By TAYLOR MITCHELL
Sports Editor

Prior to the 2011 season kicking off over two months ago, the Benton Academy football team had its sights set on a return trip to the post season, where the Raiders lost to Winona Christian 28-7 a year ago. However, after just four games, talk of the playoffs was nowhere to be found at Benton after a 0-4 start.

“We weren’t playing that bad at the start of the year,” head coach Wayman Grantham said. “We just had 20-something turnovers in those first four games. But we’ve worked hard on taking care of the ball and running the offense and it’s paid off. These last four games we’ve only had two turnovers.”

The first four games of the season, obviously, didn’t go according to plan for Benton. The first two games of the season started off the way Grantham wanted to, but the Raiders couldn’t finish off either Carroll (29-22) or Strider (30-26), despite holding leads late in the fourth quarter. The next two weeks seemed to put Benton’s season in jeopardy, as the Raiders were held scoreless against Tri-County (42-0) and Winona Christian (28-0).

With a 0-4 record with six games left to play, it wasn’t a joyous mood inside Benton’s locker room.

However, everything began to change in week five when Deer Creek came to Benton. The Raiders would grab their first of the season, without needing any late game dramatics, 19-7. That win sparked the biggest turnaround of the four local Yazoo County high schools.

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