

# Greenfield-Northwestern has hopes for strong season

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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**GREENFIELD** - Despite their winning tradition, the **Greenfield-Northwestern Tigers** have had a tendency to fly under the radar to start the last couple of seasons. Head coach Joe Pembroke doesn't care and actually prefers it that way and why wouldn't he? The Tigers have made the playoff party for the past two seasons.

"We don't mind not being right out there in front wanting the bulls-eye on our chest right out of the gate," Pembroke said.

While their Greene County rivals Carrollton and North Greene enjoyed long seasons and publicity, Greenfield quietly put together a decent 7-3 campaign and almost sneaked past Camp Point Central only losing to the eventual semifinalists 21-8. This season the Tigers will look to reload and rally around a squad that will be featuring mostly juniors and sophomores. “Some guys are going to have to step up into the fold, fill some roles, and create depth. So far I like the way we have been able to execute and the team chemistry we’ve shown... I’m very pleased how we’ve gotten off to a good start,” Pembroke said.

Last year the Tigers gave up 18.5 points per game and return the majority of their linebackers, who Pembroke says they’ll be the leaders on defense and will build around on defense. Those include Keith Elliot, Jordan Williams, Taegen Grigsby, and Blane Bilbruck. “We don’t have as much athleticism across the board that we’ve been blessed with the last couple of years, but we do return some very key cog guys and hopefully we’ll give people fits early on in the season,” Pembroke said.

Greenfield had to say goodbye to quarterback Austin Plogger, who passed for 1,200 yards with 15 touchdowns and rushed for 447 yards as well last season.

“Losing Austin is certainly going to hurt,” Pembroke said. “He was a special athlete and dynamic players like him don’t come through very often.”

Cole Arnett, who took snaps on the JV team last season, and a couple other sophomores have been in the running for the quarterback position.

The area where Pembroke is hoping his team will do damage on offense is the ground attack. Greenfield returns their leading rusher, senior Taegan Grigsby, who rushed for 711 yards on 110 carries, and found the end-zone 10 times last season. Up next in the backfield is senior Jordan Williams, who only carried the ball 51 times and ran for 187 yards, but will get much more action.

“They’ve got the most experience back there and will probably be the strength of our team,” Pembroke said. “We’ll have to create some more depth, but certainly a lot of things we do will be built around those senior backs.”

Since he’s succeeded the historic Dan Bowman at Greenfield, Pembroke has had a winning season in all of his three years (now entering fourth) with the Tigers. However in 2012 he didn’t get the Tigers into the playoffs, even though they had a 5-4 record.

“We’ve got great tradition here and that’s what the kids want to be able to achieve,” Pembroke said. That’s way down the road for us and certainly if we’re fortunate enough

to qualify we want to build on what we've created the past couple of years... And take it a step farther."