

All five state football champions had perfect records in 2012 season

Written by Jerry Byrd

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In the Louisiana High School Athletic Association, all a football team had to do to win a state championship in the 2012 season was win every game.

All five champs had perfect records, but only one of them (Class A Ouachita Christian of Monroe) came from North Louisiana. Ouachita Christian scored a 20-8 victory over another North Louisiana team, Haynesville, in the Superdome.

The only other North Louisiana teams that reached the Dome came up short in title games. Evangel fell to John Curtis 35-13 in Class 2A and Neville bowed to Edna Karr 29-22 in Class 4A.

So another season has come and gone, and Bossier Parish is still waiting for its first state champion since the LHSAA moved title games to the Dome in 1981.

The last state champion from Bossier Parish was the 1977 Haughton Bucs, who wrapped up a 13-1 season with a 21-0 victory over Vandebilt Catholic in the title game at Houma.

"It's been a long time coming," Haughton coach Bobby Ray McHalfey said after that victory. Haughton had reached the playoffs in four of the previous seven years, but that was the Bucs' first (and only) state championship.

All-Staters on that Haughton team were defensive end David Grappe, linebacker Bobby Stroger, defensive back Everett Williams and offensive guard David Pope. The 1977 Bucs' only loss was a 22-20 overtime decision to North Caddo that cost them the district championship, but they rolled past four playoff opponents that were ranked among the top six in the state.

Other than North Caddo, the only team that scored three touchdowns against Haughton in the 1977 season was Lutcher, in a 21-20 semifinal playoff loss to the Bucs.

The first two Bossier Parish teams that won state football championships were Bossier High teams in the 1942 and 1948 seasons.

The 1942 Bearkats had a couple of All-Staters: halfback Eugene "Red" Knight and tackle Camille Spataro. Knight later starred at LSU. Ben Cameron was the coach of that 12-0 team, which won the title with a 27-12 victory over DeQuincy. The 1948 champs, coached by Loy Camp, had three All-Staters: halfback Gene Yarbrough, fullback Searle Walton and end Tommy Woodall. That team wrapped up a 9-2-1 season with a 21-0 victory over Reserve, led by All-Stater Leroy Labat, in the championship game.

The 2012 season was just another state championship for John Curtis, which extended its record total of titles with a 35-13 victory over Evangel in the Class 2A title game. The New Orleans private school won its first state title in 1975, after failing to qualify for the state playoffs in its first seven football seasons. Evangel didn't win its first championship until 1993.

Coach J.T. Curtis, Jr. of John Curtis moved to the top of the list of Louisiana's winningest high school football coaches long ago, while Evangel wins have been divided between Dennis Dunn and Phillip Deas. Neither coached long enough to rank among the state's top five.

All-State high school players aren't necessarily the state's top college prospects at quarterback, running back or any other position. In 1980, Southwood's Stan Humphries was the top quarterback prospect, but Timmy Byrd of East St. John led his team to the state championship and won the quarterback position on the All-State team.

Until 1928, all Louisiana high schools competed in the same division and All-State teams consisted of only 11 players. The schools were later divided into classifications, starting with two classes and moving on to five. Since 1971, offensive and defensive All-State teams have been selected in all classifications.

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