a 60-yard touchdown with only 11:03 left in the first quarter. The extra point was successful.

Dexter's Christiaan Wirz made a crucial tackle to stop the Dragons at the one-yard line preventing another score. Ste. Gen added another touchdown ,but missed their opportunity to score the point after and led the Bearcats 13-0 at the half.

The Bearcats struggled throughout the first half.

"It was definitely a tale of two halves," stated head coach Chad Jamerson. "We faced challenges in the first half, a little impatience and a few missteps in the offensive play calling."

The momentum shifted with the 'Cats showing more enthusiasm in the second half.

Devin Turnbo's interception stalled a Dragons' drive, leading to even more important moment for the Bearcats. Lee-Michael McDonald scored a 58-yard rushing touchdown, cutting the lead to 13-7. Parker King's point after was good. McDonald followed with another 34-yard run, bringing the Bearcats ahead 14-13.

"We made adjustments at halftime particularly by the defensive staff. They were instrumental in overcoming these challenges," continued Jamerson. "This allowed our team to become more physical and ultimately win the game for us. We had some key plays and big runs by Lee-Michael McDonald, which highly contributed to our victory over our opponent."

Turnbo had yet another touchdown on a 5-yard run with a successful extra point by Parker King bringing the lead to 21-13.

The crowd, the fans and the 'Cats really got excited with the touchdowns and the momentum revealed that of a District win in the sights. Nolan Alford scored a 13-yard touchdown, finalizing the score 28-13 after another successful point after by Parker King.

"We really focused on wearing them down which proved to be successful," stated Jamerson. "Their hard work and perseverance proved us right."

Donovan McNeil and Jaxson Miller contributed in big ways making key defensive plays and tackles.

The Dexter Bearcats improved to 11-0 marching deeper into the playoffs and for the first time in Dexter School history went 11-0 heading into the Missouri State play-offs.

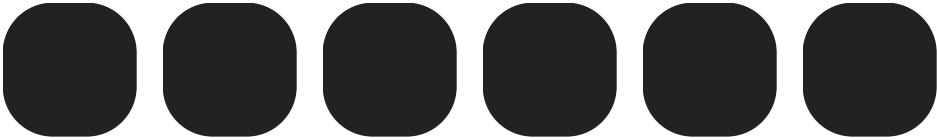
"We have a lot of work to get done this week. Lift for Life has some speed about them, athletic and a strong defensive line," continued Jamerson.

While the upcoming game poses challenges, such as facing a large and strong opposition. There are opportunities in the opponent's defense that could be capitalized on by executing a strong running game combined with strategic passing. The Bearcats are hungry for a win and a state title run.

"We are so thankful for the community's support and dedication to our team," Jamerson commented. "With our work ethic and influence to provide positive experiences we are making real progress in our program."

The Dexter Bearcats will travel to Mehlville on Saturday, November 23rd with a kick-off time of 1 p.m.

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MDC Reports 68,312 Deer Harvested During Firearms Opening Weekend, 20,000 Less than 2023 Season

NOVEMBER 18TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Top harvest counties were Franklin, Texas, and Pike.

Preliminary data from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) shows deer hunters in Missouri harvested 68,312 deer during opening weekend of the November portion of firearms deer season Nov. 16 and 17. Of the 68,312 deer harvested, 42,283 were antlered bucks, 5,105 were button bucks, and 20,924 were does.

Top harvest counties for opening weekend were Franklin with 1,627 deer harvested, Texas with 1,305, and Pike with 1,161.

Last year, hunters checked 90,253 deer during opening weekend of the November portion of firearms deer season.

According to MDC Cervid Program Supervisor Jason Isabelle, the drop in harvest this year was due to a combination of factors.

“The calendar shift this year put the November portion a week later than last year, which results in lower deer harvest,” said Isabelle. “The peak of the rut in Missouri occurs around Nov. 10. When the calendar shifts, it puts the opener about a week past peak rut when deer movement isn’t as high as it is earlier in the month.”

Another factor that Isabelle believes significantly affected this year’s harvest total is an abundant acorn crop.

“Throughout much of Missouri, there are a lot of acorns in the woods this year,” said Isabelle. “When that happens, deer don’t need to move as much to find food and they frequent fields and other open areas less often, making them less visible to hunters.”

Isabelle noted that the counties with the largest decline in harvest were in the more heavily forested portions of the state where acorn abundance has a more significant effect on deer movement.

Warm temperatures were another factor that contributed to this year’s lower opening weekend harvest total according to Isabelle.

“Although the warm temperatures this weekend made it comfortable for hunters to be in the woods, it likely had an adverse effect on deer movement,” said Isabelle.

Isabelle noted that the unseasonably mild temperatures probably also affected the desire of some hunters to harvest deer given the necessity for rapid processing.

“Fortunately, there are cooler temperatures in the forecast for the latter half of the November portion, which should result in better hunting conditions,” said Isabelle.

Pictured above: Avery Hart killed a 6 pointer with her grandpa age 8 during the youth portion of the 2024 season.

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Dexter Dominates Fredericktown, Maintains Perfect 10 - 0 Season

NOVEMBER 11TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Dexter Dominates Fredericktown, Maintains Perfect 10 - 0 Season

The Dexter Bearcats hosted the Fredericktown Blackcats in semifinal action at Charles Bland Stadium on Friday, November 8, 2024 hoping to punch the ticket to the district championship.

Fredericktown led 7-6 in the first quarter with a 68-yard touchdown pass and successfully kicking the extra point to take the lead. The Bearcats struggle early the game, but managed to keep the score close before exploding in the second half to defeat the Blackcats 56-20 breaking a school record of the most points scored in a season.

The Bearcats led six to nothing in the first quarter when Lee-Michael McDonald ran in putting the first points on the board; however they missed out on the 2-point conversion. Fredericktown answered with their own touchdown and were successful on the extra point with only about 3 minutes left in the first.

The Bearcats weren't going to let one touchdown interfere in their goal to win this game. Quarterback Jackson Howard handed off to Lee-Michael McDonald with a 6-yard touchdown run followed by a successful two-point conversion with 5:54 remaining in the second quarter. Nolan Alford then created some space and ran in for a 13-yard touchdown with only 3:38 left in the first half. Parker King kicked the extra point giving

the Bearcats a comfortable 21-7 lead going into the locker room at the half.

"Credit to Fredericktown. They came out in the first half and did some good things, especially in the first quarter," commented Dexter head coach Chad Jamerson. "They weren't able to run the ball. We made them aware very early that they weren't able to run that ball, but they were able to do some thing in the passing game, slow route and then they crossed some dudes up and it just kind of confused us a little. We did a poor job on the back four of communicating in the first, in the odd quartering the first and the third quarter. We didn't communicate very well on the back end and that kind of is what led to a lot of our breakdowns in the past defense."

"It was a hard fought football game, and their quarterback, Easton Wood, did a nice job for Fredericktown," continued Jamerson. "We told the guys all week long, hey, just because you have played really good football for nine games doesn't guarantee that you are going to play it for the 10th. And it doesn't guarantee that you can just put a whooping on people. This 10th week it's going to be different. It is different. This is not regular season. You know, the most dangerous man in the world is a man that's got nothing to lose!"

"We told the guys that all week. These guys had nothing to lose. They did some things that confused us, so we are going to make sure we kind of reset, refocus and get ready for Friday," Jamerson said.

The Blackcats narrowed the gap to 21-14 with a touchdown pass in the third. Dexter responded with a 56-yard run by Alford increasing the lead to 28-14.

Fredericktown would not give up and responded with their final touchdown of the game with a 41-yard pass late in their third quarter.

The Bearcats again responded with a 1-yard run by McDonald making it 35-20.

Dexter owned the fourth quarter with three more touchdowns. Langston Wernick scored a 10-yard touchdown run, Jackson Howard kept the ball and ran two yards and Jett Grams added a 6-yard touchdown run bringing the final score to 56 - 20.

The Bearcats had an impressive performance with a total of 619 yards of which 542 were rushing yards. Jett Grams had 19 carries for 187 yards and two touchdowns. Lee-Michael McDonald had 10 carries for 150 yards and three touchdowns. Nolan Alford had six carries for 104 yards and two touchdowns.

King had a pretty good night as well. He kicked six for six extra points.

On defense, Jackson Miller got some great hits out there. "It's hard to imagine that he is just a sophomore," stated Jamerson. "He doesn't mind bringing it. Brining the boom a little bit, and you know he was hitting some dudes out there."

"We had a punt return where Christiaan Wirz absolutely destroyed a kid down her around the 35 on or near the hash mark," jamerson continued. "And then he had a big tackle where he fell down and kid was on his back, he reached up and pulled the return man down. He made some really big plays on special teams, which made up for some mistakes that he made defensively and then had that big carry at the end of the game. Anytime you got a kid as fast and as strong as Christiaan, you got a good kid.

"The coaches and I were talking on the sideline. Most teams would be happy with giving up only 20 points. Most teams would be ecstatic. But at the end of the day, that's not our standard," stated Jamerson. "Our standard is to play with perfection. We have high expectations."

Two other players who had a great night were Lee-Michael McDonald and Jett Grams. Both came up big for the Bearcats Friday night.

"You know what I see is what you get with Jett, 230 pounds of rocking soccer robot! I mean this kid just runs with an exuberance and a joy and a fury unmatched. He's hard to tackle. Even when you think you got him boiled up in the backfield, he manages to run," stated Jamerson. "There were kids that had him wrapped up around the net, knees and kids that were wrapped up around the ankles, and he jus pulled his leg right out of the grip. Finally took about four kids to slow him down tonight. Just a man among boys at times."

"I talk about Lee-Michael, I am out of words. Over three years, lighting in a bottle, tackling things like trying to eat tomato soup with a fork, you come up with something that's describing what it's like to see Lee-Michael play. The way th kids stops on a dime, reverses field, makes kids miss. My goodness, what a blessing we have in this athlete.

"He has desire and a lot of it. He plays with intensity. He gets ramped up and I get al little ramped up and at the end of the day, he's a competitor and he comes out and gives us all his way. He just loves the game," stated Jamerson of Lee-Michael.

Jamerson this was the biggest game of his career thus far. Next week will be even bigger! The Dexter Bearcats will host Ste. Genevieve in a District Championship at Charles

Bland Stadium. It will be a big game! Coach Jamerson's biggest game yet and the community is supporting the Bearcats big this year.

"It will be a big game, probably the biggest game Dexter has had in the last decade!" Jamerson exclaimed. "The community has been outstanding. They have done a tremendous job of coming out and supporting us. So I expect nothing less than what we've already seen and probably a little bit more on Friday night."

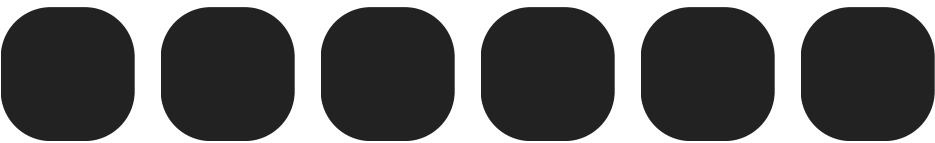
Dexter has been here before. Last year Ste. Gen defeated the Bearcats, by only one point, 29-28.....so they are hungry for a win and maybe a little revenge! In 2022 Ste. Genevieve beat Dexter in the first game of district play 56-17. The last time the Bearcats beat Ste. Gen was in 2018 when the Bearcats defeated them in triple overtime 25-19.

"At the end of the day I am not gonna stop coaching," continued Jamerson. "No matter what, I am not going to not coach. You have got to realize that the standard has been raised and 20 points might be good enough for other teams, but not good enough for us."

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