

2014 McEachern Indians SEASON PREVIEW



Is Hockman's

HOT RETURNING TALENT

ready for the next step!!!

The McEachern Indians finished the 2013 season just one touchdown away from advancing to the state finals. When the gun went off in their final game in December against North Gwinnett, the Indians were only yards away from culminating their season in the Georgia Dome and playing for a state championship. 2013, was one of four seasons where McEachern made it to the “Final Four” and the team had a remarkable playoff run. Now Coach Hockman and his staff say goodbye to a stellar class of seniors (16 of which have made commitments to college programs), an 11-3 record and a wide array of playing experience. Looking forward into the 2014 campaign, there is one very obvious challenge. With new region realignment taking place this year, the Indians have only 6 games in a region where they are generally strong. In addition to their region schedule, Coach Hockman will be testing his forces by bringing strong challenges into the mix of the first four games which include Buford, Peachtree Ridge and Lovejoy. After a scheduling issue with the Georgia Dome, the Indians have agreed to host this year’s Corky Kell Classic. There they will square off against North Gwinnett, a game that will offer a rematch from last year’s state semi-final game. If the Indians can run their early season gauntlet, there is no telling what they can do. Talent still runs deep and they return 3 All Staters and a Freshman All American who will be the backbone of the 2014 campaign. If these and other returning starters can RISE UP, 2014 may be a season to remember.

OFFENSE

Offensive Line



Chuma Edoga

In the 2013 campaign the offensive line coaching duo of Brent Haygood and Karlton Schilling saw many new faces as they prepared their men for the war in the trenches. Going into 2014, the offensive line will feature many familiar faces with only a couple of holes to fill. Experience on the offensive line looks to be a trademark for this year’s team. The bedrock of the offensive line will be Senior and 3-year starter Chuma Edoga. Seeing varsity time since late in his freshman year, Chuma (6-4, 280) has racked up just about every honor a lineman can. He is twice the All County Lineman of the Year from the Cobb Touchdown Club, a consensus choice for All

State in 2 polls, a member of the Junior Elite All Star Game and slated to play in the 2015 U.S. Army All American Bowl. Chuma has made a verbal commitment to the University of Southern California. His power, speed, athletic ability and knowledge make him a force for McEachern opponents. Also returning to the offensive line in 2014 will be the very formidable Chandler Jones (6-4, 310). Chandler started in all 14 games in 2013 and was a member of the Junior Elite All Star Game in December. He has gained valuable experience and his impressive size combined with his terrific power has caused him to catch the eyes of many college recruiters. Chandler is currently entertaining scholarship offers from many programs which includes Cincinnati,



Chandler Jones



Marshall, Georgia State, Middle Tennessee and North Carolina State. After improving his footwork and playing knowledge, Chandler should prove to be a reliable member of this group as he clears holes for McEachern runningbacks. Gaining valuable experience in 2013 was a highly skilled junior, Tremayne Anchrum (6-4, 250). This all around athlete who also doubles on the basketball team filled in during a string of injuries starting for the first time against McEachern's archrival Hillgrove and was able to play a big role all throughout the four game playoff run.

The experience he gained means he will be relied upon during 2014 and should begin to draw the attention of college recruiters this fall. Challenging for a starting position on the 2014 offensive line will be senior Greg Austin (6-3, 275). Greg saw limited action in the late season due to some injuries. After spring practice, it appears that Greg is the leading candidate to fill the center position. Somewhat of a surprise to the coaching staff, senior Kaishawn Hixon (6-0, 245) has stepped up during spring drills and has gained a leg up on the left guard position. A solid group stands behind these five and have worked hard throughout spring drills.....these include, junior, Elijah Cross (6-1, 215), senior, Andy Cone (6-2, 265), junior, Devon Wolf (5-10, 215), junior, Jezer Rodas (6-0, 220), junior, Jordan Hall (6-1, 245) and Khanyne Akers (6-1, 240).



Tight Ends

Coach Rich Foster will be facing a new challenge as he gets his boys ready for the 2014 season. He will have many candidates to fill into the slot left behind by last year's Tight End, Trey Scott who went to Tulane on a scholarship. Perhaps the one with the



most game playing experience will be sophomore Xavier Riddick (6-1, 220). Last season Riddick served well in a back up role on the defensive line while awaiting his turn to work in at his more natural position of H-back or tight end. Showing great ability he was able to have 7 solo tackles and 6 assists. Also in the mix is a rangy senior Davonne Boyce (6-4, 215) who has been quietly waiting for his opportunity while serving primarily as a J.V. player and seeing brief back up action in 2013. The duo could possibly both be used at times and may share portions of the job. Additionally the Indians are considering the athletic looks and ability of junior Christian

Roberson (6-4, 220) who sat out in 2013 due to an injury. As his experience catches up to his talent, Roberson may prove to be a force.

Wide Receivers

This year's receiving corps for the Indians appears to be bursting with talent. Consistent with Coach Hockman's wide open offense, receivers will be on display in a number of situations. Most obviously senior T.J. Rahming (5-11, 145) will be leading the way with his sure hands, lightning quickness and ability to get open. In 2013, T.J. was All Cobb County, All State (as a return specialist), with 54 receptions for 1054 yards. He was selected for the Junior Elite All Star game, and is also slated to make an appearance in the 2015 U.S. Army All America Bowl. He scored 13 receiving touchdowns, had 18 punt returns for 410 yards for an electrifying 22.0 yard average. T.J. is currently entertaining recruiting offers from the University of Tennessee and Duke University amongst others. Also in the receiving conversation at the conclusion of spring ball include hard-working senior Jeremiah Shaw (6-2, 185), junior, C.J. Windham (6-3, 190), sophomore, Brandon Smith (5-9, 150) and Mr. Versatility, sophomore, Tyler Smith (5-11, 170). Jeremiah Shaw ended 2013 with 3 catches for 45 yards and a pair of touchdowns, in a primarily back up roll. Tyler and Brandon Smith were both freshman in 2013 who gained maturity working on the varsity practice field. C.J. Windham didn't see any action in 2013. In spite of limited playing experience, the athletic ability that this trio brings has the McEachern coaching staff very optimistic.



Runningbacks



This year the running back position is superbly manned by one of the nation's most exciting players in senior Taj Griffin. Moving into the starting role last season, Taj had 167 carries for 1194 yards. This included 9 touchdowns and 1 reception for 15 yards. Perhaps his most sparkling moments in 2013 came in the hard fought playoff games against Langston Hughes and Collins Hill. He rambled into the endzone on an 18 yard touchdown jaunt against Hughes which was able to seal the victory and keep McEachern in playoffs. The following week against Collins Hill, Taj had an amazing 85 yard punt return for a touchdown which put McEachern into the state semifinals. Taj received All Cobb County Honors, All State, and appeared in the Junior Elite All Star Classic last December. He is scheduled to appear in the 2015 U.S. Army All American

Bowl. As a threat to score virtually every time he touches the football, Taj has caught the eyes of hundreds of recruiters from the nation's top BCS schools and has made a verbal commitment to the University of Oregon. McEachern coaches have high hopes for this speedster and 2014 should be a breakout year for Griffin. After a productive spring, three young runningbacks have emerged who should provide depth when Griffin is not at the helm. They include junior Michael Nwagbara (5-3, 155), junior Dorian McNeil, (5-11, 190) and sophomore Quay Holmes (6-1, 185).

Quarterbacks

In the closing regular season game for McEachern vs. it's archrival, Hillgrove, starting quarterback Ty Clemons underwent a severe ankle sprain which would cause the Indians to have to call on their J.V. quarterback, Bailey Hockman to come in and lead the team. Unfortunately, the Indians would lose this game, but in the weeks that would follow through four rounds of playoffs, this freshman would clearly earn his stripes as the post season ensued. Bailey Hockman would be a guiding force for his team and end his freshman campaign with an impressive 66 receptions on 144 attempts for 1096 passing yards and 14 touchdowns. This baptism of fire would help the Indians and Bailey to increase their confidence with each week and end the season in the state semi-finals. Bailey Hockman gained national attention with his onfield performance and would be named 2nd Team Freshman All-American. Going into 2014, he is the heir apparent for the starting position and Coach Van Spence is very impressed with his timing and leadership after he came to spring football at the completion of baseball season. Bailey will be backed up in 2014 by junior Corey Batts (5-10, 170) who has also shown positive growth during spring drills.



DEFENSE

In 2014, McEachern's defensive unit will be without the services of veteran coach Ken Hockman (father of head coach, Kyle Hockman). The exit by this veteran of over 35 coaching campaigns and 3 Hall of Fames leaves the defensive leadership on the secure shoulders of last season's Co-Defensive Coordinator, Bryan Minish. Coach Minish is in the process of installing a variable front defensive and this move will afford him the opportunity to oversee all of the phases of McEachern's defense.

Defensive Line



Tavon Johnson

Just prior to the start of spring football this May, Coach Kyle Hockman was able to solidify his staff by adding Cobb County coaching veteran Rich Robinson to this year's staff. The Indian defensive line will be the benefactor of Coach Robinson's wild enthusiasm and his more than 30 years of coaching experience. It would seem that Coach Robinson will be inheriting a highly talented and explosive group in his first McEachern campaign. Returning at the defensive tackle position is one of last year's starters, senior Tavon Johnson (6-0, 250). junior Andrew Tarver (6-3, 265). In 2013, Johnson totaled 17 solo tackles and 13 assists with an impressive 4 sacks. Also on the interior will be another player who was a part time starter in 2013, senior Andrew Tarver (6-0, 280). Tarver proved to be something of a force in 2013 logging in 77 total tackles with 39 solos, 38 assists and 2 sacks. This pair should be able to serve as a bedrock on the interior line. At the end positions the Indians boast a strong, athletic pair in junior, Julian Rochester (6-5, 285) senior Fitz Wattley (6-0, 220). Fitz's position will at times have a linebacker job description, taking advantage of his speed and experience. As a sophomore, Rochester finished as one of the leading defenders with a total of 136 total tackles with 74 solos and 62 assists. Additionally he was a team leader with 11 sacks. These figures have attracted BCS attention and he has already been offered by the University of Tennessee amongst others. He also received All County as well as All State honors. As a junior, Wattley finished the season with 63 total tackles, 2 sacks and one interception. Gaining experience in 2013 is Chris Hernandez (6-4, 230). Hernandez had 20 tackles serving as a back-up. Other newcomers to the defensive line include sophomore Willie Dean (6-1, 260) sophomore Corey Trent (6-0, 225) sophomore Quentin Hayes (6-0, 210). These reliable players all showed promise during spring drills and will give Coach Robinson much to be able to build upon this season and into the future. Senior Josh Ohanu (5-11, 195) will figure into the defensive line equation as well.



Andrew Tarver

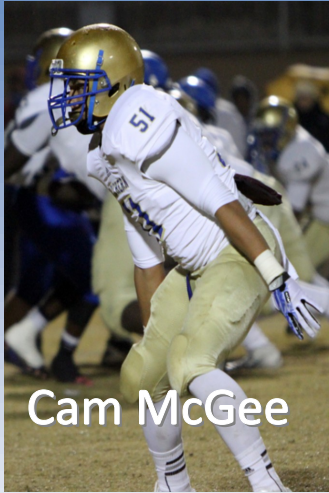


Fitz Wattley

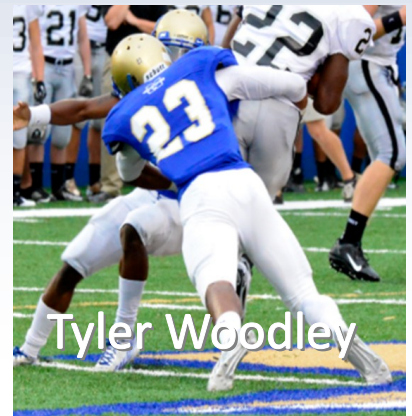


Julian Rochester

Outside Linebackers



Coach Steve Adley, who handles McEachern's outside linebackers has some great experience to deal with in 2014. This includes two highly athletic returning starters in the persons of Cameron McGee (6-0, 195) and Tyler Woodley (5-10, 175). During spring drills, McGee made a great impression with many of the recruiters who have stopped by. Having missed much of 2013 with injuries, McGee did recuperate in time for the post-season. He accounted for 30 tackles with 18 solos and 12 assists. Woodley has switched from a defensive back role last season to a more appropriate linebacker position this spring. In 2013, he accounted for 38 tackles including 29 solos and 9 assists with one interception. These two are backed up by a pair of young athletic hitmen in the likes of sophomore Zach Holloway (5-10, 170) and senior, Saquan Daniels (5-11, 185). Daniels was able to earn some playing time in 2013 primarily as a special team player coming up with 11 total tackles including 7 solos and 4 assists. Holloway has done a remarkable job this spring of making an impression with the coaching staff, and demonstrates a fast motor.



Inside Linebackers



When Coach Assamee Asad took over this spring as inside linebackers coach, he found himself blessed with some very strong talent. While a newcomer to the varsity staff, Coach Asad is no stranger to the McEachern family, having served both our freshman programs and our middle school programs in the past. The inside linebacker position will be the least experienced group on the field, however they have a wealth of talent to work with. One of last year's key figures, who gained great experience sometimes as a starter is senior Nick DaMassimo (5-11- 195). Seeing varsity action since his sophomore year, Nick totaled 62 tackles in 2013 with 38 solos and 24 assists and also snatched up 2 interceptions. Two newcomers to the inside linebacking include a pair of juniors in Courtney Johnson (5-11, 190) and Allen Cooper (6-0, 200). Both saw limited varsity action in 2013 but after spring football appear to be ready to take on the challenges of 2014 in full stride. Johnson is known for being a very physical hit-man and Cooper demonstrates the ability to be able to read and react.

Also providing depth at the inside linebacker position will be a pair of sophomores in Alex Sesay (5-10, 180) and Miles Whetstone (6-0, 185). These two will compete for playing time as their experience catches up with their athletic ability.

Secondary

Coach Phil Hoskins, a veteran of 6 McEachern seasons will have a secondary that is filling some graduation holes with some outstanding ability. The Free Safety position will be filled by rangy and athletic junior Bryan Okeh (6-3, 205). Seeing only limited action in 2013, Okey is known for his covering the high ground and his ability to come up strong in run support. On the edges will be a pair of senior corners in Dylan Hamilton (6-1, 185) and Andrew Heyward (5-10, 170). Hamilton served in 2013 as a reliable back-up and is now set to take over a starting role. Heyward on the other hand has switched from an offensive role. In 2013, he served as a “wildcat”, receiver as well as a part-time rusher. He had 15 carries for 67 yards and 1 touchdown as well as 6 receptions for 115 yards and one touchdown. Spring ball found him taking well to the position change. Providing depth in the secondary will be junior Free Safety, Bryce Sims (5-10, 165), junior corner Malik Jordan (5-8, 170) and sophomore corner Kevin Sherman (5-6, 155).



SPECIAL TEAMS



Entering his 27th year at McEachern H.S., kicking coach Randy Taylor now lays claim to being the longest football coach in the school's history. In 2014, McEachern's special teams appear to be very ably manned. McEachern will be led by the booming leg of punter Chris Hernandez (6-4, 230). Taking over the punting duties in late 2013, he recorded 9 punts for a total of 339 yards, averaging 37.25 yards per attempt. Junior kicker Cesar Dominguez (5-7, 155) will take over the kick-off and field goal duties. Seeing limited action in 2013, Cesar will replace his brother Dennis who departs for a scholarship to Tusculum College. The long snapping position will be manned by junior Eric Graham (6-1, 165) who has shown tremendous improvement as the team moved into spring drills. McEachern will be blessed by the terrific punt and kick return abilities of senior, T.J. Rahming and senior Taj Griffin. This pair will make it difficult for opponents as they are a threat to score from any place on the field.