

SHOWDOWN AT HIGH NOON

West Brunswick Faces Thomasville In State Finals

BY DOUG RUTTER

West Brunswick's Trojans will face a team with a rich football tradition in the Thomasville Bulldogs when they suit up for the N.C. 2-A High School Championship Saturday in Chapel Hill.

Thomasville has advanced to the state 2-A finals four of the last five years, while the Trojans are making their first trip.

"I think our biggest challenge is going to be just everybody focusing on doing their job each play and not worrying about who's in the stands and all of the surroundings," said West Brunswick Head Coach Marshall Seay.

The Trojans, runners-up in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference, won the eastern 2-A championship last Friday with a 27-7 win at East Bladen. Thomasville won the western crown last week with a 14-0 win at Swannanoa Owen.

Both teams enter the state championship with 13-1 records. They run similar offenses, and both West Brunswick and Thomasville depend on their strong defenses.

The Trojans have all the incentive they need for Saturday's state championship, according to senior tailback Aldwin Lance.

West Brunswick has dedicated the season to former student-athlete George Daniels, who was killed in a car accident in May.

Fred Bradley, who served as defensive coordinator at West Brunswick from 1986 to 1990, died of cancer Nov. 8.

"We set a goal all year to go to the championship. Now we're ready to win it," Lance said after last week's victory at East Bladen. "We're doing this for George and Coach Bradley. This ain't where we're stopping."

Lance has led the offense all season, rushing for 1,504 yards and scoring 28 touchdowns. Fullback Aaron Butler has rushed for 605 yards and scored six touchdowns.

In addition to the strong running game, West Brunswick has had success through the air with the Brian Alderson to Jimmy Grissett combination.

Alderson, the senior quarterback, has thrown for 907 yards and 10 touchdowns this year and ran for two more scores.

Grissett, who was selected to play in this weekend's Shrine Bowl but will play in the state championship game instead, has caught 26 passes for 673 yards and scored six touchdowns.

Coach Seay said the Trojans will have to "mix things up" on offense, throwing more than usual and using different formations, in order to beat Thomasville.

"There's places where we're a little stronger and there's places where they're a little stronger," Seay said.



TROJAN TAILBACK ALDWIN LANCE celebrates one of his three touchdowns last week at East Bladen, where the senior rushed for 208 yards to lead his team to a 27-7 victory. West Brunswick plays Thomasville for the state 2-A championship Saturday at noon at Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

"What we've got to try to do is create a little mismatch in there somewhere."

Defensively, the Trojans have been led by linebackers Daniel Russ, Adam Johnson and Butler. West Brunswick has a young, quick defensive front featuring three sophomores and one junior.

Thomasville, runner-up in the Central Carolina 2-A/3-A Conference, made it to the state finals in 1987, 1988 and 1990.

The Bulldogs lost to Whiteville 14-12 in 1987, beat Hertford County 13-10 in 1988 and fell to Clinton 14-6 last year.

They lost their only game this year to conference champ North Davidson the last week of the regular season by a 14-13 score.

The Bulldogs have scored 491 points this year, for an average of 35 points a game, and yielded only 67 for an average of 4.8 points per game. Thomasville has posted eight shutouts this season.

"On film, they look pretty tough on defense," Seay said of Thomasville. "It looks like it's going to be an awful tough shell to crack."

Seay said the Trojan offensive line needs to perform like it did last week at East Bladen, when West Brunswick rushed for 226 yards.

In the playoffs, the Bulldogs have bested Charlotte Catholic 40-14, Maiden 22-0, Forest Hills 30-9 and Swannanoa Owen 14-0.

Coach Allen Brown is in his 19th season as head coach of the Bulldogs. He has nine assistant coaches.

Thomasville uses primarily a ground attack on offense, running out of the pro "I" formation like West Brunswick.

Lamont Pegues, who has rushed for 1,795 yards and scored 29 touchdowns this season, is the team's biggest offensive threat.

"We've got to stop the tailback," Seay said. "They don't seem to want to throw it that much, but they will throw the high percentage stuff. They're forte is defense."

Defensive leaders for Thomasville include linebackers Perez Boulware and Terrell Candy, nose guard Chris McNeil and defensive tackle Ryan Johnson.

Boulware, a 6-foot-2-inch, 200-pound senior, was also picked to play in the Shrine Bowl Saturday, but will be playing for the state championship.

The West Brunswick coaches and players planned to leave for Chapel Hill today (Thursday) and practice on the University of North Carolina practice field Friday before the game Saturday at noon.

"Hopefully, going up this early will allow the kids to get used to their surroundings so they can get a good night's sleep on Friday," Seay said.

Visiting the UNC campus and Kenan Stadium will be a new experience for most of the players.

"This is going to be a good experience for our kids—something they'll never forget," Seay said.

The N.C. High School Athletic Association will recognize offensive and defensive players of the game and choose a most valuable player after Saturday's contest.

Tickets to the game will cost \$6 in advance and \$7 at the gate. Tickets are on sale at West Brunswick High School.

Fans who buy tickets for the 2-A championship will be allowed to stay and watch the 1-A final at 3:45 p.m. and the 4-A title game at 7:30 p.m.

RECREATION BRIEFS

Trojan-Aire Youth Basketball Registration Scheduled Jan. 4

The Trojan-Aire Association's youth basketball program starts next month, with registration scheduled Saturday, Jan. 4, at 9 a.m. in the West Brunswick High School gym.

Local youth ages 11 to 14 are eligible to compete in the eight-week program, which will be held each Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon.

West Brunswick High School Head Basketball Coach Billy Mims will direct the program, with varsity basketball team members to coach the youths.

The goal of the program is to teach youngsters the fundamentals of basketball in a well-supervised environment that is evenly balanced between instruction and competition, said Mims.

The \$20 registration fee covers the cost of a team shirt and a trophy.

Men's League Starting

Brunswick County Parks and Recreation is now accepting teams for an "Over 30 Men's Basketball League."

Play is expected to begin in January at South Brunswick Middle School at Boiling Spring Lakes.

For more information, call Joe Rosselli at 253-4357 or 1-800-222-4790.

Ski Trip Planned

A downhill ski trip to Appalachian Ski Resort is planned Jan.

17-19 by the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department.

The trip will be ideal for beginners, said spokesman Emma McGraw. Anyone interested must pay a \$32.16 deposit by Dec. 17.

Lodging will be provided at a motel in Blowing Rock, and the cost will be determined by the number of people sharing a room.

The approximate cost with four people in a room will be \$83 per person, which covers lodging for two nights, lift ticket and rentals for one day and transportation.

For more information, call McGraw at 253-4357 or 1-800-222-4790.

Opera Slated

The Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department is scheduling a trip to a performance of *Tosca* by the New York City Opera National Company when it comes to the North Carolina State University Reynolds Coliseum in Raleigh.

The show is slated for Thursday, Jan. 23. Cost is \$5 for tickets, plus transportation.

Tickets are available from the Recreation Department. For information call Emma McGraw at 919-253-4357 or 1-800-222-4790, weekdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Tour Slated

The Brunswick County Parks and

Recreation Department is scheduling a senior citizens trip to historic Kenansville Jan. 8.

The trip will include tours of Liberty Hall, the Cowan Museum and the Duplin Winery.

Cost is \$10, which includes transportation and admission fees. Payment and registration should be made no later than Friday, Dec. 13.

Contact Kathleen Poston, 253-4357 or 1-800-222-4790, weekdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. for information.

Sign-ups Continue

Registration for the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department's youth basketball and wrestling programs will continue for several more weeks.

Local wrestlers ages 5 to 14 have until Jan. 29 to sign up for the program. Registration and practice is held each Wednesday and Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Registration sites are Lincoln Primary School, West Brunswick High School and South Brunswick High School.

Area youths interested in basketball can sign up through Feb. 8. Registration and practices are held each Saturday from 9 a.m. until noon at four locations.

Children in the Shallotte area who are 5 to 7 years old can sign up at

Union Primary School, Shallotte area youth ages 8 to 10 play at Shallotte Middle School.

In the Leland area, youth basketball players can register and practice

at Leland Middle School.

Children from the Southport and Oak Island area can sign up at South Brunswick Middle School.

The registration fee for both pro-

grams is \$10 per child, which covers the cost of a T-shirt.

For more information, call Joe Rosselli, county athletic coordinator, at 253-4357 or 1-800-222-4790.

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