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# 2009 Menchville Monarchs Preview

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<b>Coach John Byron</b>	<b>2008 Record: 2-8</b>
<b>Peninsula District</b>	<b>Did not qualify for postseason play</b>

**2008 Revisited:** For the third year in a row, the Menchville Monarchs finished with a record of 2-8. Ironically enough, in each of those three seasons their two victories have come against the same two teams, Gloucester and Wilson. Their 50-point, 501-yard performance against the Dukes halted a four-game losing streak, but the likes of Bethel, Phoebus and Woodside each torched them for 63 points in games they'd like to forget.

**2009 Offensive Outlook:** Six starters return for an offense that had problems at times moving the ball and scoring in 2008, ranking last in the Peninsula District in points, rushing and total yards. That being said, Head Coach **John Byron** has to be thrilled to have versatile athlete and Class of 2011 prospect **Clifton Richardson** (6-1, 195) back. Two years ago as a freshman, Richardson showed his explosiveness when he returned a kickoff 98 yards for a touchdown and finished that season with over 400 all-purpose yards. Last season he ran for 643 yards and 5TD's on 130 attempts while also throwing for 222 yards.



Clifton Richardson is a dynamic playmaker for the Monarchs

Senior **Henry Boothe** (6-2, 175) is also back as the team's starting quarterback after completing 42 of 94 passes for 372 yards and a 3-5TD/Int. ratio during his junior season. Seniors **A.J. Harris** (5-8, 155), **Justin Jones** (5-10, 145) and **Anthony Mullen** (5-7, 145) as well as junior **Jontaz Atkins** (5-7, 150) make up the supporting cast of backs and receivers that'll surround him. The Monarchs do have to replace three starters on the offensive line that graduated, which is perhaps the biggest area of concern heading into the fall.

**2009 Defensive Outlook:** In their attacking 3-5 base defense, the Monarchs had some success early last year, holding each of their first four opponents under 300 total yards, one of which

2008 Averages		
Offense		Defense
12.3 (30)	Points	41.8 (38)
92.0 (33)	Rushing	210.5 (37)
59.4 (T-27)	Passing	94.1 (21)
151.4 (35)	Total Yards	304.6 (36)
(Eastern Region rank in parentheses)		

was Hampton. Eventually, the big plays caught up to them, giving up 34 points or more in each of their final six contests while opponents averaged 14.3 yards per completion and 7.3 yards per carry. On defense, the Monarchs need to find adequate replacements for both of their outside linebackers that graduated. Harris and Atkins are likely to move into the starting spots with. Senior lineman **Xavier Reid** (5-11, 250) provides experience and leadership in the front seven of the defense.

Menchville made seven interceptions through the first five games of the '08 campaign, but had only one over their final five contests. Applying more pressure up front is crucial, plus they need their defensive backs to be opportunistic. With so many teams expected to try and stop him on offense, Richardson might make his biggest impact this coming year on the defensive side of the ball by roaming around and gambling to make things happen from his free safety position. Boothe and Jones are slated to start with him in the secondary.

**Date to Circle:** Underline the October 9<sup>th</sup> date with Denbigh at Todd Stadium. Menchville was shutout four times in 2008, including by Newport News city rival Denbigh 42-0 in late October. In fact, their four city rivals along with Warwick, Heritage and Woodside outscored the Monarchs 183-30 a year ago, and they haven't beaten one of them since blanking Denbigh 34-0 in 2003.

**Hat's Hit:** The Monarchs' last trip to the postseason came in 1993, and their last winning season came in 1995 when they finished 6-4 overall. Richardson is arguably the best football athlete the school's had since NFL defensive back David Macklin graduated several years ago, so it's critical that they utilize his skills to the fullest over the next couple seasons in an effort to get to and potentially above that .500 mark. Cutting down on penalties (their 83 for 729 yards was most in the Peninsula in '08) is key, as is limiting turnovers because as good as Richardson is he can't do it alone.

"Our strength on offense will be our ability to spread the defense and create mismatches. On defense, we will have to use our speed and be disciplined," says Byron, whose team may only be an early upset in the season's first month away from being a .500 team in the PD.

### [2009 Eastern Region Schedule](#)

### [2008 Eastern Region Results](#)

### [2008 Menchville Preview](#)

*Matthew Hatfield has covered Eastern Region Basketball & Football since 2004 for VirginiaPreps.com ? the #1 High School Sports Site on the Rivals Network. Check out Hatfield's website ? [www.matthewhatfield.com](http://www.matthewhatfield.com) ? for more on the pro and college sports scene. To contact Matthew, please e-mail [hatfieldsports2k4@yahoo.com](mailto:hatfieldsports2k4@yahoo.com), and be sure to listen to him throughout the year on [ESPN Radio 1310](#).*