

PREP FOOTBALL WEEK 3

Ties bind Cordova, Houston

By COLIN DONOHUE
Special to The Commercial Appeal

If Cordova football coach John Dowtin steps outside and squints hard enough, he just may be able to glimpse tonight's opponent, Houston High School, in the distance.

Dowtin calls the two backyard rivals, and while short tracks of asphalt divide the schools, his connection to Houston is closer than the eight miles of separation.

Dowtin counts several friend and family ties at Houston,

"We have a family reunion this summer, so it would be nice to wear my Cordova stuff and smile."

JOHN DOWTIN
Cordova coach

among them two cousins — Hunter Kitchens, who plays outside linebacker, and his mother, a teacher.

"We have a family reunion this summer, so it would be nice to wear my Cordova stuff and smile," Dowtin said.

Dowtin's most prominent Houston connection, however, is head coach Tim Haney, who Dowtin played for in high school.

"(Haney's) a large part of the reason I wanted to be a football coach," Dowtin said. "I want to do well because I want him to look at our program and say, 'Coach Dowtin's doing a good job.' It means a lot to me to earn his respect as a coach."

Cordova (1-1) will have to buck a historical trend, though, if it hopes to make any headway against Houston (2-0) tonight at home. The Wolfpack hasn't beaten the Mustangs since 2000.

"We want respect from Houston," Dowtin said. "We don't want them to think, 'Oh, it's Cordova. We beat you all the time.'"

The Wolfpack will continue to employ its running back by committee scheme early in the game. If a lead runner establishes himself early, though, Dowtin said he'll receive the bulk of carries, as happened last week when Rashard Shaw torched Bartlett in a 28-14 win.

Houston, meanwhile, beat Collierville last week despite not attempting one pass. The Mustangs, instead, relied on a 95-yard kickoff return and a 65-yard touchdown run.

"That's not how we want to do it, but you just kind of go with it," Haney said. "We were looking at the stats and said, 'Wow, we didn't have any passes.'"

Will Haney mirror a similar game plan against a Cordova defense that allowed only 77 total yards last week?

"I wouldn't think so," he said. "It just turned out like that."



Nikki Boertman/The Commercial Appeal

Tromarcus Toney began this season as a backup. But he got his chance in the first game of the year and hasn't looked back. "He's still maturing every game," said Melrose coach Hubbard Alexander.

Cool customer

Golden Wildcat quarterback Toney's abilities, demeanor reminiscent of former standout

By JASON SMITH
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The similarities between the two are uncanny, though Melrose quarterback Tromarcus Toney hasn't exactly patterned his game after former Golden Wildcat standout Antonio Heffner.

Fact is, Toney, a sophomore, wasn't around during Heffner's halcyon days at Melrose, when the former South Carolina signee was rated among the top pro-style quarterback prospects in the nation by most recruiting services.

But Toney has indeed heard the comparisons.

"They say we look alike, we play alike and we have the same personality. I guess that's why they compare us," said Toney, who at 6-1, 175 pounds, already resembles the 6-2, 180-pound frame Heffner had as a senior in 2003.

There's also Toney's calm, nonchalant attitude that reminds so many of Heffner, who stood out with his awareness and poise as a pocket passer.

"I think (Toney's) biggest strength is his composure and the way he manages the team. He's always very under control," first-year Melrose coach Hubbard Alexander said.

Alexander substituted Toney for an ineffective Courtney Madison in Melrose's

season-opening loss to Memphis University School, and has since been convinced of the sophomore's potential at the position.

Madison, meanwhile, transferred to Munford, leaving the job firmly in Toney's hands.

"I honestly didn't know (before the MUS game) what to expect from him, but once I saw him, after a couple of series, I could tell he was maturing," Alexander said. "He's still maturing every game, but right now he's got a pretty decent arm and he's going to get stronger."

Toney — who got his feet wet at quarterback as a freshman last season before former Melrose coach Chester Flowers Jr. elected to go with the now departed Monte Wilson — finished 15-of-21 for 161 yards, a touchdown and an interception in the loss to top-ranked MUS, nearly leading the Golden Wildcats (now 2-1 and ranked No. 2 in The Dandy Dozen) to a come-from-behind victory.

A week later at Whitehaven, Toney finished 13-of-24 for 142 yards and a touchdown, and booted the 27-yard, game-winning field goal in a three-point victory over the Tigers.

Ironically enough, Heffner doubled as the team's kicker as well during his time at Melrose.

"(Alexander) just told me to keep a

straight head, to never get the big head and to stay calm," said Toney, who burned East last week with 149 passing yards, two touchdown passes and a pair of scoring runs in the Golden Wildcats' 58-6 Region 8-4A victory over the Mustangs.

"I've got a lot of weapons at receiver with Jed (junior Justin Holloway), A.J. (senior Anthony Kizer), (senior) Justin Stone and Pee Wee (junior Alan Tinsley). I've just got so many to name. Then, my offensive line is giving me so much time back there in the pocket."

That may not be the case this evening when Melrose travels to face seventh-ranked CBHS (2-1), which is looking to bounce back from a 37-14 loss last week at Nashville Father Ryan in which it gave up 319 total yards.

The Purple Wave defense had given up a grand total of just 276 total yards in wins this season over Bolton and Carver.

"They say they're just like MUS," Toney said. "They play a 3-3 (defense) and they blitz a lot."

Yet Alexander doesn't expect to see his quarterback fazed this evening.

"He's got good presence and he knows when to scramble and when not to scramble," Alexander said. "But it's his composure that jumps out at you."

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TONIGHT'S GAMES

No. 1 MUS (2-1) at No. 10 ECS (3-0)

Time: 7 p.m.
Storylines: Two of the three defending Division 2 state champions face off in what's been a dead even series since 1998 with both teams going 3-3. No area quarterback has been more effective by air this season than ECS junior QB Adam Currie, who is averaging a Shelby-Metro best 193 passing yards per game. MUS, led by its own star QB in senior Michael Park, has struggled for the most part offensively this season against three tough defenses, averaging just 173 total yards per game.

No. 3 Ridgeway (3-0) at Hopkinsville-Ky. (0-2)

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Storylines: The Roadrunners should be looking for a little payback here following their 27-0 season-opening loss at Hopkinsville in 2004. Ridgeway seems to have found a solid answer at QB in senior Scott Railenau, who went 3-of-6 for 56 yards and a touchdown in replacement of junior quarterback Ryan Denton (knee) last week. Senior RB Aaron Crawford leads the area with eight TDs (six rushing, two receiving).

No. 4 Germantown (2-0) at South Panola (2-0)

Time: 7 p.m.
Storylines: Germantown looked like its usual, physical self in a 39-19 victory over Whitehaven last week in which it piled up over 300 rushing yards, but this isn't Whitehaven. It's perennial Mississippi power South Panola, which began the year ranked No. 23 in USA Today's Super 25, but has looked mortal in a pair of single-digit victories this season over Clarksdale and Moss Point. Germantown was a 40-10 loser at home against South Panola last season.

Northside (0-1) at No. 5 Olive Branch (2-0)

Time: 7 p.m.
Storylines: Expect senior QB Cannon Smith and the Conquistadors to have a field day in this one against a Northside team that



Germantown defenders like Mike Martorano (left) and Jeremie Riddick will need to be on their toes against dangerous South Panola tonight.

Nikki Boertman/The Commercial Appeal

gave up 339 total yards in a 48-2 loss to Kingsbury last week. Smith, who's averaging 147 passing yards per game, has been as efficient as any area quarterback this season with six touchdown passes and zero interceptions. Junior wing back D.J. Dodson (six receptions, three TDs) has been Smith's favorite target thus far.

No. 6 Covington (2-0) at Brighton (2-1)

Time: 7 p.m.
Storylines: No Shelby-Metro team has moved the ball on the ground as effectively as Covington, which is averaging an area-best 348 rushing yards per game. Senior FB Rodney Gude, the area's top ground gainer so far this season at 178 rushing yards per contest, leads the Chargers' offensive attack. Brighton, however, has been one of the area's best against the run this season, allowing just 69.3 rushing yards per game to rank eighth-best in Shelby-Metro.

Southaven (2-0) at No. 8 Millington (3-0)

Time: 7 p.m.
Storylines: Hank Hawkins' Trojans come

into this one on a roll offensively as Millington has averaged 35.3 points and 284.3 rushing yards in wins over Bartlett, Munford and Overton. Southaven has yet to give up a point following shutout wins over DeSoto Central and Frayser. Offensively, junior QB Joel Rich, the son of Charger head coach Ed Rich, has tossed four TD passes and ran for another two TDs.

No. 9 Wooddale (3-0) at Horn Lake (0-1)

Time: 7 p.m.
Storylines: Wooddale senior QB Jeremy Perry's 234.6 passer rating leads Shelby-Metro. The 6-2, 200-pounder has already thrown for an area-best 11 TDs and zero interceptions in lopsided victories over Hillcrest, East and Hamilton. Horn Lake, which is coming off a bye week, managed just 58 rushing yards in a season-opening loss to Ridgeway. That number must improve tonight if the Eagles are to have any chance of keeping a potent Cardinal offense from exploding for a fourth straight week.

No. 11 W. Memphis (0-1) at Osceola-Ark. (0-1)

Time: 7:30 p.m.

SHELBY-METRO STANDINGS

(Through Friday's games)

STANDINGS

REGION 7-5A

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Millington	2	0	3	0		
Ridgeway	1	0	3	0		
Bolton	1	0	1	1		
Cordova	1	0	1	1		
Craigmont	0	1	2	1		
Central	0	1	0	2		
Overton	0	1	0	2		
Bartlett	0	2	0	3		
*Arlington	0	0	3	0		

REGION 8-5A

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Wooddale	1	0	3	0		
Germantown	1	0	2	0		
Houston	1	0	2	0		
White Station	1	0	2	0		
Collierville	1	1	2	1		
Whitehaven	0	1	1	2		
Kirby	0	1	0	3		
Hamilton	0	2	0	3		

REGION 8-4A

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Fairley	1	0	2	1		
Melrose	1	0	2	1		
Kingsbury	1	0	1	1		
Northside	0	1	0	1		
East	0	1	0	2		
Raleigh-Egypt	0	1	0	3		

REGION 8-3A

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Mitchell	1	0	3	0		
Sheffield	1	0	2	0		
Frayser	0	0	0	2		
Trezevant	0	1	0	2		
Hillcrest	0	1	0	3		

REGION 8-2A

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Washington	2	0	3	0		
Treadwell	1	0	1	1		
Carver	1	1	1	2		
Westside	0	0	3	0		
Oakhaven	0	1	0	2		
South Side	0	1	0	2		
Westwood	0	1	0	3		

DIVISION 2-AAA

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Brentwood Aca.	1	0	3	0		
Chatt. McCallie	1	0	2	0		
Nash. Father Ryan	1	0	2	0		
MUS	1	0	2	1		
CBHS	0	1	2	1		
Chatt. Baylor	0	1	2	1		
Nashville MBA	0	1	2	1		
Briarcrest	0	1	0	3		

DIVISION 2-AA

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
ECS	1	0	3	0		
Harding	1	0	2	0		
Pope John Paul	1	0	2	1		
Knox. Webb	0	1	2	1		
St. Benedict	0	1	1	2		
Franklin BGA	0	1	0	2		

DIVISION 2-A

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
SBECS	1	0	2	0		
FACS	1	0	2	1		
Davidson Aca.	1	0	1	1		
Bishop Byrne	0	0	0	1		
Tipton-Rosemark	0	0	0	3		
St. George's	0	1	2	1		
David Brainerd	0	1	0	2		
St. Andrew's	0	1	0	2		
*Ross. Christian	0	0	1	2		

MHSAA REGION 1-5A

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
West Point	1	0	2	0		
Olive Branch	0	0	2	0		
South Panola	0	0	2	0		
Southaven	0	0	2	0		
Starkville	0	0	1	1		
Horn Lake	0	0	0	1		
Tupelo	0	0	1	2		
Columbus	0	1	1	1		

OTHERS

Team	Region			Overall		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Fayette Academy	1	0	3	0		
Fayette-Ware	1	0	2	0		
Covington	1	0	2	0		
Marion	1	0	1	0		
Brighton	1	0	2	1		
Munford	2	1	1	1		
DeSoto Central	1	0	2	1		
Hernando	1	0	1	1		
West Memphis Christian	1	0	1	1		
West Memphis	1	0	1	0		
Senatobia	0	1	0	2		
Manassas	0	1	0	3		

*Not eligible for playoffs

STAT LEADERS

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Gude, Cov.	26	356	178.0	5
Hunter, Kings.	34	351	175.5	5
Field, Mitch.	28	336	168.0	4
Crawford, Ridge.	38	495	165.0	6
Sims, WMC	28	290	145.0	6
Walker, Munford	69	426	142.0	5
Jessen, SGIS	37	394	131.3	7
Simpson, Mill.	35	373	124.3	3
Butler, Fay. Aca.	33	358	119.3	5
Jones, BTW	44	322	107.3	2

PASSING

Name	C	A	Yds.	YPGTD
Currie, ECS	33	53	579	193.0
Skinner, CBHS	31	57	545	181.7