

# Ready Or Not, West Brunswick To Begin State Title Defense

BY DOUG RUTTER

Seven straight winning seasons. Three consecutive eastern North Carolina championships. Back-to-back state titles.

West Brunswick High School's football team, one of the most successful in the state in recent years, will begin its quest for even more glory Friday night when it opens the 1994 season at South Brunswick.

The Trojans probably won't look like a state championship team Friday as first-year head coach Yogi Hickman continues to install an information offense and look for the right combination of players on both sides of the ball.

"We're still learning," Hickman said Tuesday. "We're going to have to be very basic for a while. We're not going to look anything Friday like we're going to look in another three weeks."

West Brunswick finished 5-1 in the Waccamaw Conference last year—sharing the league championship with Whiteville and West Columbus—and 12-3 overall.

Twelve of the 14 returning players who were members of the Trojans' state 3A championship team last year are expected to start this season.

Returning are Eric Johnson, Cory Hill, Derek Frink, Timothy Daniels, Dexter Bass, Brian Gore, Ty Brown, James Morgan, Kwabena Green,

Brian McDowell, Jonathan Faulk, Kelly Wooten, Marcus McCray and Terrell Thomas.

Key losses from last year's club include linemen Phillip Johnson, Steve Brooks, Charlie Peele and Wayne Branch and running backs Steve Holmes and Michael Lance and William Stanley.

"We got hit pretty hard," Hickman said.

On offense, Hickman inherited three players who started every game last year, but one of those is playing a different position. Defensively, five of the front seven are new.

"What we have is a very inexperienced football team. I'm not crying, but it's just a different football team," Hickman said.

"I don't want people to get down on these kids because they're working hard. We're going to be a good football team eventually," he said. "What we're concentrating on is improving as a football team and it's going very slow."

Hickman said speed and quickness at the skill positions will be the greatest strength for West Brunswick, which carries a six-game winning streak into the season.

And what does the new coach think about his Waccamaw Conference peers picking the Trojans to win the conference championship?

WEST BRUNSWICK FOOTBALL SCHEDULE	
DATE	OPPONENT
Aug. 26	at South Brunswick
Sept. 2	Dillon, S.C.
Sept. 9	Wilmington Hoggard
Sept. 16	at Mullins, S.C. (8:00)
Sept. 23	at South Columbus*
Sept. 30	at Pender*
Oct. 7	Whiteville*
Oct. 14	at East Columbus*
Oct. 21	West Columbus*
Oct. 28	at Lumberton
Nov. 4	South Brunswick*
*Waccamaw Conference game	
—Games start at 7:30 p.m. unless noted	

"Obviously they haven't been to practice," he said. "I think there's some unreasonable expectations. But people are going to take shots at you when you're the defending champion."

Hickman said West Brunswick's goal is to win the conference championship. That would guarantee a berth in the state playoffs, and from there anything is possible.

At this point, Hickman says defending the state 3A championship is the last thing on his mind.

"That's a goal for everybody playing football in the state. That's what you keep totally in the background until you make the playoffs," he said.

West Brunswick is looking for its eighth consecutive winning season. The Trojans have a record of 66-21 since 1987, including a 36-8 mark over the last three years.

## The Starting Lineup

West's starting offense Friday night will include only three players who started every game last year, and one of those has switched to a different position.

Senior Eric Johnson (6-1, 185) returns for his second season as the starting quarterback. An outstanding athlete and leader, Johnson will be called on to run and pass.

As a junior, Johnson passed for 753 yards and nine touchdowns and also rushed for 295 yards and two more scores.

Timothy "Salt" Daniels (6-2, 200), who started at tight end last year, has been moved to tailback. The other returning starter is senior guard Kelly Wooten (5-10, 175).

Junior Kwabena Green (6-1, 245) saw considerable action last season on the offensive line and will occupy one of the tackle spots. Sophomore Brian "Bull" Nealy (6-1, 240) also will start at tackle.

Other offensive starters include senior James Morgan (5-11, 195) at fullback, senior Ty Brown (6-2, 180) at flanker, junior Derek Frink (6-6, 175) at split end, junior Jamal Stanley (6-0, 180) at tight end and

junior Brian McDowell (5-11, 190) at center.

Jonathan Faulk (5-9, 210), a senior who will start at offensive guard and defensive tackle this season, was injured in a car accident last weekend and may miss Friday night's opener.

Sophomore Cliff Gore (6-1, 200) is expected to take his spot in the lineup if Faulk cannot play.

West Brunswick's defense will be anchored once again this year by Green at middle linebacker. He is considered one of the top high school juniors in the state.

Green led the Trojans in tackles last year with 132, including 46 solo stops. He also recovered five fumbles, had one interception and blocked three kicks in 1993.

West's only returning defensive lineman is Faulk, who received the Rookie Of The Year Award after a fine season in 1993. He was the second-leading tackler on the line last year with 50 stops.

Morgan, who made 45 tackles and had three interceptions last season, has moved from the secondary to linebacker.

Even with Morgan's move to linebacker, West's secondary remains strong with the return of Johnson and Daniels.

An outstanding cover man at cornerback, Daniels led the defensive backs last season with 68 tackles. He also had one interception, forced three fumbles and recovered two.

Johnson, who made 41 tackles last season with two fumble recoveries, will occupy one of the safety spots.

Other defensive starters include McDowell and Wooten at defensive end and Gore and senior Mark Everette (5-11, 185) at tackle.

Junior Terrell Thomas (6-2, 200) will start at linebacker, and senior Brian Gore (5-9, 155) and sophomore Cory Hill (5-10, 160) will round out the secondary.

Hickman expects the kicking game to be one of West Brunswick's strengths this year with Frink back



WEST'S KWABENA GREEN (50) and Cory Hill (4) slap hands prior to last week's scrimmage against Wallace-Rose Hill. The Trojans play their first real game Friday night.

STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

as the Trojans' punter and place kicker.

Frink converted 42 of 54 extra point attempts (78 percent) last year, including 16 of 18 in the playoffs.

## The Coaching Staff

Before coming to West Brunswick, Hickman was the head football coach at St. Pauls from 1988 to 1993. In six years, he guided the Bulldogs to six conference championships and an overall record of 64-10-1.

Hickman is a Whiteville native and was an assistant coach at Whiteville High School for three years, serving as offensive coordinator when the Wolfpack won the state 2A championship in 1987.

The strong staff of assistant coaches includes veterans Mike Alderson (defensive coordinator) and Joe Noble and newcomers Heath Hewett (offensive coordinator), Frank Ciamillo, Emmett Lay and Chip Leavitt.

WEST BRUNSWICK ROSTER					
No.	Name	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Grade
2	Timmy Vaught	RB/LB	5-9	155	11
4	Eric Johnson	QB/DB	6-1	185	12
5	Cory Hill	RB/DB	5-10	160	10
4	Derek Frink	QB/DB	6-6	175	11
10	Timothy Daniels	RB/DB	6-2	200	12
11	Al Johnson	RB/DL	5-8	150	12
21	Dexter Bass	RB/DB	5-9	155	12
22	Ahmed Green	WR/DB	5-10	160	9
31	Agut Bryant	WR/DB	5-10	165	9
32	Sherrill Lance	RB/DB	5-9	160	12
34	Brian Gore	RB/DB	5-9	155	12
40	Ty Brown	WR/DB	6-2	180	12
42	Jamal Stanley	TE/DL	6-0	180	11
44	Michael Johnson	RB/DL	6-0	180	12
45	Derrick Bland	RB/LB	5-9	165	10
46	James Morgan	RB/LB	5-11	195	12
50	Kwabena Green	OL/LB	6-1	245	11
52	Brian McDowell	OL/LB	5-11	190	11
53	Walt Sellers	OL/DL	5-8	200	11
55	Jonathan Faulk	OL/DL	5-9	210	12
62	Clifford Gore	OL/DL	6-1	200	10
63	Mark Everette	OL/DL	5-11	185	12
65	Kelly Wooten	OL/DL	5-10	175	12
67	Brian Nealy	OL/DL	6-1	240	10
77	Mark Varnum	OL/DL	5-9	200	10
78	Marcus McCray	OL/DL	6-1	275	11
80	Eric Hewett	WR/DB	6-0	165	11
83	Terrell Thomas	TE/LB	6-2	200	11



QUARTERBACK ERIC JOHNSON scrambles for yards at muddy Legion Stadium last Friday. The senior will be one of the keys to West Brunswick's success.

## Grissett Catching On With NCSU Wolfpack

BY DOUG RUTTER

After sitting out his first year at N.C. State University and spending much of 1993 on the sidelines, Jimmy Grissett should start making an impact this fall for the Wolfpack football team.

The former West Brunswick High School standout is competing for one of the starting wide receiver positions, according to NCSU wide receiver coach Jimmy Kiser.

"He's doing great. Jimmy has just worked extremely hard in the off-season to improve his speed and strength," Kiser said. "He's battling for a starting position right now."

Three other players also are in the running for the Wolfpack's wide receiver spot opposite senior Eddie Goines, who is considered one of the top pass-catchers in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE FOOTBALL SCHEDULE	
DATE	OPPONENT
Sept. 1	Bowling Green
Sept. 10	at Clemson
Sept. 24	Western Carolina
Oct. 1	Georgia Tech
Oct. 8	at Louisville
Oct. 15	Wake Forest
Oct. 29	at North Carolina
Nov. 5	at Maryland
Nov. 12	Duke
Nov. 19	Florida State
Nov. 25	at Virginia

"He'll get plenty of playing time without a doubt. I play four or five people every game. He'll get in the rotation quite a bit." —NCSU Receivers Coach Jimmy Kiser

Grissett, who was red-shirted in 1992, is a 6-foot, 188-pound sophomore who coaches say has the best hands on the team.

"He's got huge hands to start with," Kiser said. "If you throw it to him he'll catch it. He can really catch the football."

Whether or not Grissett starts, he's sure to see a lot of action this fall as a receiver and possibly as a punt returner.

"He'll get plenty of playing time without a doubt," Kiser said. "I play four or five people every game. He'll get in the rotation quite a bit."

Kiser said Grissett's greatest improvement during his first two years at N.C. State has been his speed.

When he reported to Raleigh in 1992, coaches timed him at 4.6 seconds in the 40-yard dash. Twice this spring, Grissett was clocked at a blazing 4.38 seconds.

"That's the biggest surprise of the strides he's made," Kiser said. "He's worked hard in the weight room to build himself up. He's a good bit

heavier and a lot stronger."

Most of Grissett's playing time last season was on special teams. "Last year he just got a little taste of it. He's ready to go now. We're looking for three years of a lot of contributions from him," Kiser said.

Grissett should be counted on even more heavily his junior and senior years following the departure of Goines, an All-ACC selection last year who is on track to rewrite many Wolfpack receiving records this season.

As a West Brunswick senior, Grissett helped lead the Trojans to a 13-2 record and the Eastern North Carolina 2A Championship. He caught 34 passes for 745 yards and seven touchdowns and also had eight interceptions in 1991.

The Wolfpack was 7-5 overall in 1993, ending the season with a 42-7 loss to Michigan in the Hall Of Fame Bowl. NCSU finished fifth in the ACC with a 4-4 record under first-year head coach Mike O'Cain.

N.C. State will open the 1994

campaign on a Thursday night, Sept. 1, against visiting Bowling Green. The Wolfpack also has non-conference games at Louisville and home against Western Carolina.

State has ACC home games this year against Georgia Tech, Wake Forest, Duke and Florida State and will play Clemson, North Carolina, Maryland and Virginia on the road.

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