

# OHS football has solid turnaround

## Tornadoes overcome slow start to have great season, led by All-Area players

By Joe Ragozzino  
Sports editor

Randy Daniel had to admit he was surprised.

The Orange High School varsity football head coach didn't expect his team to make the playoffs, let alone finish with a 7-3 record this season.

After all, the Tornadoes had lost several key standouts to graduation, notably four-year starting quarterback Contrez Hunter and receiver Malcolm Bagley, from a team that reached the semifinals of the state North Jersey Section 2, Group 2 playoffs.

But the Tornadoes showed their resolve, especially after rebounding from a 1-2 start to win six straight that helped clinch another North Jersey Section 2, Group 2 playoff berth.

"This team wasn't supposed to do that," said Daniel of his team's playoff appearance. "They worked hard and believed in each other."

The fourth-seeded Tornadoes, unfortunately, failed to get revenge on fifth-seeded Caldwell in the first round of the playoffs, losing 28-17, at Bell Stadium in Orange.

Caldwell beat OHS, 21-20, in double overtime in last year's playoff semifinals and then beat the Tornadoes this year in Super Essex Conference play. That was the last loss for the Tornadoes before they went on the six-game winning streak. Despite losing to Caldwell in the playoffs, Daniel was quite proud of his team's successful season, which can be attributed to its chemistry and year-round hard work.

"They gave a good run," Daniel said. "It was all team. They worked hard in the offseason. They didn't care about individual accolades. It was a total teamwork. They did whatever they can to help the team."

The Tornadoes this season also lost to Weequahic in the opener and beat Cedar Grove, two teams that met in the state North Jersey Section 2, Group 1 championship game in which Cedar Grove won, 34-21, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford last Saturday.

The Tornadoes were sparked this year by several players who made the Worrall Community Newspapers All-Area Team.

They include:

#### Quarterback

- Safee Fisher, junior, 6-foot-1, 180 pounds

#### Running back

- Jayquan Watson, senior, 5-9, 170

#### Wide receivers

- Farrod Clarke, senior, 6-4, 175
- Jamar Summers, junior, 5-11, 160

#### Defensive linemen

- Kassan Messiah, senior end, 6-4, 195

- Rasheed Williams, sophomore end, 6-0, 200

#### Linebackers

- Michael White, senior, 6-0, 205

- Malik Watson, senior, 5-9, 155, Jayquan's brother
- Kevin Boeteng, senior, 5-10, 155

#### Place-kicker

- Marquiso Jean, senior, 6-0, 190

Daniel also was named All-Area co-Coach of the Year along with East Orange Campus' Marion Bell and West Orange's John Jacob.

Fisher proved exceptional in his first year as the starting quarterback. Fisher's receiving targets included Clarke and Summers.

Watson powered the ground game.

The defense was solid. Messiah particularly was a force, and is a serious candidate to receive a college scholarship, said Daniel.

Jean also proved to be one of the best kickers in the area.

The All-Area is selected by the Essex County sports staff of Worrall Community Newspapers and consists of high schools in the WCN publishing area of Belleville, Bloomfield, East Orange, Glen Ridge, Irvington, Maplewood, Nutley, Orange, South Orange, West Orange and Vailsburg. The varsity players chosen also must reside in those municipalities.

For the complete All-Area list, visit [www.orangenjnavigator.com](http://www.orangenjnavigator.com)

### Orange (7-3)

Sept. 9, Loss, Weequahic, 28-7  
Sept. 16, Won, Verona, 14-12  
Sept. 24, Loss, at Caldwell, 28-22

Sept. 30, Won, Central, 41-8  
Oct. 7, Won, Barringer, 48-0  
Oct. 14, Won, at Shabazz, 34-32  
Oct. 22, Won, Cedar Grove, 42-33

Oct. 29, Won, at Glen Ridge, 27-2

Nov. 4, Won, Cedar Creek, 29-6  
Nov. 11, Loss, Caldwell, 28-17\*

\*North Jersey Section 2, Group 2 playoffs



Photo by Steve Ellmore

Orange High's Kassan Messiah, No. 14, Jayquan Watson, No. 25, and Michael White, No. 20, were key contributors during the Tornadoes' 7-3 playoff season.

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