



## **Hickman welcomes a new season after last year's 1-9 finish**

By Blake Nelson

Columbia Missourian

Published Aug. 20, 2015

COLUMBIA — Lorenzo Conway could have started his high school career any number of ways.

He chose Kewpies football.

A freshman at Hickman High School, Conway stood on the sidelines Tuesday wearing a collared shirt and basketball shoes. He was still waiting on a physical to clear. If he showed up to practice, he said, he would receive a jersey the next day. He was ready to play.

A whistle blew. In less than a minute, those with jerseys formed into six rows with 11 players each. They removed their helmets in unison. Players called out numbers. There was little talking otherwise.

Outliers were quickly addressed. One player was starting to explain why he forgot his shorts when a coach cut him off with a brisk “fix it.” The player fell silent. Another jogged up late, athletic tape wrapped around his hand. Coach Arnel Monroe inspected the player’s thumb. The tape had to hold that bone, he said. “It’s gotta be tight.”

The same could be said for Kewpie football.

The Kewpies were clearly inconsistent during last year's 1-9 season. After an August loss to Lee's Summit, quarterback Carter Nicoli said a lack of mental discipline was a big reason why the Kewpies failed to hold on to an early lead. The team thought they had the game in the bag, Nicoli said, only to watch a 17-point lead disappear into a 41-17 loss.

Monroe is upbeat about how much his team has learned since then.

“You can show a guy a tape of his mistakes, but that guy has to make the decision,” Monroe said. “They’re accepting that piece of it.”

The Kewpies will have their first chance to measure their progress Saturday against the defending Class 6 state champion Christian Brothers College High School. Kickoff is at 3 p.m., as part of the Mayhem at the Zou event at Memorial Stadium.

Sophomore wide receiver and punter Noah Tamerius is optimistic about the upcoming season, pointing to the close relationships the quarterbacks have with the receivers, the relatively few seniors they lost last season and how often the team met over the summer to lift and strategize. “We really worked out everything from last year,” he said.

Soon, they'll get to prove it in a place where they've previously had success.

The last high school game played at Faurot was three years ago, and ended in a Kewpie win. But Monroe dismissed the memory.

“That was then,” he said. “This is now.”

*Supervising editor is Mark Selig.*