

# Conway Stops West Trojans In Football Season Opener

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick got the best of Conway for three quarters Friday night, but the Trojans let the pigskin slip through their hands and with it went the victory in their high school football season opener.

For the second straight year, Conway's Tigers made the Trojans pay for fourth-quarter turnovers. The result was a 25-21 Conway win at Rourk Stadium in Shallotte.

"We got tired and our kicking game changed the momentum," Trojan Coach Jim Brett said after the disappointing loss. "The punt was the turning point in the game."

West Brunswick led 21-12 early in the fourth quarter before Conway returned a fumbled punt snap for a touchdown and turned another turnover into the game-winning score less than five minutes later.

"We were beat by our kicking game tonight," Brett said. "I'll take credit for that. Maybe we didn't spend enough time on it."

Playing in muggy conditions, Brett also said the Trojans ran out of gas in the fourth quarter. "Playing a school three times as big as us we're supposed to give out," he said.

The second-year West Brunswick coach pointed out that the Tigers dressed about twice as many players as the Trojans. West also went with seven two-way starters, while Conway used just one.

Brett said he wasn't worried about losing the first game, something the Trojans did last year en route to an 11-3 season and the North Carolina 2A Championship.

"I would rather play somebody like we did tonight and learn something than play somebody whose not very good and not work hard," he said. "We're going to have to work hard later on when we get into the conference schedule."

The 4A Tigers took the lead midway through the first quarter after partially-blocking a West Brunswick punt and taking over possession at their own 48-yard line.

On the first play from scrimmage, freshman running back Vinson Blain shot through a gap in the offensive line and outran the Trojan defense down the right sideline for a 52-yard touchdown.

Jeremy Reed's extra point attempt was wide left and the Tigers held a 6-0 lead with 5:34 remaining in the opening quarter.

West responded with an 81-yard scoring drive on its next possession. The Trojans ran eight straight plays before junior quarterback Eric Johnson rolled right and lofted a 55-yard touchdown pass to a wide-open Ty Brown.

Derek Frink tacked on the extra point to give West a 7-6 lead with 55



STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER  
**TROJAN HALFBACK JAMES MORGAN (46) led West Brunswick with 49 yards rushing Friday night against Conway. Morgan also had an interception on defense.**

seconds left in the first period. The Trojans bumped their lead to 14-7 just before halftime. West took over possession at its own 46-yard line with 2:11 left in the second quarter and drove 56 yards in seven plays.

Brett's bunch benefited from a pass interference call against Conway, and senior halfback William Stanley scored an 11-yard sweep with 39 seconds in the half. Frink's kick gave the Trojans an 8-point edge at intermission.

Conway came out fired up in the second half, taking the opening kickoff and driving 64 yards in nine plays for a touchdown.

Quarterback Michael Allen, who completed just one pass for 17 yards in the game, rushed for 48 yards in the drive and scored on a 1-yard sneak. Allen finished with 51 yards rushing.

Allen tried to pass for a two-point conversion, but Trojan cornerback James Morgaa intercepted the throw and Conway trailed 14-12.

West Brunswick increased its lead to 21-12 late in the third quarter. Fullback Michael Lance dove in from the 2-yard line to cap an im-

pressive, five-play, 56-yard drive. Frink added the extra point.

Leading by nine points, West Brunswick's wheels came off in the fourth quarter.

On fourth-and-4 at the Trojan 35, West's punter, Frink, fumbled the snap and watched as Conway's Jimmy Riggins scooped up the loose ball and ran 20 yards for a touchdown.

Conway's Reed kicked the extra point to trim West Brunswick's lead to 21-19 with 10:28 left in the game.

West Brunswick fumbled again on its next possession, and Conway's Charlie Parker recovered at the Trojan 34-yard line.

The Tigers scored three plays later as fullback Corey Livingston sprinted 11 yards up the middle with 5:44 on the clock. Leading 25-21, Conway tried for two points, but Blain was stopped short of the goal line.

With West Brunswick needing a touchdown, Michael Johnson returned the ensuing kickoff 25 yards to the Trojan 45-yard line.

With eight straight running plays, the Trojans moved the ball to the Tiger 26-yard line. However, Eric

Johnson's desperation pass on fourth-and-9 was intercepted by Conway's Leshay Grant.

"The most pleasing thing I saw all night was our team took the ball with about five minutes left on the clock and moved down the field," Brett said. "Our guys were tired but they dug down deep for that last drive."

Other than the kicking game, Brett said the Trojans need to work on blocking in the middle of the offensive line.

The veteran head coach said the Trojans missed the running of senior halfback Steve Holmes, who played just one down Friday night due to an injury. Holmes rushed for more than 1,500 yards and scored 26 touchdowns last year.

"He's one of the best backs in the east," Brett said. "With his speed there were a couple of things we could have done that we weren't able to do tonight."

Overall, Brett said he thought the

Trojans played better Friday night than they did in last year's season-opening, 19-14, loss at Conway.

Brett said Eric Johnson, a three-sport standout at West, played "very good" in his first start at quarterback. "He's a good athlete and I like the way he plays the game."

Johnson completed just 2-of-9 passes, but several other passes were dropped. The junior also came up with a second-quarter interception from his defensive safety spot.

**THE YARDSTICK**

West Bruns.	Conway
13.....First Downs.....	7
50-159.....Rushing.....	25-166
2-9-47.....Passing.....	2-11-17
3-2.....Fumbles-Lost.....	1-0
1.....Ints. Thrown.....	2
3-21.....Punts(No-Avg).....	3-35
5-55.....Penalties-Yards.....	13-113

**Score By Quarters**

West Brunswick	7	7	0	21
Conway	6	0	6	13

**Scoring Summary**  
(C) Blain, 52-yard run (kick failed)  
(WB) Brown, 55-yard pass from Johnson (Frink kick)  
(WB) Stanley, 11-yard run (Frink kick)  
(C) Allen, 1-yard run (pass failed)  
(WB) Lance, 2-yard run (Frink kick)  
(C) Riggins, 20-yard fumble return (Reed kick)  
(C) Livingston, 11-yard run (run failed)

**Individual Rushing**  
West Brunswick: Morgan, 15-49; Lance 10-34; Stanley, 11-29; Warren, 5-22; Brown, 4-21; Holmes, 1-4; Johnson, 4-0.

Conway: Blain, 8-61; Allen, 9-51; Livingston, 4-44; Nelson, 1-8; Hasty, 3-2.

**Individual Passing**  
West Brunswick: Johnson, 2-9-47.  
Conway: Allen, 1-6-17; Nelson, 1-5-0.

**Individual Receiving**  
West Brunswick: Brown, 1-55; Morgan, 1-minus 8.  
Conway: Wise, 1-17; White, 1-0.



**WEST BRUNSWICK DEFENDERS Michael Lance (32) and Greg Gause (31) run down Tiger tailback Antonio Hasty (38).**



**TROJAN QUARTERBACK ERIC JOHNSON (3) gets ready to hand off to one of his running backs Friday night against visiting Conway.**

**ONE HOUR**

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