

FRIDAY NIGHT PREVIEW

# Trojans Host Northeast Guilford In Playoff Opener

**BY DOUG RUTTER**  
The list of North Carolina high school football teams that have won nine state playoff games in the last two years is an extremely short one. In fact, West Brunswick is the only team on that list and the Trojans hope to continue their magic Friday night when they host Northeast Guilford in the first round of the state 3A playoffs.

West Brunswick (7-3) finished the regular season last Friday with a 29-20 win at South Brunswick. The Trojans tied with Whiteville and West Columbus for the Waccamaw Conference championship.

Northeast Guilford (6-4) is coming off a 14-7 victory over Northwest Guilford—a win that the Rams needed in order to qualify for the playoffs as the second-place team from the Triad Conference.

As the Waccamaw's top 3A team, the Trojans will have home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. The Rams face a four-hour bus ride to play at Rourk Stadium.

"Obviously we like the advantage of being at home," West Brunswick Coach Jim Brett said Monday. "Being at home this week might be a big advantage for us. It's a long, hard trip for them."

Brett, who led the Trojans to the state 2A championship last year, said he was concerned about his players being ready for the playoff game after last week's emotional win at South Brunswick.

"It's going to be hard for our kids to get up for this game after last week," he admitted. "We'll have to be up for every game from here on out or our season could be over."

Most of the West Brunswick players who take the field Friday night will know what to expect in the playoffs. A dozen of them started in last year's state championship game.

"We've got right many kids who went through this last year in the playoffs," Brett said. "I would think that our experience will help us. Our kids know if they lose the season's over."

*"Being at home this week might be a big advantage for us. It's a long, hard trip for them."*

—Trojan Coach Jim Brett

The Trojans have scored 300 points this season and yielded 135, while Northeast Guilford has scored 242 and given up 167.

West Brunswick lost its first two games of the season but bounced back with a six-game winning streak. After their only conference loss of the season at West Columbus, the Trojans won their last two contests.

West has posted wins this season over Hoggard (41-6), Georgetown, S.C. (41-18), South Columbus (45-0), Pender (42-7), Whiteville (28-25), Lumberton (34-8 endowment game) and South Brunswick.

The Trojans' only losses this sea-

son were to Waccamaw Conference foe West Columbus (7-6) and non-conference opponents Conway, S.C., (25-21) and Purnell-Swett (15-6).

Northeast Guilford has posted wins over Bartlett Yancey (28-0), Rockingham County (21-12), Eastern Guilford (62-6), Southwest Guilford (35-6), McMichael (31-14) and Northwest Guilford.

The Rams have lost to Reidsville (14-0), Burlington Williams (28-27), Southeast Guilford (24-21) and Greensboro Page (56-3).

Brett said Northeast Guilford has average size with better-than-average quickness, something the Trojans will have to contain if they

want to advance to the second round of the playoffs.

"They've got some excellent skill people," Brett said of the Rams. "They're a wishbone-option type team. Everything seems to focus around the quarterback. He's a runner."

The Rams also have a big fullback, which prevents opposing defenses from focusing all of its efforts on stopping the option.

The Trojan offense has relied heavily on a deceptive, three-back running attack that uses multiple fakes to fool opponents. West has rushed 443 times this season for 2818 yards, gaining an average of 6.4 yards per attempt.

Senior halfback Steve Holmes leads the ground assault with 923 yards on 112 carries (8.2-yard average) and 14 touchdowns. For his career, Holmes has 2,979 yards and 43 TDs.

Halfback William Stanley has scored 91 times for 517 yards and scored seven touchdowns. Fullback

Michael Lance has rushed 119 times for 655 yards and nine touchdowns.

The Trojans didn't pass much during the regular season, but they didn't need to with a solid running game.

When they did throw, junior quarterback Eric Johnson was effective. He completed 27 of 60 pass attempts for 497 yards with eight touchdowns and just two interceptions.

Brett said the Trojans have been working the last couple weeks on spreading the field to improve the running and passing game. "If we can do that it'll give our opponents something else to prepare for and it'll give us more options on offense," he said.

West Brunswick, which made the jump from the 2A classification to the 3A class this year, should see more high-caliber teams in this year's playoffs than it did last year.

"I think we'll see a big difference," said Brett, who coached in (See FRIDAY, Following Page)

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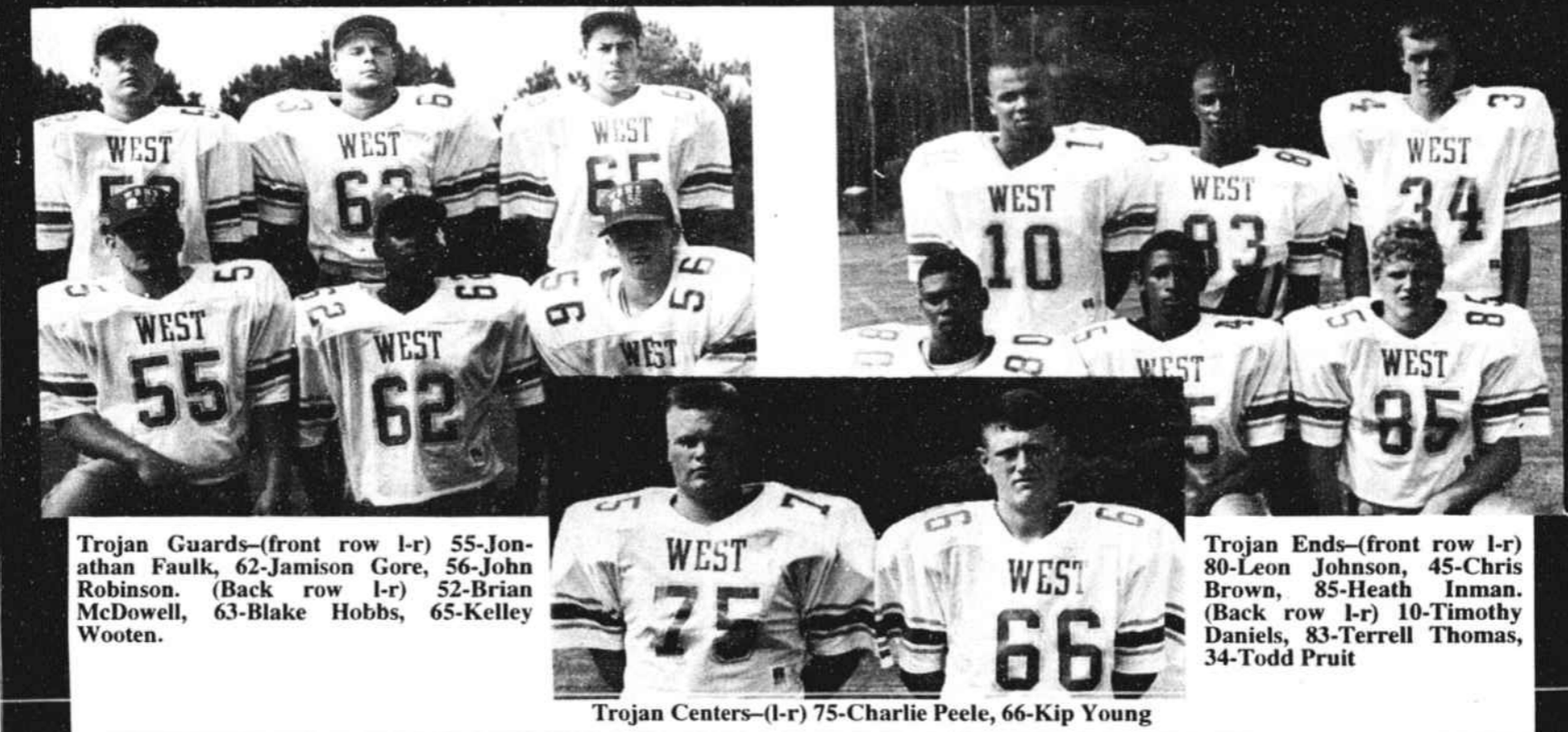
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