

Keonte Coffie: The New Warrior of Oviedo High

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The last time Oviedo High School (OHS) saw a running back like Keonte Coffie was four years ago when Jurell “Rat” Green, Class of ’15, set the school record amassing 4,782 rushing yards during his career as a Lion.

With 3,133 yards under his belt, Keonte (pronounced Chianti) enters his senior year with a shot at knocking off the reigning champ. Averaging 1,566 yards on the ground the past two years, he needs to rush for 1,650 yards his senior season to earn the OHS yardage crown. It makes one wonder how many yards Keonte would have accumulated carrying the ball if an injury didn’t forced him to sit out much of his freshman year after being called up to varsity.

“I am excited about it,” says Keonte concerning his run for the record. “I have been working hard and knowing I am close, I want to achieve it.”

“He has had some incredible games,” says Head Coach Matt Dixon. “His sophomore year, he ran 353 against Hagerty High, one short of the Oviedo single-game rushing record set by Leon Lowman in 1991. We looked at it many times to be sure he really came up short.”

2018 Seminole County Offensive Player of the Year

Keonte’s accolades run deep. Among his accomplishments, the star running back was named the 2018 Seminole County Offensive Player of the Year and 2018 Orlando Touchdown Club Player of the Year. Keonte was named to All-Conference, All District and All-State teams for the second consecutive year.

Coach Dixon refers to Keonte as the heart and soul of the Lions.

“He is a hard worker in the weight room and on the field,” says Coach Dixon. “He is really an incredible young man. Players look to him during drills. He sets the example. In football, you get a few warriors who will always give you their best. Keonte is a warrior.”

“I have always known I was a good player, but not this big,” says the humble running back, who is also on the track team this year.

Keonte also does a yeomen's job of receiving out in the flat. He has one receiving touchdown in his career and one passing touchdown. That occurred against University last year after both dressed quarterbacks were lost for the game.

"He was in there just to run the ball, but [Running Back Coach Andrew] Dennis told him if he saw a bubble, take it. And he did."

More telling, the four-year varsity letterman fumbled the ball only once in his high school career. Coach Dennis says holding on to the ball is a "real point of emphasis" with Keonte.

"Keonte makes my job easy," says Coach Dennis. "He leads by example."

A Family Affair

Keonte will be wearing number 5 on his back this year, the number his father wore when he played football at Oviedo High. He wore it briefly during his freshman tenure, but the number was already taken during his sophomore and junior years. He chose to wear numbers 22 and 2 respectively. Whatever the number, Keonte just likes being out on the field.

"I like hearing my mom screaming my name in the crowd," he smiles. "I like being part of a team, and all of the fun and excitement under the lights."

The passion for football apparently runs in the family genes. Not only did his dad play for Oviedo, his cousin Jay Henry (DE/HB) will finish out his OHS career this year as well. Keonte's younger brother Xavier (DL) and cousin DJ Scott (RB) will begin their careers on the Lion's freshman team this fall.

The outlook for Keonte's senior year looks to be just as bright as his previous seasons. In the annual spring game against Winter Springs last month, the 5'10", 185 pound running back ran for 237 yards and scored two touchdowns in only three quarters of work.

Without doubt, all eyes will be on Keonte Coffie this fall as he not only pursues the OHS yardage record, but also as scouts begin to take a closer look at the Oviedo backfield warrior. While Blake Bortles, class of '10, may be the most famous and successful football player to emerge from OHS, nine years later, we could be witnessing a new star right before our eyes.

Oviedo High's first regular season game is a conference match-up at home vs. the Winter Springs Bears on August 23.