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The Parthenon, August 31, 2012

John Gibb
Parthenon@marshall.edu

Jeremy Johnson
Parthenon@marshall.edu

Adam Rogers
Parthenon@marshall.edu

Nikki Dotson
Parthenon@marshall.edu

Joanie Borders
Parthenon@marshall.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

John Gibb, Jeremy Johnson, Adam Rogers, Nikki Dotson, Joanie Borders, and Eden Adkins

FRIDAY
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CATO SET FOR BIG STAGE | Page 3

FOOTBALL EDITION



MARSHALL FOOTBALL EDITION



FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2012 | THE PARTHENON | MARSHALLPARTHENON.COM

2012 Herd football schedule



When: Sept. 1
Who: West Virginia Mountaineers
Where: Morgantown



When: Sept. 8
Who: Western Carolina Catamounts
Where: Huntington



When: Sept. 15
Who: Ohio Bobcats
Where: Huntington



When: Sept. 22
Who: Rice Owls
Where: Houston



When: Sept. 29
Who: Purdue Boilermakers
Where: West Lafayette, Ind.



When: Oct. 6
Who: Tulsa Golden Hurricane
Where: Huntington



When: Oct. 20
Who: Southern Miss Golden Eagles
Where: Hattiesburg, Miss.



When: Oct. 27
Who: UCF Knights
Where: Huntington



When: Nov. 3
Who: Memphis Tigers
Where: Huntington



When: Nov. 10
Who: UAB Blazers
Where: Birmingham, Ala.



When: Nov. 17
Who: Houston Cougars
Where: Huntington



When: Nov. 23
Who: East Carolina Pirates
Where: Greenville, N.C.

GO HERD!



252859
SUNTIME TANNING
AUGUST SPECIAL
2 x 2.0



Coach Doc Holliday motivates his team during a summer practice session on Aug. 29. The Herd looks to beat WVU at their last foreseeable Friends of Coal Bowl game.
MARCUS CONSTANTINO | THE PARTHENON

Herd to take on 11th ranked Mountaineers

BY JEREMY JOHNSON
SPORTS EDITOR

Marshall University football opens the season on the road with the last foreseeable Friends of Coal Bowl game against the 11th ranked West Virginia

University Mountaineers.

Thundering Herd Head Coach Doc Holliday said he is well aware of the talent that his squad will be facing.

“Anytime you’re going into somebody else’s venue and playing a top-10 team

that is picked either to be first or second in the Big 12 conference, you know they’re an excellent team,” Holliday said.

Holliday also said with the likes of Geno Smith, Tavon Austin and Stedman Bailey,

limiting West Virginia’s high-powered offense will be a tall task for the Herd.

“Geno Smith probably is the best quarterback in America and has a shot to

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SENIOR’S FINAL SEASON

Small in size, wealthy in experience

BY ADAM ROGERS
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Marshall University football had just six seniors on its roster before fall camp began in early August.

Now the total stands at nine, thanks in part to two transfer players from Boston College and one from Penn State.

Although the Herd has one of the smallest senior classes in the country, the group is spread out across both sides of the ball.

On offense, there is John Bruhin along the line, Martin Ward at running back and the foursome of Andre Snipes-Booker, Antavious Wilson, Aaron Dobson and former Nittany Lion Devon Smith at wide receiver.

Defensively, the Herd finds seniors at the linebacker spot in Devin Arrington and safety with BC transfers Dominick Leganes and Okechukwu Okoroha.

Snipes-Booker said he knows what is expected of him as one of the few seniors.

Leadership. “Motivating my guys, making our team chemistry stronger and being a leader,” Snipes-Booker said.

When Arrington found out he was part of one of the smallest senior classes in the NCAA, he said it was a shock.

“Spring ball is when I first really realized it, but now it’s just something we hear a lot,” Arrington said. “We’ll handle it.”

Wilson said he is using his experience as a freshmen dealing with seniors to be a better teammate.

“I’m trying to do the same thing those guys did for me,” Wilson said.

These nine players know there is a lot of work to be done between them,



MARCUS CONSTANTINO | THE PARTHENON

Senior wide receivers Aaron Dobson (left) and Antavious Wilson (right) look on as the Thundering Herd practice for the upcoming season.

but Okoroha said they are ready for the challenge.

Marshall’s seniors have already experienced their last first practice and are close to playing their last first game.

There are several last first experiences these nine players will go through over the course of the season.

The first one of which is Saturday’s game against West Virginia University and Snipes-Booker said he cannot wait for his last shot at defeating the Mountaineers.

“This might be the last time Marshall plays them and it’s my last time playing them,” Snipes-Booker said. “I’m 0-and-3 against them and I’m not trying to be 0-and-4, so I’m trying to make a big difference out there.”

Arrington said

he only thinks about this being his last season when everything slows down in front of him, but he already knows he is going to miss playing college football.

“It’s the college experience,” Arrington said. “You have tons of fun and you’re doing what you love, playing college football. I already know I’m going to miss it and because my teammates are like my brothers.”

Fortunately for Arrington and the rest of the senior class, there are still 12 guaranteed games in 2012 and they don’t have to begin thinking about life after Marshall football just yet.

Adam Rogers can be contacted at rogers112@marshall.edu.

page designed and edited by JOHN GIBB | gibb@marshall.edu

252857
COLLIS P HUNTINGTON
NEW RIVER TRAIN
2 x 4.0

252955
MAMA ROSA’S PIZZA
PARTHENON AD
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FOOTBALL EDITION



FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2012

| THE PARTHENON

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Rakeem Cato: Prepared and poised for the big stage

BY JEREMY JOHNSON
SPORTS EDITOR

Rakeem Cato relishes the big stage; like a rock star who laps up the energy of a devoted audience. Cato feeds off of packed houses and pressure-filled environments.

This dates back to him leading Miami Central High School to its first ever state title in 2010 and as recent as a bowl clinching 341 yard two touchdown performance against East Carolina and

a victory against Florida International in the Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl as a true freshman.

The stage doesn't get any bigger for the Thundering Herd quarterback than the Friends of Coal Bowl in hostile Morgantown, West Virginia to start the season.

With a year under his belt Cato said he has continued to develop and evolve as a quarterback.

"My first year, it was a learning experience," Cato

said. "I look at film every day and see the things that I did wrong and trying to make progress every time that I come out here and practice. I just want to be great."

In the 2011 season, the 6-foot 182-pound quarterback threw for 15 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. Cato said his decision-making has improved and the game has slowed down and comes easier to him than last season.

"The defense has slowed

down a lot more," Cato said. When to throw the ball down the field and not to throw the ball downfield, settle for less or just the basic things like throwing the ball out of bounds and those type of things."

Senior wideout Aaron Dobson established a connection with Cato in their first year together. In the final two Herd games, including the bowl game, the two connected 11 times for 191 yards and four touchdowns.

Cato progressed mightily down the closing stretch of last season and Dobson said he is excited to see the growth of his sophomore quarterback.

"He has grown up a lot," Dobson said. "His maturity level is just out the roof. To see somebody start their true freshman year the first game of the season to now, he has grown up tremendously and I can't wait to see what he is going to do this year."

Instead of the traditional first and last name for a facebook profile, Cato's reads

"Tosuccess Onamission" and he said it reminds him of whom he is striving to be.

"To be successful at everything I do both on the field and off the field as a man and as a player," Cato said. "That I am trying to do right now and just make my life better and make the people around me lives better too."

As a man, an athlete and quarterback for the Thundering Herd, Cato is primed for the spotlight.

Jeremy Johnson can be contacted at johnson783@live.marshall.edu.



MARCUS CONSTANTINO | THE PARTHENON

Sophomore quarterback Rakeem Cato stands poised in the pocket as he delivers a pass against Southern Miss in his first collegiate victory.

page designed and edited by JEREMY JOHNSON | johnson783@live.marshall.edu

252680
DAVID W ROOF - MCGUIRE REALTY
SPRING SOLUTIONS
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3 / 3 / 3

252641
MU RESIDENCE SERVICES
WELCOME BACK
6 x 10.5
1

FOOTBALL ROSTER / fall 2012

	#64	BRUHN	1	A.J. LEGGETT	DB	FR	Miami, Fla. (South Miami)	31	EVAN MCKELVEY	LB	SO	Moncks Corner, S.C. (Berkeley)	65	BILLY RONE	OL	JR	Glendale, Az. (Marcos de Niza)
	#29	GALE	2	TRON MARTINEZ	RB	JR	Hampton, Va. (Hampton)	32	DEANDRE REAVES	WR	RS / FR	Sterling, Va. (Dominion)	66	CAMERON DEES	OL	FR	Saffner, Fla. 0
	#11	ARRINGTON	3	DERRICK THOMAS	DB	RS / JR	Greenbelt, Md. (Eleanor Roosevelt)	33	DEVON SMITH	WR	SR	White Plains, Md. (Westlake)	68	ANTHONY SPANO	OL	RS / FR	Naples, Fla. (Gulf Coast)
	#9	WILSON	4	AARON DOBSON	WR	SR	Dunbar, W.Va. (South Charleston)	35	SHAWN SAMUELS	S	RS / FR	Bainbridge, Ga. (Bainbridge)	69	TREVOR MENDELSON	OL	RS / SO	Dublin, Ohio (Dublin Jerome)
	#33	SMITH	5	DEMETRIUS EVANS	WR	JR	Belle Glade, Fla. (Glades Central)	35	REMI WATSON	RB	RS / FR	Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland)	70	COREY TENNEY	OL	RS / JR	New Castle, Va. (Craig County)
	#19	SNIPES-BOOKER	6	JERMAINE KEISON	WR	SO	Miami, Fla. (Southridge)	36	MONTERIUS LOVETT	DB	RS / JR	Tallahassee, Fla. (Rickards)	71	SEBASTIAN JOHANSSON	DL	FR	Port Charlotte, Fla. (Port Charlotte)
	#6	OKOROHA	7	DOMINICK LERANDE	S	SR	Staten Island, N.Y. (Boston College)	37	KEVIN GROOMS	RB	RS / FR	Hollywood, Fla. (South Broward)	73	JOE MASSAQUOI	OL	RS / FR	Karlstad, Sweden (Raeland)
	#10	LEGRANDE	8	DAVONTE ALLEN	WR	RS / FR	Belle Glade, Fla. (Glades Central)	38	ARDY HOLMES	DB	SO	Charlotte, N.C. (West Charlotte)	74	ALEX SCHOOLER	DL	FR	Alexandria, Va. (T.C. Williams)
	#3	DOBSON	9	TRAVON VAN KEITH BAXTER	RB	SO	San Diego, Calif. (Helix/Mitford Academy)	39	TYLER WILLIAMS	P	FR	Ft. Wayne, Ind. (R. Nelson Snider)	76	GARRETT SCOTT	OL	RS / JR	Virginia, Km. (Collegiate)
			10	ANTAVIOUS WILSON	WR	SO	Homestead, Fla. (Homestead)	40	RA'SHAUDE MYERS	DB	RS / FR	Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland)	77	JORDAN JEFFRIES	OL	JR	Douglas, Ga. (Coffee County)
			11	DEVIN ARRINGTON	S	SR	Pahokee, Fla. (Pahokee)	42	ESSRAY TALIAFERRO	RB	RS / JR	Cocoa, Fla. (Cocoa)	78	CLINT VAN HORN	OL	RS / JR	Oswego, Ill. (Oswego)
			12	RAKEEM CATO	LB	RS / SR	Lanham, Md. (Boston College)	43	DEONTAE WEST	RB	RS / FR	Asbury, Va. (Briarwoods)	79	JOSH LOVELL	OL	RS / FR	Beekley, (Woodrow Wilson)
			13	ARMONZE DANIEL	QB	SO	Portsmouth, Va. (Deep Creek)	44	DEREK MITCHELL	LB	RS / JR	Hollywood, Fla. (Hialeah)	80	CHRIS ALSTON	OL	RS / SO	Christchurch, Va. (Christchurch)
			14	RAHEEM WAITERS	DL	RS / FR	Miami, Fla. (Miami Central)	45	MATT PICKETT	DL	RS / JR	Charlotte, N.C. (Providence)	81	CRAIG WILKINS	WR	FR	Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland)
			15	BLAKE FROHNAPFEL	LB	SO	Avon, Ind. (Avon)	46	JERMAINE HOLMES	LB	SO	Valdosta, Ga. (Valdosta)	82	JACK GAMMON	WR	SO	Hialeah, Fla. (Hialeah)
			16	LAWRENCE GUNNAR HOLCOMBE	QB	SO	Quincy, W.Va. (Riverside)	47	DEVON JOHNSON	LB	FR	Richlands, Va. (Richlands)	83	ERIC FROHNAPFEL	TE	FR	Columbus, Ohio (Bishop Watterson)
			17	TOMMY SHULER	QB	FR	Stafford, Va. (Colonial Forge)	47	KEVIN RODRIGUEZ	RB	FR	Richlands, Va. (Richlands)	84	DAMEON GARRETT	TE	SO	Stafford, Va. (Colonial Forge)
			18	TANNER OWENS	QB	SO	West Bloomfield, Mich. (West Bloomfield)	48	ZACH WELLMAN	RB	RS / SO	Linden, N.J. (Linden)	85	TRENT MARTIN	WR	RS / SO	Stagford, Va. (Colonial Forge)
			18	ANDRE SCOTT	QB	SO	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. (University School)	48	STEPHEN ROUSH	S	SO	Huntington, W.Va. (Spring Valley)	86	BRYAN ATTAWAY	K	RS / FR	Cincinnati, Ohio (North College Hill)
			19	ANDRE SNIPES-BOOKER	WR	SR	Miami, Fla. (Miami Central)	49	CORTEZ CARTER	LB	SO	Parkersburg, W.Va. (Parkersburg)	87	AUSTIN DUMAS	P	RS / FR	Virginia Beach, Va. (Floyd E. Kellam)
			20	DEREK ROBINSON	WR	SR	Cincinnati, Ohio (Anneta)	50	DAVONTE EDWARDS	OL	FR	Beaeton, Va. (Liberty)	88	MATT CINCOTTA	TE	RS / FR	Kingstland, Ga. (Camden County)
			21	C.J. CRAWFORD	DB	RS / SO	Cincinnati, Ohio (Anneta)	51	DEON MEADOWS	LB	SO	South Charleston, W.Va. (South Charleston)	89	JOE WOODRUM	LS	FR	Bradenton, Fla. (Bradenton Christian)
			22	D.J. HUNTER	S	RS / JR	Orlando, Fla. (Oak Ridge)	52	MALCOLM STRONG	DL	RS / SO	Smyrna, Tenn. (Smyrna)	90	BLAKE BROOKS	TE	RS / SO	Charlotte, N.C. (Charlotte Chatot)
			23	JUSTIN HAIG	K	RS / JR	Sarasota, Fla. (Riverview)	53	ALEX BAZZIE	DL	RS / JR	Stone Mountain, Ga. (Stephenson)	91	KEN SMITH	DL	JR	Charlotte, N.C. (Bluefield)
			23	LORRENZO STEELE	DB	RS / FR	Davie, Fla. (Nova)	54	ANTHONY WILSON	LB	FR	Siber Spring, Md. (Northwood (Fork Union))	92	JAMES ROUSE	DL	RS / JR	Charleston, W.Va. (South Charleston)
			24	JAZZ KING	K	RS / SO	Huntington, W.Va. (Huntington High School)	54	GRADY KEER	OL	RS / SO	Alexandria, Va. (Hayfield Secondary School)	93	STEVE DILLON	DL	RS / FR	Copperas Cove, Tx. (Copperas Cove)
			25	STEFONE GRACE	WR	RS / FR	Middletown, Ohio (Middletown)	56	ERIC ANSLEY	OL	FR	New Smyrna Beach, Fla. (New Smyrna Beach)	94	JARQUEZ SAMUEL	DL	RS / FR	Harrisonburg, Va. (Harrisonburg)
			26	GATOR HOSKINS	TE	JR	Delroy Beach, Fla. (American Heritage)	57	SETH DOSS	LB	RS / FR	Riverdale, Ga. (Charles Drew)	95	JAMES POWER	LS	RS / FR	Palmdale, Ca. (Palmdale)
			27	BILLY MITCHELL	LB	RS / JR	District Heights, Md. (Suitland)	58	JEREMIAH TAYLOR	DL	JR	Marlington, W.Va. (Pocahontas)	96	BRANDON SPARROW	DL	JR	Valdosta, Ga. (Valdosta)
			28	CORIE WILSON	DB	RS / FR	Duncan, S.C. (James F. Byrnes)	60	CHRIS JASPERSE	OL	RS / SO	South Point, Ohio (South Point)	97	MARQUES AIKEN	DL	RS / SO	Myrtle Beach, S.C. (Myrtle Beach)
			29	MARTIN WARD	RB	RS / SR	Cincinnati, Ohio (Milford Academy)	61	JOSH MURRIEL	OL	FR	South Point, Ohio (South Point)	98	TOM COLLINS	DL	SO	Myrtle Beach, S.C. (Myrtle Beach)
							Gainesville, Fla. (Eastside)	62	JAMES ALLEN	OL	RS / SO	Greensboro, N.C. (Page)		RYAN RIEDEL	LB	FR	Greensboro, N.C. (Page)
							Naturre, Fla. (Naturre)	63	GAGE NIEMEYER	OL	JR	Port St. Lucie, Fla. (Port St. Lucie)					
							Miami, Fla. (Edison)	64	JOHN BRUHN	OL	GS	Bradenton, Fla. (St. Stephens Episcopal)					
							Jonesboro, Ga. (Mount Zion HS)					Pan Jachinto, Ca. (Mount San Jacinto CC)					
												Powell, Tenn. (Powell)					



DEFENSE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Marshall welcomes two new faces to secondary



MARCUS CONSTANTINO | THE PARTHENON

Boston College transfer Okechukwu Okorah practices as a safety for Saturday's game in Morgantown.

BY AARON PAYNE
THE PARTHENON

The 2012 edition of the Thundering Herd defense will feature two brand new faces in the secondary.

During the offseason, head coach Doc Holliday and defensive coordinator Chris Ripon recruited two veteran players from Boston College, Dominick LeGrande and Okechukwu Okorah.

Ripon said that the duo from the Atlantic Coast Conference impact the team immediately in two ways.

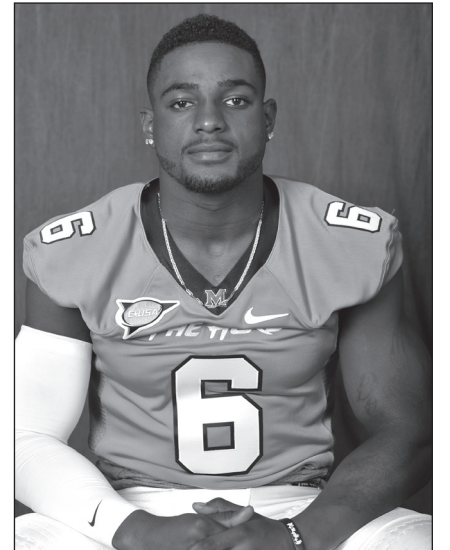
"One is the experience they have already. The other, and probably most important, it now gives us a little more time before we throw in the three or four younger guys into the mix who don't have playing experience."

Beyond the immediate impact, the transfers also create a long-term win-win situation for themselves and for their new team.

"It's their maturity," Ripon said. "We're not used to maturity being so many freshman and sophomore dominance. They're highly motivated kids who are going to go out there and try to help Marshall win and attempt to make it to the NFL."

To some followers of collegiate football, Marshall seemed like an odd destination for LeGrande and Okoroha.

However, if you ask them, the destination seemed perfect for multiple reasons.



LAGRANDE

For starters, they found the talent and competitiveness in the squad to be impressive.

"When Doc recruited us, he said he would surround us with great competition," Okoroha said. "He didn't lie about that. There is a lot of speed and there are a lot of athletes on this team; even more athletes than at Boston College."

Also, the two are eager at the prospect of defending in pass-happy Conference USA after coming from a balanced ACC.

"I like that," said Okoroha. "That's something that Dominick and I talked about. They're going to throw the ball around 50 times and few of them will end up in our hands."

Finally, it didn't hurt for Okoroha that the team recruiting him not only wanted him, but also his

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Transitioning linebackers ready to take the field in Morgantown

BY MARCUS CONSTANTINO
THE PARTHENON

Under the leadership of Devin Arrington, Marshall's young linebackers will look to shine against one of the most potent offenses in the country Saturday in Morgantown at the Friends of Coal Bowl.

Arrington, a 6-foot-3, 210-pound senior from Portsmouth, Va., played his first two years as a linebacker, but was moved to safety during the 2011 season to make up for a lack of depth at that position.

He will join a crew of linebackers who, for the most part, weren't at the position last year, either.

Marshall head football coach Doc Holliday said he thinks the only player who played a year ago is Jermaine Holmes, who started some games at linebacker last year, and he'll play there again.

A year ago, Devin Arrington was playing safety, and has played linebacker in the past. We have Evan McKelvey and Raheem Waiters who were both safeties a year ago.

"There's not a lot of experience there, but there's a lot of athleticism," Holliday said.

Holmes, a 5-foot-11, 245-pound sophomore from Valdosta, Ga., started in eight games for the Herd during the 2011 season.

He made 26 tackles with 2.5 tackles for loss during his freshman year, and had a season-high five stops against Virginia Tech on Sept. 24, 2011.



MARCUS CONSTANTINO | THE PARTHENON

Linebackers Raheem Waiters, Devin Arrington and Evan McKelvey prepare for the highly anticipated Marshall v. WVU rivalry game this weekend.

With a year of collegiate football play under their belts, sophomores McKelvey and Waiters have spent the offseason making the difficult transition from safety to linebacker. McKelvey made

three tackles in six games last year, in addition to his special teams duties and Waiters added six tackles in 11 appearances throughout the 2011 season.

Waiters said the transition

hasn't been easy, but he's excited about the switch-up.

"You hit a lot more than you do when you're a free safety," Waiters said. "I like it. It's a closed space, and I can move faster."

McKelvey, Waiters and junior Derek Mitchell will be aided by the senior leadership of Arrington, who has two years of experience as a linebacker.

"He has the position I'm in

down to a T," Waiters said. "So anything I'm having troubles with, I can go ask him and he will coach me up on the field."

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FOOTBALL EDITION



FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2012

| THE PARTHENON

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Marshall talented and deep at running back



BY WILL VANCE
THE PARTHENON

The Thundering Herd backfield has not truly put fear in defenses since the departure of Ahmad Bradshaw in 2006. This season, head coach Doc Holliday and his staff have put together a running backs corp that is sure to give defensive coordinators fits with their diverse range of talents.

"We've got power, we've got speed, we've got people who can go catch, go block" said senior running back Martin Ward, the elder statesman of the backfield, "We're so versatile its ridiculous."

Returning from the 2011 edition of the Herd are junior Tron Martinez and sophomore Travon Van. With Martinez being a downhill, physical runner and Van being an outside, speed runner,

the two complemented each other nicely, racking up 1200 yards and six touchdowns last season.

"We've grown up a lot as players," said Van, who ran for 551 yards and three touchdowns in his freshman year. "(We've been) studying film together, working out together, it should be a pretty good year."

The Herd also brings back red-shirt junior Essray Taliaferro, who played in all 13 games last season. Senior Martin Ward primarily plays on special teams.

Added to this already potent backfield are red-shirt freshmen Kevin Grooms and Stewart Butler, as well as true freshmen Remi Watson and Kevin Rodriguez. Watson and Rodriguez got a chance to show the coaching staff their talents during

spring practices while Van and Martinez were both recovering from surgery.

"Whatever play I get, I want to do my best and wherever they put me I'll help the team out," Rodriguez said.

After sitting out last season due to NCAA clearinghouse problems, both Grooms and Butler have impressed the Marshall coaching staff during training camp with their speed as well as their toughness.

"I knew they could run, the thing that surprised me a little bit about Butler and some of those other guys is that they're tough too," Holliday said. "They like to play and they'll stick it in there."

Holliday and his coaching staff plan to use some of the speedy running backs as wide receivers in certain situations, a role that Grooms

said he would embrace.

"As long as I'm on the field and help my team win, I'm with whatever".

Running backs coach Ja-juan Seider said that the accumulation of talent in the backfield over the past few years has been a "life changer".

"Every year we got better and better," Seider explains. "Tron, then we got Travon, we added Remi Watson... then you got Stew and Grooms. They bring a whole new dimension with their speed ... its fun."

Coach Seider's running backs corp figures to be an integral piece of the Herd's season, which kicks off Saturday at noon in Morgantown.

Will Vance can be contacted at vance162@marshall.edu.

FILE PHOTO
Sophomore Travon Van is just one of nine running backs listed on the Thundering Herd's 2012 roster.

Marshall gets ready for West Virginia University Mountaineers



LEFT: The Thundering Herd conducts team drills during a practice session on Wednesday.

RIGHT: Chris Jasperse, starting center for the Thundering Herd talks to teammates during a practice session on Wednesday.

PHOTOS BY MARCUS CONSTANTINO | THE PARTHENON

Secondary Continued from Page 5

teammate that he has grown close to.

"That's my best friend since we both came into Boston College as freshman. We've been roommates ever since, so when they said they wanted both of us, that was God working."

After, roughly, a year out of football, some fans might be concerned that the two are out of shape and might struggle to get indoctrinated into Marshall's scheme. However, Okoroha puts those fears to bed.

"We're still learning the defense but with the help of the coaches and with the help of everybody, everything will work out perfectly."

Herd fans can sleep soundly now, knowing that the secondary is in the capable and experienced hands of "Dom" and "Big O."

Aaron Payne can be contacted at payne122@marshall.edu.

Preview Continued from Page 5

win the Heisman," Holliday said. We know that we have a great challenge ahead of us."

Last season, Rakeem Cato went 15-21 for 115 yards without an interception in a 34-13 loss. Cato connected on a high percentage of his passes but the offense failed to record a touchdown, with the lone Thundering Herd touchdown coming off an 87-yard punt return by Andre Snipes-Booker.

Cato was limited in what he could do within the Herd offense in his first collegiate start, but Holliday said this go around he expects a higher level of production.

"With a full season under his belt he has got to be better," Holliday said. We got to be better offensively and I think we will be."

Senior wide receiver Andre Snipes-Booker and senior running back Martin Ward said that the team is ready to clash with the Mountaineers.

"We ready," Snipes-Booker said. "We focused, confident and we ready to go."

"We don't doubt them, they are a good team but we have the talent and we have to skills to go ahead and compete," Ward said. That's what we plan to do."

Cortez Carter, a middle linebacker for Marshall, is poised that if the team plays to their potential that the walk off of Mountaineer Field will be a pleasant one.

"We have to show up and play the game," Carter said. "If we show up like we know we can there should be no reason why we leave there unhappy."

Dominick LeGrande, a senior transfer from Boston College, and A.J. Leggett, a freshman from South Miami Senior high school, will get their first taste of the in-state rival game. LeGrande and Leggett recognize the magnitude of the game, but they are treating the West Virginia matchup just like any other opponent.

"Football is football so you still just got to go out there and play the game," Le-Grande said.

"It's going to be a big game but I'm going to take it like I am going to take any game," Leggett said.

For seven years, the Friends of Coal Bowl has brought excitement and interest to the state of West Virginia.

"For anybody to say they are not interested in the game, they're kidding themselves," Holliday said. Every year, that game is sold out. Our kids enjoy playing in it and I know our fans enjoy it."

On Saturday, the Thundering Herd will roam onto Mountaineer Field for a noon kickoff in front of packed house and a televised audience in an attempt to pick up Marshall's first ever victory over West Virginia.

Jeremy Johnson can be contacted at johnson783@live.marshall.edu.

Linebackers Continued from Page 5

Arrington had 64 tackles (four for a loss), 1.5 sacks, two forced fumbles and four pass breakups as linebacker in the 2010 season, and last year as a safety, he posted 77 tackles, two forced fumbles, two interceptions and four pass breakups.

Arrington said he has a unique understanding of the plays because he has ran them as a linebacker and a safety, and he hopes he can use that experience to help his younger teammates.

"I've played the (strongside) position of linebacker, I've played safety, and now I'm playing wheel, so I kind of know a lot about the defense, so I can help guys out," Arrington said.

Filling the shoes of former linebackers Tyson Gale, George Carpenter and Kellen Harris will be a tall task for the young squad.

The three veterans

combined for 229 tackles, 27 of which were for a loss of 94 combined yards.

Holliday said he is eager to see if his new crew of linebackers can put their months of practice to use and successfully fend off the West Virginia University Mountaineers.

"I'm anxious to watch those guys play," Holliday said. "I feel like we're more athletic there. There's a time that comes when you've been working all winter and summer practicing to where, as a coach, you just need to go out there and watch these guys play."

Marcus Constantino can be contacted at constantino2@marshall.edu.

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FOOTBALL EDITION



FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2012 | THE PARTHENON | MARSHALLPARTHENON.COM

Sound the horn, let the games begin

Preseason speculations look promising for the Thundering Herd

The time has arrived: time for all the silly preseason polls, preseason all-conference teams and stereotypical preseason banter to go away. The college football season is upon us and what a way for the 2012 edition of the Marshall Thundering Herd to start the season. It's ironic that the season starts with the final game in a series that seems destined to end (although the majority of West Virginians don't want it to). The Thundering Herd will travel to a more northern part of the state to take on the highly ranked (preseason) West Virginia University Mountaineers. This is a team that has all of its weapons back from a season that ended with a 70-33 beat down of Clemson in a BCS bowl game. Geno Smith should win



Dalton Hammonds
COLUMNIST

the Heisman Trophy, Doc Holliday's words not mine, and Dana Holgerson's hairline will continue to diminish with each pass that is attempted in his air-raid based offense.

But enough about the Mountaineers. Let's talk about this year's version of

the Marshall Thundering Herd. Rakeem Cato returns back under center with a year of experience under his belt and Aaron Dobson is back to hold down the receiving position. Fun fact about the season Dobson had last year: he had 12 receiving touchdowns on only 49 catches, which means that a touchdown was scored by him once every four receptions! Not-so-fun fact about the season Dobson had last year: he only had 49 receptions, which averages out to less than four catches per game.

The running game is more of a problematic area, especially if you look at the numbers put up last season. The leading rusher, Tron Martinez, is back; however, he will miss the WVU game and is expected to be evaluated on a week-to-week basis

following knee surgery in the offseason (Get well soon Tron). The bright side to this story is that Travon Van is a more than capable replacement and showed it in flashes late last season that he can be the game-breaking player he was brought in to be.

My eyes, however, will be on the Marshall defense Saturday and throughout the season. How do you replace a player that was not only the heart and soul of your defense, but also the face of your team and, in my opinion, the university last season? That will be the question the team will have to answer following the graduation of Vinny Curry. Curry had such a special season last year on so many levels that following it up will be a difficult task. Help has arrived on the wings of former

Boston College Eagle safeties Derrick LeGrande and Okechukwu Okohora (say that three times fast), along with former Penn State cornerback Derrick Thomas. Supplementing these three players with an already athletic defense should lead to an exciting defensive unit this year.

So what should we expect as far as wins and losses go from the Thundering Herd this year? West Virginia on the road is a tough way to open the season to say the least. Trips to Purdue out of conference and Southern Mississippi in conference are also difficult encounters. I think the Ohio game on September 15 will tell a lot about the direction this season will head. After the Bobcat beating the Herd took last year in Athens, I look for this year's "Battle for the Bell"

to go a little differently. In conference play, the only games Marshall will be the underdogs in, will probably be the against Southern Miss, Tulsa and Houston being affected by what hopefully will be raucous Joan C. Edwards Stadium crowds. The last game of the season at East Carolina will be a close game with its share of unforgettable moments. Just ask Byron Leftwich or Aaron Dobson.

By the time November 25 arrives, Marshall should be above .500 and have eight to nine wins. This would also put them in serious contention for a spot in the Conference USA championship game and a bowl game to follow. But what do I know? It's all just preseason speculation anyway.

Dalton Hammonds can be contacted at hammonds9@marshall.edu.

New season, reason for excitement

I was walking around campus the other day when I crushed some acorns with my foot.

Besides possibly ruining some squirrel's day, I didn't think much of it, until much in the same way that Peter Parker's spider-sense kicks in, I was suddenly aware of what that meant.

Acorns mean fall.
Fall means football.
Football is coming.

It's hard not to get excited about football, especially at this point in the year.

Nothing has happened yet on the field, so anything can happen.

It's not hard to convince yourself that this is the year the Thundering Herd will finally get the monkey off of its back by defeating the Mountaineers, of course that just means that all the WVU fans will change their attitude from "it's not a rivalry because you haven't beaten us" to "it's not a rivalry because you've only beaten us once."

It's the same line of thinking that leads me to believe that the Minnesota Vikings will win the Super



Tyler Kes
DIGITAL EDITOR

Bowl thanks to the play of Adrian Peterson and his amazing reconstructed knees.

Consequently, it's also the same kind of thinking that leads me to spend thousands of dollars on therapy getting over the way my heart is continually ripped out and stomped on every year, but hey, that's sports.

But that doesn't mean that I'm not super pumped for Marshall to open up the season.

Last year the Thundering Herd exceeded expectations and managed

7-6

record last season

“

...this year, it is difficult to imagine the team winning less than seven games.

> Tyler Kes

to win seven games, after most people didn't pick them to win more than three games.

This year, it's difficult to

imagine the team winning less than seven games.

Last year, the buzz about true freshman quarterback Rakeem Cato gave fans

something to talk about besides the legal troubles of various players, new and old.

But after a season of

controversy in which he led the team to some of its most surprising and exciting victories while also managing to lose his starting job for three games, you started to see less people wearing the "Fear the Beard" shirts around campus.

This season, Cato is more mature and assured of his starting spot, barring injury.

Last year, I was mildly excited about Marshall football, but this year, I'm playing "Thunderstruck" on repeat as I look into the cost of kelly green body paint.

Football season is here.

I hope you are ready.

Tyler Kes can be contacted at Kes@marshall.edu.

page designed and edited by EDEN ADKINS | adkins778@marshall.edu

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