

Russell Hedges: District 1-5A, 1-4A races look wide open

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If you're looking for a favorite in District 1-5A or District 1-4A football, the best thing to do might be to draw a name out of a hat.

District play begins tonight, and both districts look wide open.

Five of the six teams in District 1-5A have winning records through the first half of the regular season.

Two of them — the Haughton Buccaneers and the Parkway Panthers — are undefeated. But neither have played what could be described as a strong schedule.

Airline, generally considered the favorite going into the season, is coming off its first loss of the season, but it came against the defending Class 4A state champion Neville Tigers on the road. Byrd lost 17 starters off last year's championship team, but the Yellow Jackets have won three straight since losing to defending state champion West Monroe in their opener.

Tonight's most intriguing opener is at Haughton where the Bucs face the Yellow Jackets.

District 1-4A looks wide open for a different reason than 1-5A. All six teams had their issues through the season's first half.

Benton went through a tough three-game stretch but may have righted the ship with a win over Southwood last week.

Huntington (3-2), Benton's opponent tonight, has definitely improved from last season. The Raiders appear on the upswing after winning only two games last season.

Fair Park and Minden, which shared the district title last season, battled Thursday night with the Indians coming out on top 14-6. It was the first win of the season for the Indians. Minden is 0-6.

Woodlawn defeated Northwood 15-12 in another 1-4A opener Thursday night. It was Woodlawn's first win of the season. Northwood lost for the second straight week after a 4-0 start.

So who's the favorite in District 1-4A? Your guess is as good as mine.