

NOTEBOOK

Scroggins' gamble pays off with title

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Unemployed for a few days in March, Ty Scroggins now can call himself a state champion.

Scroggins left his job at Doss to pursue the position of head football coach at Central High School. The gamble paid off last night as he led the Yellowjackets to a 27-17 victory over Belfry in the Class 3-A championship game at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium.

Scroggins, a former player at the University of Louisville, went 22-30 in four seasons at Doss and didn't have his contract renewed in March when he decided to pursue the Central job. Steve Serotte resigned as Central's head coach in February.

"I didn't have a job," Scroggins said. "My old boss (at Doss) said that if I was thinking about leaving that I needed to resign. I told him I wouldn't resign, so they didn't renew my contract. It was a gamble."

Central athletic director Marlon Miller said he talked with Scroggins before he left Doss but couldn't guarantee the coach he would get the job.

"I told him we'd interview and that the best candidate would get the job," said Miller, who credited Serotte for not "hanging around another year" when he had become burned out.

"I couldn't make (Scroggins) any promises. After the interview, I was totally convinced he could come in and do this."

Some Central fans became concerned when the team started 0-2 — losing to Manual and Male — but Scroggins stayed true to his plan of playing a tough schedule and get-



By Sam Upshaw Jr., The Courier-Journal

Central coach Ty Scroggins, who hugged QB Leland Banks after the championship win, left Doss in March to pursue the Central job.

ting ready for the playoffs.

The Yellowjackets finished the regular season 5-5, losing their final two games to St. Xavier and Highlands, but they peaked in the past five weeks.

"I heard people from (Doss) saying he's a great coach, and at first I didn't believe it," Central running back Darrell Taylor said. "Now I believe it 100 percent."

And Scroggins is 100 percent sure he made the right move.

"It paid off," Scroggins said. "I was told by some people that this was a lateral move, but obviously it's not. It's a jump up."

Central ends drought

Central did something not many Jefferson County Public Schools have been able to do

— make a state final.

Excluding power Male, the Yellowjackets became only the third JCPS team since 1988 to make a title game.

Waggener was in the 3-A title game in 1998 but lost 56-7 to Fort Thomas Highlands. Manual had previously lost 28-0 to Trinity in the 1988 4-A final.

The last JCPS school other than Male to win a title was Butler in 1979.

Male has won three titles and been to five championship games since '93.

A perfect '10'

Beechwood scored a 38-35 victory over Lexington Christian in the Class A game to grab the school's 10th overall state title.

The Tigers are now tied

with Danville for fourth all-time behind Trinity, Fort Thomas Highlands and St. Xavier.

Beechwood coach Noel Rash said after the victory he thought about the two coaches that helped build the program. Bernie Barre won the school's first title in 1984, and Mike Yeagle won eight, including seven in nine years starting in '91.

"I think about Bernie and Mike, because I'm living off some of the things they were able to accomplish," Rash said. "We've got some guys on the field who are at Beechwood because of what they built. Hopefully we can continue that."

Names to remember

The state championships normally produce a few names to remember for the future, and yesterday's first game was no different.

The Class A game showcased two of the best sophomores in the state, and both play for Lexington Christian.

Quarterback Lucas Witt (6 feet 2, 175 pounds) and running back Domonique Hayden (5-8, 220 pounds) had solid games to end fabulous years for the Eagles.

Whitt completed 27 of 48 passes for 290 yards and two touchdowns. He did throw three interceptions but also had two touchdown passes. Hayden ran 21 times for 49 yards and three TDs and caught three passes for 39 yards.

On the season, Witt threw for 2,940 yards and 30 TDs, and Hayden ran for 1,356 and 33 scores.

"They're going to be around for a few years," Rash said of the Eagles.

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How the Yellowjackets earned their wings

Central's road to glory a long one

By Jason Frakes
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The Courier-Journal

From "sacrificial lambs" to state champions.

Such is the story of Central High School, which won its first Kentucky High School Athletic Association football championship this season after 52 years of trying.

Times are good for the downtown school — located

at the corner of Chestnut and 11th streets — which beat Belfry 27-17 for the Class 3-A title on Dec. 7.

Mayor Jerry Abramson was on hand last week for a title celebration. Administrators talk of how the entire student body feels a sense of accomplishment. Ty Scrogins is being hailed after becoming the first African-American coach to lead a team to a KHSAA football crown.

Central has become Exhibit A for how the state's switch from four to six classes for football provided opportunities for more schools

to be successful.

Clint Lovely remembers when times weren't so good. The 1962 Central graduate coached 14 seasons at the school (1975-88) and compiled a record that can only be described as dismal: 21 wins, 121 losses.

The lowest of the lows? How about 1981, when the Yellowjackets went 1-9 and were outscored 382-39? The one "victory" actually was a 46-6 loss to Manual, which later had to forfeit the game for using an ineligible player.

"We were undersized, we

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By Sam Uoshaw Jr., The Courier-Journal

The Class 3-A trophy, hoisted by Darrell Taylor last weekend, represented Central's first state title in 52 years of football.

TY SCROGGINS

School: Central
Record: 29-14 entering fourth year
Other coaching jobs: Assistant coach at Iroquois; went 22-30 as head coach at Doss from 2002-06
High school education: Fairdale (1990)
College education: Louisville
Age: 38

Central's Scroggins knows success



No current African-American high school football coach in Kentucky has enjoyed more success than Central's Ty Scroggins.

In 2007, he became the first black football coach to lead a team to a Kentucky High School Athletic Association state title as the Yellowjackets beat Belfry 27-17 in the Class 3-A final. Central repeated as the 3-A champion in 2008.

"Ty has opened a lot of eyes," Doss coach LaKunta Farmer said. "There's a lot of doubt out there, and he has kicked the door wide open on that doubt."

Scroggins coached five seasons at Doss before getting the Central job in 2007. That year he became just the second black football coach in Kentucky to lead a team to a KHSAA state final, joining Harrodsburg's Alvis Johnson (1988, 1996, 1997).

"I don't look at myself as a role model or a pioneer," Scroggins said. "I'm just a football coach, a guy who loves football and wanted to give back."

Scroggins isn't the only African-American coach in Kentucky to enjoy big-time success in recent years. Steve Lovelace led Christian County to a Class 5-A runner-up finish in 2008 and became the first African American to be named The Courier-Journal's Kentucky Coach of the Year. Randy Wyatt led Paducah Tilghman to the Class 3-A championship last year.

"I think the administrators are realizing that there are a lot of qualified African Americans that can coach this game — not just at the assistant level but at the head-coaching level," Scroggins said. "There are a lot of guys who just want to be recognized as 'Coach,' regardless of skin color."

CLASS 3-A CHAMPIONSHIP

CENTRAL BELFRY

RIGHT OUT OF CENTRAL CASTING



Central High players rejoice after beating Belfry 12-6 in overtime in the Class 3-A title game Friday in Bowling Green. JOE IMEL/AP

Unlikely heroes script Yellowjackets' overtime win

By Jason Frakes | jfrakes@courier-journal.com | The Courier-Journal

Sydney Tedford was the backup quarterback for the first 12 games of the year. Marcel Malone had 11 catches on the season and was in his coach's doghouse after a subpar performance last week.

On Friday night Tedford and Malone — two forgettable players most of the season — connected on a play that Central High School football fans will long remember.

Tedford's 15-yard touchdown pass to Malone gave the Yellowjackets a 12-6 overtime victory over Belfry in the Class 3-A

championship game before 7,116 fans at Houchens Industries/L.T. Smith Stadium.

It marked Central's third straight state title and its fifth in six years. Coach Ty Scroggins called it the best team in his six seasons at the school.

"It's the best record (13-2) we've had since we've been here, and we don't have any big-name individuals," Scroggins said. "We have guys who want to be part of Central football and do things to win football games."

Four of the Yellowjackets' five championship victories have

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CLASS A FINAL | CLASS 2-A FINAL | CLASS 4-A FINAL | CLASS 5-A FINAL | CLASS 6-A FINAL

3-A: Central beats Belfry again for title, this time with Hollywood ending

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come against Belfry, including a 15-14 win last year after Tajh Miliken hit Cornelius Bolden for a go-ahead touchdown pass with 2:01 left in the game.

"It was a heck of a football game," said Belfry's Philip Haywood, the state's all-time winningest coach with 362 victories. "I almost told (Scroggins) walking out there for overtime, 'Hey, you just want to call this one?' But, no, you play to win. I feel for our kids. They battled all year to get back here."

Senior Deris Cox rushed for 102 yards on 17 carries and gave Central a 6-0 lead on a 28-yard touchdown run with 1:47 left in the first quarter.

Sani Warren's 13-yard TD pass to Tony Messer tied it at 6 with 5:53 left in the second quarter, but Keilan Carr missed the point-after kick.

After a scoreless second half, Belfry had the ball to start overtime. On third and goal at the 5-yard line, Warren went left on an option play. His toss to running back Josh Robinson hit the



Central running back Deris Cox leaves Belfry's Cameron Johnson behind during a 28-yard scoring run in the first quarter.

ground, and Robinson eventually was pushed out of bounds for an 11-yard loss. Warren's pass on fourth and 16 was incomplete.

Central's overtime possession began with a 5-yard loss by Cox. On second down, Tedford saw the Belfry defense shift toward standout receiver Devonte Yel-

der on the left side.

"They left (Malone) one-on-one," Tedford said. "He's a great player, and I knew he was going to go get the ball."

Malone ran a slant route on the right side, slipped inside the Belfry cornerback and made the catch to seal the victory. Scrog-

gins said Malone was "taken out of the playbook" this week after failing to make a big catch in last week's semifinal victory over Monroe County.

"We told him, 'We can't throw you the ball in crucial times because you're going to drop it,'" Scroggins said. "It just so happens he caught this one. He has the best hands on the team."

The touchdown reception was Malone's second of the season and his first catch of the game.

"Greatest moment of my life," Malone said. "I've never had a feeling like this before."

Tedford was the backup quarterback all season before senior The Shawn Gibbs suffered a concussion during the second-round playoff victory over Wayne County that limited his play in the final two playoff games.

"The whole season I felt like I was never going to get in," Tedford said. "I thought I was going to have to wait my turn until my senior year and make something out of one year. I got my chance."

Austin Hatfield rushed for 105 yards on 19 carries to lead a Belfry team that won the battle for

yardage (221-175) and time of possession (27:39-20:21).

But once again it was Central earning the championship trophy.

"It means something special for this senior group because they're going out with a ring," Scroggins said. "We always talk about, 'Don't be that one group not to win it.' That's our whole motto."

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Central 12, Belfry 6, OT		
	Q 1	Q 2
Belfry	0	6
Central	6	0
Final	6	12

Central - Cox 28 run back blocked, 1:47; Belfry - Messer 13 pass from Warren (kick blocked), 5:53; Central - Malone 19 yards from Belfry, A - 7:16.

	R	C
First downs	14	8
Rushing yards	52-163	31-142
Passing yards	58	33
Comp-att-Pct	4-9-40	3-6-50
Interceptions	0	14
Fumbles lost	3-36.7	3-27.7
Penalties	4-2	3-0
Time of possession	6:35	5:40
OT	27:39	20:21

PASSING—Belfry, Hatfield 19-375, Carr 14-406, Taylor 4-20, Robinson 4-17, Warren 11-27, Central, Cox 17-102, Beason 4-17, Powell 4-17, Gibbs 4-0, Hatfield 1-17, Warren 1-17, Carr 23, Smith 0-2.

RUSHING—Belfry, Warren 4-5-0-58; Central, Hatfield 3-7-0-33, Gibbs 14-0-0.

RECEIVING—Belfry, Messer 2-22, Robinson 1-25, Hatfield 1-11; Central, Yelder 2-18, Malone 1-15.