

## DON'T SLEEP ON THE BULLDOGS

BY MATT MALATESTA



**THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR RECONSTRUCTION TO THE "DOG HOUSE" ON THE CAMPUS OF MAGNOLIA HIGH SCHOOL OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS.**

Under the direction of coach Sterling Doty, the Bulldogs have something to be proud of. After starting 0-5 under their new coach last season, Magnolia has gone 5-2 in their last seven games and were a blocked field-goal away from going to the playoffs.

This year the 'Dogs were 2-0 with wins over Kingwood Park and preseason ranked CE King to start the season.

"Our goals are to make the playoffs and compete for a district title," coach Doty said. "We've started off strong, but we have to keep our early success in perspective. We are just trying to be 1-0 every week."

Doty knew he had something cooking coming into the season as he returned eight starters on offense. The offensive line had experience and quarterback Jacob Frazier showed flashes as a sophomore. The emergence of sophomore running back AJ Johnson and receivers Reese Mason and

Michael Woods have given Magnolia some quick-strike weapons. Mason and Woods have made up for the production lost by star Cole McGowan, who suffered an ACL injury in the spring. He has hopes of getting back come the playoffs.

"When the new staff came in, it was a complete change in culture," senior tight end Ridge Mason said. "The intensity in the weight room and the attention to detail is the difference. The staff challenged us, but have still made it fun with things like new uniforms and names on the jerseys. It's small stuff but it's a reward for all the work we've put in. It's more of an atmosphere of a college football program than we were used to."

With the offense clicking, it's been the

defense that has turned heads in the community and to opponents. After getting crushed by CE King 59-3 a year ago, it was the defense who shut down TCU-commit Trayveon Williams and the high-powered Panther offense in Week 2.

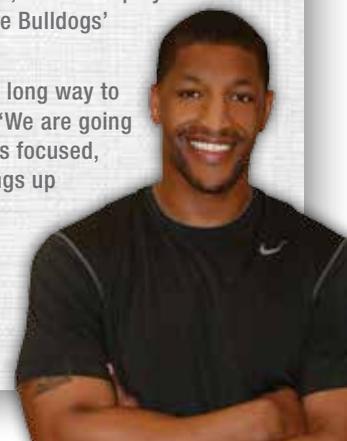
"Our front seven is pretty special and we have a relatively young secondary that has come up big for us so far," Doty said.

Anchoring the front is tackle Spencer Nigh, who has a few DI offers so far. Nigh is complemented by end Noah Blomberg, Jose Maravillo and Matthew Spicer, while Hayden Willis is the heat-seeking linebacker.

"I've worked with several of these athletes and have seen a huge change in them over the past year," The Woodlands-based trainer Derrick Jonkins said. "They are putting in extra work and have a passion to win. I'm happy to see their hard work is paying off with wins on the football field."

Jonkins has trained AJ Johnson, Reese and Ridge Mason, Cole McGowan and Drew Hale for several years, who have played huge roles in the Bulldogs' early success.

"We still have a long way to go," Doty said. "We are going to keep our guys focused, clean some things up that we see on film and keep improving. Our goals haven't changed."



FOLLOW HIS TIPS...

 [DERRICK.JONKINS](#)

 [@DJONKINSSPORTS](#)

 [@DJONKINSSPORTS](#)

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT DERRICK JONKINS, GO TO [DJONKINSSPORTS.COM](#) OR CALL 832.721.8311