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As the West High Rebels practice Wednesday, one coach can be seen wearing a mask, and the scoreboard reminds all what year it is. The high school football season is scheduled to start this week despite the coronavirus pandemic. Please see high school previews for football, volleyball, girls' soccer and girls' cross country in Sports and Recreation, Section B, of this week's Focus.

Pressure? New Central head coach says he's excited

By Steve Williams

The season opener is days away and his feelings could change as kickoff time nears Friday night.

After all, Central's football team has won back-to-back Class 5A state championships and it will be Nick Craney's first time on the sidelines as a high school head coach.

He'll be close to 85 miles from friendly Fountain City, too.

But when asked if he was feeling any pressure, Craney didn't gulp or blink.

"I feel excited first and foremost," he said from his coach's office after a preseason morning practice. He also was sitting



F.A.M.I.L.Y.: ... "Forget About Me I Love You" ... the foundation of the Central High football program.

behind the same desk that Bryson Rosser had occupied the past six seasons, during certainly one of the most successful eras in the school's proud history.

"I'm excited for our players. I'm excited for where the program is at and honestly for where the program is going," added Craney, who served as defensive coordinator in Central's

three trips to the state finals in the past four years.

Craney said he feels fortunate to be part of a program that has had success on and off the field. He's also proud to have helped build the current foundation of that program.

When Rosser left Central for family reasons, Craney was named interim head coach and let it be known he wanted to continue the program's "family" foundation.

"I'm extremely excited and honestly the pressure is not something that I'm going to worry about," said Craney. "I

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Knox Co. BOE approves virtual learning contract

By Ken Lay

The Knox County Schools Board of Education has approved a contract with Florida Virtual School to assist with its remote learning program this fall.

The board approved the measure with an 8-1 vote Wednesday night at its regular session meeting at the Andrew Johnson Building. Board member Jennifer Owen was the one dissenting vote after expressing concerns at the board's work session on Wednesday, Aug. 5.

The program could cost the district up to \$1.5 million for the fall semester and should not exceed \$3 million if used again in the spring of 2021.

The Florida Virtual School model is the same one being used by Metro Nashville, which is beginning its academic year exclusively with distance learning.

KCS is opening its schools Monday, Aug. 24 with 18,500 students and their parents have opted to attend school remotely this fall.

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New alcohol permit adopted for outdoor dining

By Mike Steely
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Knoxville restaurants will be permitted to serve alcohol outside of their property under an emergency ordinance adopted Tuesday evening by the Knoxville City Council. Councilman Andrew Roberto, who chairs the Beer Board, suggested the change that will continue as long as COVID-19 restrictions are in place.

The temporary permits must be requested by a restaurant which serves at least 50% food. Outdoor dining restrictions have been loosened during the pandemic allowing some public space to be used for dining. Permission forms are being prepared and the emergency resolution will be back on the agenda in two weeks for final approval.

Mayor Indya Kincannon called the outdoor alcohol service "a great idea."

In other action the council voted to deny an appeal by

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Appointed law director amendment to go on November ballot

By Mike Steely
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In a 15-9 vote Wednesday, the Knox County Charter Review Committee was successful in putting an "appointed" law director amendment on the November ballot. If passed, this amendment would require the board of education and the county commission to hire their own attorneys.

The committee also voted, 23-1, to require the county mayor to submit a list of all his expenditures of \$100,000 or less on the monthly commission agenda as a Spread of Record item.

The committee voted, on a motion by member Lisa Starbuck, to make sure a mayor

cannot remove an elected law director. Two citizens spoke in public forum before the vote with Todd Frommeyer saying that if Mayor Glenn Jacobs can fire newly-elected Law Director David Buuck then Buuck could have the shortest term as law director in history.

Law Director Richard (Bud) Armstrong assured the body that the mayor cannot fire the elected law director but could name a replacement, approved by county commission, should Buuck leave office before his term expires. Armstrong said all the provisions in the amendment, if passed by the public in November, would not be effective until September 1, 2024. He said he could add that

clarification to the amendment language if the Review Committee agreed and they did.

Attorney James Cran said on behalf of an elected law director, saying that a separate attorney appointed by the mayor plus one each for the school system and the county commission could double the legal cost to the county.

"The presentation is much more favorable," he said.

Charter Review Committee Chairman Bran Anders said he also had an email from board of education member Mike McMillan prior to the meeting urging the committee not to put an appointed law director amendment on the ballot, yet Anders did not read the message to the

body.

Anders said an appointed law director could be approved or dismissed by a request from the mayor to the commission and a 50% plus one vote from that body. An elected law director is only subject to a recall election and not at the pleasure of a mayor.

Committee member Mike Arms noted, "You can't out an elected law director for poor performance but you can fire an appointed law director." He also said the law director is the "people's lawyer" only when they want to be.

The 15-9 vote to put an appointed law director charter

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