

# SPORTS



**George Cox**  
Sports editor

## Brett's hot Trojans 'turn it up a notch'

As West Brunswick's Trojans journey to Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill this Saturday in a second attempt to win the state 2A football title, let's hope Brunswick County well-wishers, especially those whose loyalties tie directly to the Shallotte high school, appreciate what's happening.

West Brunswick football now can be legitimately counted among the state's best programs in the 2A ranks after successive years in the state championship game. Last year in Chapel Hill, the Trojans lost to Thomasville en route to a 13-2 record under former coach Marshall Seay, an outspoken and sometimes controversial mentor who earned the distinction of taking the program to where it is today.

Seay produced five straight winning seasons, including one title in what many consider the state's best 2A football league. When Seay took the job, he rebuilt his staff while the community improved the facilities.

But his biggest job was to recruit ball players. As former West Brunswick girls basketball coach Ronnie Jenkins, now an assistant principal at North Brunswick, said, "Marshall literally went out to the players' houses, talked with them and their parents and sold them on going out for football." Seay's grassroots effort was the foundation for future success.

Even though there were those who didn't like Seay's methods -- long practices, long coaching meetings -- he got the job done and made it possible when he left for West Brunswick to attract one of North Carolina's top prep football minds in former Tarboro coach Jim Brett.

### Brett moves program to another level

With a completely new offensive system -- a three-back set in primarily a Wing-T formation -- Brett, along with Seay's remaining staff, has carried the Trojans' program up yet another notch. Taking over a program is difficult even under the most favorable circumstances, and it took Brett over half a season to get his ball club playing football with his trademark of hiding the pigskin from the defenders with deft faking and fine execution.

And with 22 players returning next season, Trojan football should continue to improve -- if that is possible. West Brunswick football is indeed in the upper echelon of the 2A ranks and the program is beginning to build a tradition much like Whiteville.

Trojan football is also similar to the West Brunswick basketball program of the 1970s under the late Gary Taylor, who created a 3A dynasty while leading the Trojans to a state runner-up spot in 1974 and the state championship the next season. Ironically, Trojan football can now duplicate the basketball team's success if it can bring home the bacon Saturday against unbeaten Maiden.

Winning begets winning -- even past the conference level. Look at Duke's basketball program. Two straight national titles, six Final Fours in seven seasons. West Brunswick's winning football program is building an expectation in the minds of its players before they even play a varsity game.

And in the process, the Trojans are proving the worth of the post-season playoff format. Remember, for the second successive season West Brunswick (4-2, 10-3) failed to win the conference title. But during the past two seasons the Trojans began peaking at just the right time -- starting with post-season play.

### Brett: 'The best staff I've worked with'

Just as the strength of any major sports program lies in the strength and leadership of the head coach, a head coach's success lies in the quality and dedication of his staff of assistants. Brett underscored the importance of his See Cox column, next page

## Cougars split with Wildcats

South Brunswick's Lady Cougars kept their early season momentum going Tuesday night with a 42-32 win over 4A Wilmington New Hanover, but the Wildcats sent the Cougar boys to their first loss of the season in convincing fashion, 78-46.

South Brunswick's Josh White, who entered the contest scoring at a 38.5-point clip, was held to two points.

In the girls contest, South Brunswick (3-0) stretched a 12-10 first quarter lead into a 29-19 halftime advantage and coasted to the win. Erika Bryant led the Lady Cougars with 14 points and was followed closely by Jenny Fullwood with 13.

The boys game started bad for the Cougars and went downhill from there. New Hanover outscored the visitors in every quarter, holding leads of 16-9 after one period, 43-21 at halftime and 64-38 after three quarters.

Tyrell Hewett led South Brunswick with 15 points. "We didn't play defense, we didn't hustle," said coach Gene Doane. "We didn't make the extra pass."

New Hanover won the junior varsity game, 71-62. Charles Blue led South Brunswick with 17 points and was joined in double figures by Paul Pelham (13) and Jeremy Baker (12).

South Brunswick had been scheduled to host Wilmington Laney on Friday night but the game was postponed until January 6 because of exams. The Cougars' next action is December 18 at home against New Hanover.

## Friday games are postponed

## TITLE CHASE



Steve Holmes scored three times in Friday's 39-14 West Brunswick win that sends the Trojans to the state 2A finals for the second straight year. Holmes, a junior, and senior running mate Aaron Butler -- both 1,500-yard rushers -- will try to offset the effort of Maiden's Antoine Ikard, the all-time leading rusher among North Carolina prep players.

## Blast St. Pauls, 39-14

# Trojans reach 2A finals

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

The game was close for three quarters, but in the end West Brunswick became the first Waccamaw 2A Conference team to defeat a tough, unbeaten St. Pauls Bulldog team this season in the eastern 2A high school football finals, 39-14.

At Rourk Stadium in Shallotte, coach Jim Brett's club (10-3) won its fourth consecutive playoff game and fifth game in succession since being upset by East Bladen in regular season play.

And in the end, it was depth and conditioning which ultimately spelled the difference as the Trojans outscored the 'Dogs 24-0 in the second half to win going away. St. Pauls, which took an early 7-0 lead, just ran out of gas and was beginning to suck air at halftime with

Statistics		
West Brunswick		St. Pauls
11	First downs	14
48-365	Rushes/yards	42-142
18	Yards passing	107
2-6-2	Passes	6-14-2
2-45	Punts	5-38
0-0	Fumbles	6-3
4-40	Penalties	5-27
West Brunswick 7 8 6 18 -- 39		
St. Pauls 7 7 0 0 -- 14		

West Brunswick leading, 15-14.

The Trojans travel to Chapel Hill on Saturday to meet another unbeaten team -- Maiden (14-0) -- in the state championship game at noon at Kenan Stadium on the University of North Carolina campus.

West Brunswick junior running-back Steve Holmes dazzled the home crowd with three scores on runs of 50, 19 and three yards. He totaled 135 yards rushing behind senior fullback Aaron Butler's 182.

West Brunswick rushed 48 times for 365 yards compared to St. Pauls' 142 yards on 42 carries. The visitors did hit for 107 yards through the airways while Brett's team could muster but 18. However, the Wing-T offense continued to do just what it was designed by Brett to do: Eat up the clock while scoring points and keeping the pigskin away from a dangerous St. Pauls offense which was capable of scoring quickly through the air.

Butler scored twice on runs of 57 and 27 yards while Michael Lance scored on a 50-yard fumble recovery -- a touchdown which put the game away. Kwabena Green's strip of the

ball allowed Lance to pick up the loose pigskin and scamper to paydirt.

Brett said his players' previous experience in big games helped them prepare for the contest. His team won the eastern 2A finals last fall over league foe Whiteville.

"(Being in last year's title game) helped us tonight," Brett noted. "It certainly helps (everyone) to have been in a game like this. (At halftime) we made no major changes. I just told them we had 24 minutes to play before going to Chapel Hill."

A West Brunswick decision to go for a first down at midfield in the first quarter backfired as St. Pauls took over on downs and scored first.

"That kind of worried me (St. Pauls getting up 7-0)," he said. "Dumb me. But it worked out all right."

## Maiden features all-time top rusher

The Maiden Blue Devils, who face West Brunswick in Saturday's state 2A championship game, are no strangers to the title contest. Coach Tom Brown's team, unbeaten at 14-0 and led by North Carolina's all-time leading prep rusher, senior Antoine Ikard, stands 2-0 in state championship action.

In 1978, Maiden defeated coach Jack Holley's Tabor City Red Devils, 36-14, for the North Carolina crown -- its second state title. In 1971, when the North Carolina High School Athletic Association crowned only the eastern and western champions in each classification, the Blue Devils won the western title with a victory over Mt. Pleasant.

Brown has been at Maiden (near Hickory) since the mid-1970s and the Blue Devils have made the state playoffs 13 times since 1971. Maiden went 10-2 last season and has a record of 41-7-1 during the past four seasons.

The Blue Devils snapped an 18-game Thomasville winning streak last week with a 21-0 victory over the defending state 2A champions, who defeated West Brunswick in the championship game last season.

The key to beating Maiden is stopping Ikard, who has rushed for 1,952 yards this season and 6,690 during his illustrious prep career.

# Can Trojans win the big one?

By George Cox  
Sports Editor

As coach Jim Brett's 1992 eastern North Carolina 2A football champion West Brunswick prepares to embark to Chapel Hill to play unbeaten Maiden (14-0) Saturday in Kenan Stadium at high noon for the state title, a couple of questions remain.

Can the Trojans continue their impressive run that started when the post-season playoffs began four weeks ago, and can they defeat their third consecutive unbeaten opponent? For the past two weeks, Brett's team has scored second-half shutouts and ultimate victories over unbeaten Farmville Central and St. Pauls, 41-14 and 39-14, respectively.

The Trojans beat South Columbus, 47-0, to begin playoff competition four weeks ago and then beat

Clinton, 14-6, the next week. That's 141 playoff points (35 per game) versus just 34 (six per game) for opponents.

Radio station WDZD will carry the game live with Dwight Flanagan doing the play-by-play and Johnny Craig offering the color. Air time Saturday is 11:45 a.m.

For the season, West Brunswick has yielded just 97 points -- fifth best in the state. And its offense has gone into overdrive with a ground attack which has two runners -- Steve Holmes and fullback Aaron Butler -- each near the 1,500-yard mark for the campaign and a third back now functioning at nearly the same level.

Saturday's state championship participation will be the second time for both Brett and the Trojans. As head coach at Tarboro High for 18 years, Brett led that eastern North Carolina school to the state title in

his only championship game appearance in 1984.

The Trojans reached the state 2A title game last fall in Chapel Hill against Thomasville, losing to the western champions, 20-6.

"We're going to approach going to Chapel Hill in a business-like manner," Brett said in his coaching office after Friday night's stunning 39-14 win over Yogi Hickman's St. Pauls outfit.

"I hope we're not going up there just for the chance to play in the state championship game. I hope we're going up there with the anticipation of winning it. We want to have fun, too, but we want to win."

In order to win, the Trojans must continue playing flawlessly on offense. The success of West Brunswick has been its ability to attack offensively -- even when it has the

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**Jim Brett**  
Trojans head coach