

October 15, 2025

By Dennis Garcia

SportsTone.net

CLIMAX - When Providence Grove left the old Piedmont Athletic Conference for the new Central Carolina Conference, one of the main reasons was to give the Patriots the opportunity to compete for league championships.

Well, the football team is competing for a league championship.

Not having to worry about Eastern Randolph or Randleman in the new realignment, the Patriots are primed to capture their first football conference title in school history. There's still plenty of work to do, beginning with Friday night's home game with East Davidson, but that elusive first title is well within the Patriots' grasp.

"It begins with a different mindset," said first-year head coach Cody Moran. "Senior leadership, I say it all the time and it's huge on our team. It's about what we're doing and not who we're playing. If we play up to our standard of football, it works."

The Patriots are 2-0 in the CCC and 5-2 overall. Thomasville (3-4 overall), East Davidson (1-6), West Davidson (4-3) and Wheatmore (1-6) are all 1-1 in league play with Trinity (1-6 overall) 0-2. PG already owns league victories over West Davidson and Trinity, meaning ED, Wheatmore and Thomasville still await.

A big part of the Patriots' success has been the team's depth.



*Patriots head coach Cody Moran.*

"We normally have to have everyone play both ways, but this year we only have four guys playing both ways," Moran said. "These guys have been hungry. They want to be the first team to put that banner on the wall."

A gigantic step toward that goal came in the form of a 23-22 win over West Davidson in the league opener two weeks ago. The Patriots trailed the Green Dragons 16-14 late in the game when West Davidson added what appeared to be an insurance score to make it 22-14. The Green Dragons went for the two-point conversion and failed.

It took PG three plays to score to make it 22-20, but the Patriots were stopped on their two-point conversion.

However, PG recovered the onside kick and kicker Carson Jones, one of the top-rated kickers in the country, nailed a

41-yarder with 24 seconds to play. A desperate Hail Mary pass by West Davidson was picked off by Holden Swift and the Pats celebrated a thrilling victory.

"When I sent him out there, there wasn't a coach or player who said are you sure?" Moran said. "There wasn't a coach or a player who thought he wouldn't get it. He drilled a 41 yarder."

PG followed that last week with a 56-6 win over Trinity.

"You look at the adversity this team has faced with four coaches in four years." Moran said.

"They are having success, but they know how fragile it is. Trinity is just one year removed from beating Randleman."

Trinity's 21-19 win over Randleman last Oct. 25 is considered one of the biggest upsets in Randolph County football history. Moran said he has stressed to his team any team can beat any team on a particular night.

Unselfishness has also been a big key. Led by senior quarterback Jackson Lawver, who is asked to run the ball a great deal, running mates Nick Straughn, Andrew Thomas and Jacob Flinchum are all very capable. Heading into Friday night's contest with East Davidson, Lawver has carried the ball 68 times for 368 yards, a 5.3 yards-per carry average and two touchdowns; Straughn has carried it 56 times for 308 yards, a 5.5 yards-per-carry average and two touchdowns; Thomas has 50 carries for 224 yards, a 4.5 average and three scores; while Flinchum totals 28 carries for 194 yards, a 6.9 average with four touchdowns.

"The thing about this group is you never have to worry about the other ones getting upset," Moran said. "They are genuinely happy when we score and they don't care who it is. They play so unselfishly."

Conner Haithcock, Chase Collins and Flinchum lead a defense that recorded consecutive shutout wins over Morehead and Southwestern Randolph earlier this season.

"When you sit down at the beginning of the year, one of the goals is to be conference champion," Moran said. "We've had such great support from our community and when you can put a good product on the field, it gives them something to see on Friday nights."

There's been plenty to see with this Providence Grove team on Friday nights.



*Junior running back Nick Straughn.*