

September 22, 2022

By Dennis Garcia
SportsTone.net

TRINITY - In years past, there wasn't a whole lot to cheer about when the Trinity Bulldogs varsity football team had the ball. Points were few and far between.

But led by a talented group of juniors and a group of senior leaders, the offensive numbers have risen and risen greatly this season.

The Bulldogs, under third-year head coach Marlon Morris who took over the program after an 0-11 finish in 2019, are on a pace to score more points than they have registered in many seasons.

"We had a football class last spring and our core group of guys have spent some time together," Morris said. "We have a junior-dominated team who made it to the middle school championship game undefeated and were undefeated on the jayvee team in ninth grade. We have a small senior class, but they are doing a good job leading."

The Bulldogs opened this season with a high-powered attack, topping Chatham Central 52-0 and Forbush 45-21. East Davidson slowed THS down for just one week, posting a 42-13 victory before the Bulldogs rebounded in a big way, rolling past Jordan-Matthews 60-7 and earning a thrilling 18-13 victory over Carrboro, scoring two touchdowns in the final quarter, including one at the final buzzer for the win.

"One of my assistant coaches who has been here 12 years said in the last 12 years, we would have been on the other side," Morris said of the last-second win. "After we scored that first touchdown in the fourth quarter, you could see the energy change on our sideline."

That offensive energy has certainly changed. This season, the Bulldogs have scored 188 points in their first five games, an average of 37.6 points per contest. Last season, THS scored a combined total of 219 points in 10 games and the season before in the shortened COVID season, the Bulldogs managed just 27 points in five games. In the 2019 campaign, the Bulldogs were outscored 447-39 meaning in a 16-game span over two seasons, THS was outscored by an average of 39.2-2.4.

My, how things have changed.

"We have a lot of guys who touch the ball," Morris said, which is very important since senior Dylan Hodges broke his collarbone early this season. "We have a lot of guys who can get you 30, 40 yards on three or four carries. Everyone wants to look at our quarterback and say we have to stop him and they do. But we have other players who are doing a great job as well."



That quarterback is junior Dominic Payne. Payne gives the Bulldogs a definite two-way threat as he can run and throw. Bo Gibson, Chance Grogan, Adrian Goodwin and Brandon Campbell have had strong offensive seasons and Daniel Torreblanca, Wesley Mathai, Joey Smith and Jaiveon Holmes are among the leaders on defense.

This year marks the first time since 2018 the Bulldogs are off to a 4-1 start. THS won its first four games that season, but won just once the rest of the way. Morris and the Bulldogs are working hard to assure that doesn't happen in 2022.

"Our objective is to win the conference championship and we are going to find out a lot about ourselves in that game," Morris said of the Bulldogs' league opener, a Sept. 30 date with Providence Grove. "We've made it clear to them we need to focus on what's ahead of us. They know they are better. They trust one another more. We are going in the right direction."

There's no doubt about that.