



BACK-TO-BACK

Varsity football beats Bell Co. for second straight state title



Varsity football won the Kentucky 3A state championship for the second consecutive year, defeating the Bell County Bobcats by a final score of 41-6 in the championship game on Saturday afternoon at Kroger Field in Lexington.

Bell County's game plan to limit CAL's offensive possessions initially appeared successful in the early going.

The Bobcats received the game's opening kickoff and sustained a 13-minute drive consisting exclusively of short-to-medium-yardage

run plays.

On the 20th play of the drive, the Bobcats found the end zone for a touchdown, followed by a successful two-point conversion on another grinding run play.

CAL's offense finally gained possession of the ball with just over 11 minutes left in the second quarter, trailing 8-0.

The notoriously high-powered Centurion offense, led by senior quarterback Cole Hodge, proved unstoppable from the get go.

See 'V football' page 4



Verse of the week

"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

- Philippians 2:14-15



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Varsity boys basketball starts year 2-1

Down several players with football still active, the varsity boys basketball team began the 2023-24 season with a 2-1 week.

The Centurions opened the year with a 55-47 win in triple overtime over Fern Creek last Tuesday.

CAL traveled to North Laurel for the Legacy Nissan

Classic over the weekend and beat the host Jaguars 52-44 on Friday night.

The Centurions rounded out the week with a 59-58 defeat to Sayre on Saturday afternoon.

CAL has a pair of games on tap this weekend, beginning with a home date against Atherton on Monday at 7 p.m.

Varsity girls basketball splits first two games

Varsity girls basketball opened the 2023-24 season with a win and a loss this past week.

On Monday, the Centurions fell 83-59 at Meade County. Three Centurions scored in double figures, led by Ava Moore with 13 points.

CAL bounced back

with a lopsided 93-25 win against Fern Creek the following night. Brianna Wilkins poured in 35 points to lead the Centurions, which had six players finish with at least nine points.

The Centurions travel to face Assumption on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

8th boys basketball puts together 1-2 week

Eighth grade boys basketball won one of its three contests last week.

On Monday, the host Centurions rolled past Anchorage by a final score of 71-45.

With several members of the team playing up with the high school team the following night, CAL fell 54-36 in a battle to South Oldham.

CAL rounded out the week with a 55-40 defeat at East Oldham.

The Centurions' sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams will travel to Shelby County West on Tuesday before returning home to play Marnell C Moorman on Thursday.



Hodge named 3A state player of the year

Prior to the 3A football state finals, senior Cole Hodge was honored as the 3A player of the year.

Hodge finished the 2023 campaign with 4,104 yards and 57 passing touchdowns, both of which paced 3A by a wide margin.

The third-year starter also made an impact with his legs. He led the Centurions with 625 rushing yards and added 10 scores on the ground, good for second on the team.

He compiled a 40-3 record in his career as CAL's

signal caller, including a 29-1 mark with two state titles the past two seasons.

Hodge is committed to play NCAA Division I football at Eastern Carolina next season.



Can't make it to the game? Watch it online!

Mike Bautello has proudly broadcasted CAL football and basketball games for 15 years. Tune in each Friday night as your Centurions strive for victory!



For a complete listing of upcoming and past broadcasts, visit <https://livesportscaster.com/portal/user/2644/mike-batuello/>



Follow CAL athletics on Instagram @CALCenturions



'V football'

Continued from page 1

Hodge made two impressive throws to junior wideout Trey Cotton, putting the Centurions at the Bobcats' 18-yard line in short order to set up a scoring opportunity.

After a 17-yard run by Cotton put the Centurions down at the one-yard line, Hodge punched the ball in with a quarterback sneak on the fourth play of the drive to bring the Centurions within a tally at 8-7 after the extra point.

The Centurions adjusted their defensive scheme during Bell County's second drive of the game by introducing a fifth lineman to their defensive front. The tactical change provided additional support against Bobcats running back Thomas Daniel, who finished the year with a state record 3,817 rushing yards.

The move paid off immediately, as Bell County failed to convert on fourth down at the CAL 32-yard line to give the Centurions strong field position.

The CAL offense wasted no time and quickly responded with their second touchdown in six

offensive snaps to take a 14-8 lead they would never relinquish.

The score held into halftime, as Bell County's next possession lasted until the second quarter whistle.

CAL received the ball to start the second half and scored quickly on a 31-yard connection between Hodge and senior wideout Justin Ruffin to go up multiple scores.

After a fourth down penalty kept the next Bell County drive alive, the Bobcats reeled off a 36-yard touchdown run – their last points of the game – to cut the deficit to five points at 21-16 following another two-point conversion.

Junior Connor Hodge returned the ensuing kickoff into Bell County territory, and Cole Hodge netted his third rushing score of the game just under a minute later to make the score 28-16 late in the third quarter.

Bell County had the ball just outside the red zone in to start the fourth quarter following another fourth down conversion, but senior linebacker John Cobaugh stripped an upended Bobcat

ball carrier, scooped up the fumble and streaked 80 yards for his second defensive score of the postseason to put CAL ahead 34-16 with 11:43 to play.

After a pair of turnovers on downs by Bell County, Cole and Connor Hodge connected for one more touchdown in a CAL uniform to give the Centurions a 41-16 lead with 3:23 remaining. The Hodge brothers linked up for 23 scores in 2023.

Cole Hodge's exceptional postseason earned him state tournament MVP honors. In the championship game, the Eastern Carolina com-

mit completed 18-of-20 passes for 236 yards and two touchdowns and led the team in rushing with 38 yards and three touchdowns on six carries.

Connor Hodge led the team with eight catches for 84 yards and a touchdown, followed closely by junior wideout Trey Cotton, who tallied 82 yards on four catches. Senior wideout Justin Ruffin notched three receptions for 59 yards and a touchdown.

In what proved to be their most physically demanding battle of the season, the CAL defense demonstrated unwavering strength against a Bell County offense that was on the

field for most of the game.

Freshman line-backer Garyon Hobbs stood out with an impressive 16 tackles, followed by senior linebacker Connor Franklin with 12 tackles. Senior defensive lineman David Holloway, along with safeties Connor Franklin and Trey Cotton, recorded 10 total tackles each.

The 2023 state championship is the fourth in program history. It also marks the first time in program history that the Centurions have won back-to-back titles.

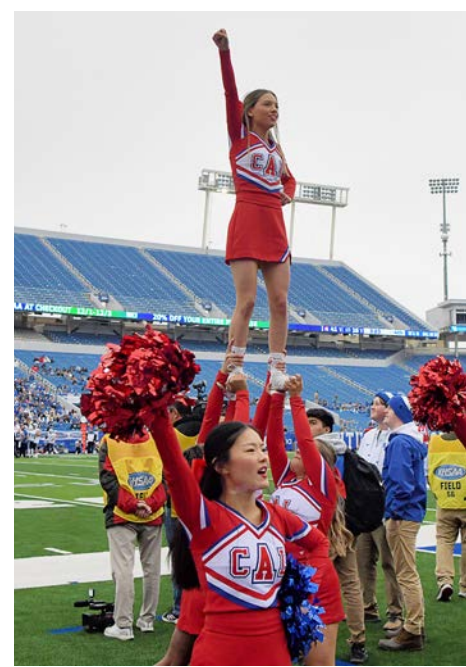
See pages 5-6 for more photos.



Gallery: Football state championship game action



Gallery: Football state championship crowd



This week in Centurion Nation - Dec. 4-9

Monday

Bowling

V vs. Seneca
4 p.m. / Ten Pin S&S

Boys Basketball

JV/V vs. Atherton
5:30/7 p.m. / CAL
FR at South Oldham
6 p.m. / SOHS

Tuesday

Boys Basketball

MS at Shelby County West
5:30/6:30/7:30 p.m. / SCWMS

Girls Basketball

FR/JV/V at Assumption
5:30/6:30/7:30 p.m. / AHS

Thursday

Boys Basketball

MS vs. Marnell C. Moorman
5:30/6:30/7:30 p.m. / CAL

Saturday

Boys Basketball

FR vs. Bullitt Central/Bullitt East
9/10 a.m. / CAL
V vs. Oldham County
12 p.m. / Henry County

Swimming

HS at Eastern Invite
1 p.m. / Ralph Wright Natatorium

Archery

MS at The Academy at Shawnee
3 p.m. / The Academy at Shawnee

Contacts

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Winter sports head coaches

High School Archery.....Alan Snyder

Middle School Archery.....Rhonda Hoyer

Varsity Boys Basketball.....Aaron Hill

Junior Varsity Boys Basketball.....Jake McAllister

Freshmen Boys Basketball.....Chris Burke

8th Grade Boys Basketball.....Gabe Graham

7th Grade Boys Basketball.....Nick Turner

6th Grade Boys Basketball.....Andrew Norton

High School Girls Basketball.....Byron Wilkins

8th Grade Girls Basketball.....Jana Bassett

7th Grade Girls Basketball.....Kyle Augustine

6th Grade Girls Basketball.....Adam Cline

High School Bowling.....Jeff Imlay

High School Cheerleading.....Amy Dreher

Middle School Cheerleading.....Kim Robinson

High School Swimming.....David Robinson

Middle School Swimming.....Kelly Cullop

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