Written by Mike Kelly
Friday, 16 July 2010 08:58

Wide receiver Andy Gonzalez of the Avery High football team has been named a pre-season, all-state selection.

Gonzalez, a rising senior, has been named to the Class 1A All-State pre-season team by NCPreps.com. Gonzalez, who also plays defensive back, was an All-Western Highlands Conference selection last fall. He caught 39 passes for 746 yards and he scored seven touchdowns.

Gonzalez and quarterback Alex Villanueva, a rising junior, gave Avery a strong one-two punch last fall. The Vikings, who only won two games in 2008, came charging back to win five games last season. Villanueva completed 130 passes for 1,865 yards and he threw 18 touchdown passes. The Vikings, who return 16 lettermen, open the season at home against Robbinsville on August 20. They play Watauga in Boone on September 3. The Vikings haven't won in Boone since 2004.

In all, there were 13 players from western North Carolina that were named pre-season all-state. Linebacker/defensive lineman Ben Councell of A.C. Reynolds was named to the Class 4A squad. The Pioneers play at ACR on September 17. Linebacker Austin Rice of Mountain Heritage was named the Class 2A team.

NOTES: Hibriten will have two players, defensive back Josh Dula who has signed with Lenior-Rhyne University and offensive lineman Nick Easton, that will play in the East-West Senior All-Star game in Greensboro on Wednesday, July 21. The game will be played at Jamison Stadium on the campus of Greensboro Grimsley High School.

Darius Lipford of the Panthers played in the Shrine Bowl last December. It's also the first time Hibriten has had two players selected to play in the East-West game.

Defensive lineman Blake Baker of Alexander Central, linebacker Patrick Blalock of ACR, offensive lineman Marcus Byrd of St. Stephens will also play for the West squad Wednesday night. Hickory coach John Worley is an assistant coach for the West. Jim Ruark of East Burke is the head coach of the West.

In women's basketball, Lakin Norris of Mitchell will play for the West women on Monday in the East-West Senior All-Star game. She will be joined by Karlee Taylor of ACR and Chelsea Connelly of Freedom. Norris, who broke the 2,000 point barrier this past season, was also the Asheville Citizen-Times Player of the Year in Western North Carolina in women's basketball.