Old friends meet in Whitefield-Prince Avenue game

- Adam Carrington
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Alex Carver (55) and the Whitefield Academy defense will try to continue its strong play tonight when the Wolfpack travel to Bogart to face Prince Avenue Christian.
Jon-Michael Sullivan

There will be a reunion among coaches tonight when Whitefield Academy heads to Prince Avenue for the second round of the Class A private school state playoffs.

Second-year coach John Hunter will be coaching against one of his former assistant coaches in Greg Vandagriff, the former head coach at Campbell and Kell.

Before arriving in Atlanta, Vandagriff was Hunter's defensive coordinator at Louisiana's Christian Life Academy during the early 1990s. Current Hillgrove coach Phil Ironside served as his offensive coordinator on that staff.

Now, Hunter is getting his players prepared to face Vandagriff's 4-4 defense.

"It's very multiple and he always put kids in the right positions," Hunter said. "They are always going to play hard. They are going to fly around, and we have to be prepared for that."

There is more at stake for Whitefield tonight than beating a familiar face on the opposite sideline. A win over Prince Avenue would put the Wolfpack in the state quarterfinals for the first time in program history.

Whitefield is coming off a tough 2016 season in Hunter's debut, having won just three games. The 2017 campaign did not start any better, losing its first two games. The Wolfpack turned things around and won seven of their last eight games, capped by a 26-7 win over cross-county rival Walker in the first round a week ago.

In order to keep playing, Hunter said it comes down to doing one particular thing well, the fundamentals.

"It goes back to the blocking and tackling," Hunter said. "In the early stages of the season, we were developing an identity of who we were. We added new coaches to the program, and they have done a phenomenal job. Once (the players) started believing we win, good things were happening."