

WEST BRUNSWICK ASSISTANT COACH JOE NOBLE works with offensive linemen (from left) Brian McDowell, Jonathan Faulk and James Cook during the football team's first practice Saturday.

FOOTBALL PRACTICE UNDER WAY

State Champion Trojans Return To Gridiron

BY DOUG RUTTER
West Brunswick's Trojans, winners of two consecutive state high school football championships, made a quietly confident return to the gridiron Saturday morning.

There were no peppy cheerleaders or rowdy fans cheering them on as they huffed and puffed their way through a series of conditioning drills. It was just the kids and coaches on a soggy field.

All were spared from the typical heat associated with the first day of football practice. Gray skies kept the temperature relatively low, and occasional raindrops also helped.

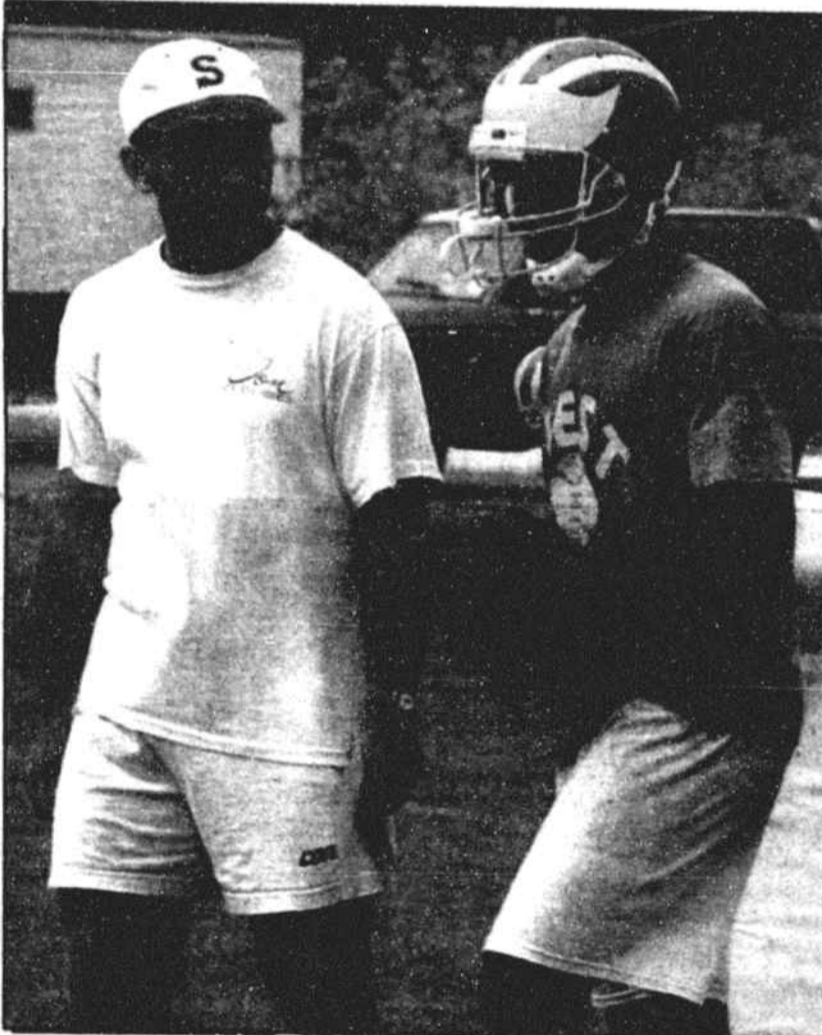
Nearly eight months after West Brunswick captured its second straight state title, a new group of players and a revamped coaching staff began the painstaking task of preparing for the 1994 season.

It starts in just over three weeks (Aug. 26) when the Trojans travel to Boiling Spring Lakes for a non-conference battle with their arch rivals, the South Brunswick Cougars.

A lot has changed since West Brunswick defeated High Point Andrews 19-14 to win the state 3A crown last December. Stars Steve Holmes, William Stanley, Michael Lance, Phillip Johnson, Charlie Peele and Steve Brooks graduated.

But some things haven't changed. Eric Johnson is still running the show at quarterback. Kwabena Green and Kelley Wooten are still doing their thing in the trenches.

As of Monday, West had 38 players out for the varsity and junior varsity squads. First-year head coach Yogi Hickman said he hopes more players will trickle in this week.



TROJAN QUARTERBACK ERIC JOHNSON gets instruction from offensive coordinator Heath Hewett, who was a standout quarterback himself at Whiteville High School and Elon College.

"The numbers are down. I'm a little disturbed about that. There are a couple kids who played last year who haven't shown up yet," he said.

"I'm gonna coach who shows up. Everybody knows when we're practicing," Hickman said he's pleased with

the kids who have been showing up for morning practice.

"The ones who are here have done well. They're very eager to pick up what we're trying to teach them," he said.

Hickman and his staff are trying to teach the kids an offense that is vastly different from the deceptive attack West Brunswick ran the last two years under coach Jim Brett.

"Overall I don't know I have any complaints about what I've seen on the field," Hickman said. "Obviously there's some big-time talent here. I knew there were some good players out here, but some of them are even better than I thought."

Hickman said he's pleased with the turnout of junior varsity players. "That is very encouraging. We have a number of young kids who are going to be good athletes down the line."

Two-a-day workouts will start next Monday. Morning practices will be held from 9:00 until 10:45 and 11:15 until noon.

West Brunswick's first scrimmage game is Saturday, Aug. 13, at 7 p.m. against the Golden Falcons of C.B. Aycock. The school is located in Pikeville, about seven miles north of Goldsboro.

The Trojans will be one of eight teams competing in the eighth annual UCB Football Jamboree, a series of four scrimmage games slated Aug. 19 at Wilmington's Legion Stadium.

West Brunswick will face Wallace-Rose Hill in its scrimmage. Other matchups are New Hanover versus Whiteville, Hoggard versus South Brunswick and Laney versus South Columbus.

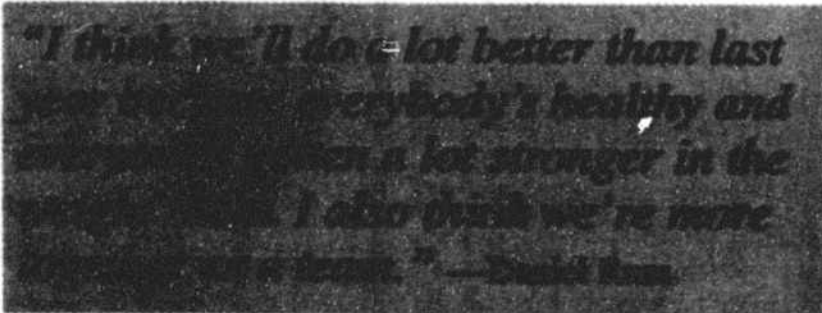
FORMER TROJAN STANDOUT

Russ Expects Playing Time On ECU Defense

BY DOUG RUTTER
Former West Brunswick High School football star Daniel Russ is expected to get substantial playing time this season on East Carolina University's defensive line.

Russ enters his sophomore season as a second-string defensive end and should play 20 to 30 downs per game this fall, said ECU defensive ends coach David Blackwell.

"He was probably the biggest surprise on the team coming out of spring practice," Blackwell said last week. "It probably won't be a starting job, but he'll play a lot this fall." Russ, who started at middle line-backer and tight end on West Brunswick's eastern 2A championship team in 1991, started working out at the "rush end" position at



the end of the 1993 season. He will open the 1994 campaign as a backup to senior end Willie Brookins, who led the Pirates in sacks last season with 7½ as well as tackles behind the line of scrimmage.

Recruited as a linebacker, Russ was red-shirted his first year at East Carolina and worked out at the nose guard position much of last year before switching to rush end. "During the off-season last year he absolutely killed himself in the weight room," Blackwell said. "We're real excited about him. You like to see a guy find a spot and really start to contribute to the team."

The 6-foot-4-inch Russ, who played at 225 pounds in high school, has bulked up to 240 pounds. "I worked hard in the weight room in the spring and summer," Russ said last week. "I'm going into

the fall behind a senior, second team, so I should be getting about 30 snaps a game on defense."

When Brookins graduates next spring, Russ said he hopes to move into the starting lineup. "I feel a lot more comfortable at end than nose guard. My weight wasn't exactly right for nose guard. Two hundred forty isn't enough when the other guy's 280."

East Carolina is coming off a tough season. The Pirates went 2-9 in 1993 after losing one quarterback to academics and two others to injury. In all, 10 starters missed games due to injury.

"I think we'll do a lot better than last year because everybody's healthy and everyone's gotten a lot stronger in the weight room," Russ said. "I also think we're more together as a team."

Russ, the son of James and

SOUTH HIRES MCKINNON

Emmett Lay Named New West Basketball Coach

BY DOUG RUTTER

"It's a real good opportunity. It was really a career move. Brunswick County offers a fine opportunity to people in the education profession and the coaching profession as well."

So says Emmett Lay, a former athletic director at West Columbus High School who was hired last week as the new boys' basketball coach at West Brunswick.

Ed McKinnon of Laurinburg has taken over the boys' basketball program at South Brunswick. Both hirings were approved last Wednesday by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

Lay fills the vacancy left by Charlie Stevens, who resigned as West Brunswick's basketball coach on July 5 after only one year to take over the basketball program at Goldsboro High School.

Although he was hired primarily to coach basketball, Lay's first order of business will be coaching West Brunswick's junior varsity football team. His basketball duties won't begin until November.

Lay, a single 34-year-old, is starting his 13th year as a high school football and basketball coach. His career has included stops at Smithville Selma, McMichael, Wallace-Rose Hill, West Columbus and South Columbus.

Lay, who was athletic director at West Columbus for three years before transferring to South Columbus last year, also has experience coaching baseball and track and field.

The Tabor City High School graduate received a sociology degree in 1982 from N.C. State University, who he was a member of the basketball team. He is currently doing graduate work at Pembroke State University, working toward an education administration certificate.

Lay, who will teach social studies at West Brunswick, has roots in the county. His mother's family is from Ash, and his grandmother still lives there.

"My home is just across the river in Pireway," he said. "I'm going to hunt a residence in Brunswick County but it might take a while. I don't want to move too far from Pembroke until I finish my graduate work."

West Brunswick's boys placed fourth in the Waccamaw Conference last year with a 5-7 record. The Trojans were 10-16 overall and advanced to the second round of the state 3A playoffs.

Four starters—Eric Johnson, Timothy Daniels, Jonathan Williams and Derek Frink—and several key reserves are expected to return to the

lineup this winter. "I saw them play several times last year and have seen them many times over the last few years," Lay said of the Trojans. "But I'm not really familiar enough with their talent to comment on it."

New Man At South

South Brunswick's new boys' basketball boss, McKinnon, has coached the junior varsity boys at Scotland County High School for the last four seasons and has 17 years of coaching experience.

The 43-year-old native of Robeson County replaces Gene Doane, who resigned in late June after coaching for eight years at the Boiling Spring Lakes school.

"I'm really excited about getting back to being a head coach again," said McKinnon, who hasn't been a head basketball coach since a two-year stint at Chatham Central ended in 1987.

The Chatham boys were 19-30 in two seasons under McKinnon. At Scotland County his junior varsity teams went 49-31, finishing first in the conference twice and second another year.

In six years as the boys' basketball coach at Carrington Junior High in Durham, McKinnon's teams posted a record of 67-31, including a 14-0 mark his final year in 1985.

A 1969 graduate of Rowland High School, McKinnon has an undergraduate degree in psychology and master's degree in health and physical education from UNC-Chapel Hill.

McKinnon said he will not help coach the South Brunswick football team this year because there are no openings, but he added that he wouldn't mind assisting in the future.

"I have 15 years in football and worked with the Scotland County team," he said. "Some basketball coaches don't like to but I enjoy it. I've worked in football everywhere I've been."

McKinnon said he could move to the Southport area as soon as this week. He has a wife, Valerie, and stepdaughter, Lauren, who is entering her sophomore year in high school.

"I've always had my eye on this part of the state," McKinnon said. "I'm leaving a lot of good friends in Laurinburg, but I'm looking forward to coming to Southport."

In 1993, the South Brunswick boys' basketball team missed the state playoffs for the first time in five years. The Cougars finished fifth in the Waccamaw Conference with a 4-8 record and overall mark of 9-15.

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EAST CAROLINA FOOTBALL SCHEDULE	
DATE	OPPONENT
Sept. 10	at Duke
Sept. 17	at Temple
Sept. 24	Syracuse
Oct. 1	Southern Miss
Oct. 8	at South Carolina
Oct. 15	Virginia Tech
Oct. 22	at Tulsa
Oct. 29	Cincinnati
Nov. 5	at Auburn
Nov. 12	Central Florida
Nov. 19	at Memphis

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