1966 Pioneer Football Team

The 1966 Conestoga High School Football team was coached by William Paolantonio. His assistants were Joseph Ujobai, Peter Ramsay and Harry Golden. The team compiled a six-win, four-loss record with two big wins over previously undefeated Penncrest and traditional Thanksgiving Day rival West Chester. And the Pioneers were the Suburban Two League champions.

Tony Domenick, Steve Tifft and Todd Parrish were named to the first team All-Mainline. Don Ingham was selected to the second team, and Nick Elisio received honorable mention.

Although a team effort was responsible for Conestoga's winning record, certain individuals deserved the spotlight. Senior standouts: Craig Welburn was the leading scorer until he was injured in the Penncrest game. Nick Elisio led the team to victory in five of the six games he quarterbacked. Tony Domenick was a stalwart three-year varsity lineman. Backs Drew Knowlton and Bill Tumilty and linemen Jeff Proter, Don Ingham and Chris Dexter were strong and steady throughout the season. Larry Thompson was responsible for the first field goal in Conestoga's football history.

Pioneers Need Better Team Depth

Coach Eyes Improvement As Season Progresses

Daily Local News September 22, 1966

It is always a gamble when you have to spread things thin over a big surface and that is the problem that faces the Conestoga Pioneers as they open the 1966 football season. "Depth is our big problem," lamented Pioneer coach bill Paolantonio as he thought about the thin spots on his club.

"We have a combination need of physical size and experience, but we need experience more than anything," he added. "We have a 60 man squad out this year and about 50 per cent of that is sophomores. We just don't have the knowledgeable replacements," he explained.

Having so few experienced players is forcing Paolantonio to play a lot of boys both ways and that can prove costly in the powerful Suburban Two League. In the Pioneers' first game, for instance, Conestoga was giving rough Ridley Township a good battle, but then wilted late in the game while dropping 26-6 decision.

Need Experience

"What we need is two or three games under our belt, and we need a victory," The Pioneer mentor revealed. "A victory would give us the momentum and confidence we need," he added.

With the exception of experience, Conestoga isn't too bad off as Paolantonio has five experienced

lettermen and some good sized prospects to drill into a unit. The Pioneers have real good size in some positions, but the size drops off in others. At worst, Conestoga is at least as big as it was last season.

The overall team speed is good, and Paolantonio thinks that "This is a faster team than we had last year, both backs and linemen." Conestoga has two returnees to the backfield in flanker Craig Welburn and halfback Bill Tumilty.

Welburn, who had good speed and good hands, is used primarily as a receiver and on reverses. Tumilty has been recovering from an injury and is hobbling around on a bad ankle. The coach says that he is potentially a good, solid runner, and Paolantonio expects him to see a lot of action this season.

Vogan Gets Nod

Chuck Vogan, who has gotten the nod for the starting quarterback position, is proving himself worthwhile as he can get the ball to the receivers and is getting to the position where he can call the type of game Paolantonio wants.

"He'll be alright. He's starting to put things together now. All he needs is more experience," Paolantonio said of Vogan.

Drew Molten had been the starting fullback, but he got banged up in the Ridley Township game, and Paolantonio isn't sure when he's going to be back. Mike Byrd and Warren Smith, a pair of sophomores, have been working out at the fullback position.

1966 Roster

No	Name	Position	Class	No	Name	Position	Class
21	Nick Elisio	Qback	12	73	Cliff Duncan	Tackle	11
32	Drew Knowlton	HBack	12	74	Bob Hill	Tackle	11
31	Bill Tumilty	HBack	12	77	Scott Morrow	Tackle	11
83	Craig Welburn	WBack	12	72	Bob Zogby	Tackle	11
20	Bob Weller	Back	12	23	Mike Byrd	Back	10
52	John Hoffman	Center	12	14	William DiDomenico	Back	10
51	Don Ingham	Center	12	43	Jeff Hyde	Back	10
86	Jeff Porter	End	12		Bruce McMillan	Back	10
12	Larry Thompson	End	12	53	Todd Parrish	Back	10
65	Tony Domenick	Guard	12	42	Steve Scartozzo	Back	10
70	Chris Dexter	Tackle	12	6	Bill Smith	QBack	10
60	Marc Steinbring	Tackle	12	33	Warren Smith	Back	10
41	John Purtell	Back	11	15	Kris Thoemke	Back	10
30	Charles Shain	Back	11	66	Henry Gulbrandsen	Center	10
40	Robert Swanson	Back	11	50	James Johnson	Center	10
22	Charles Vogan	QBack	11	81	Steve Braun	End	10
11	Lawrence Welch	QBack	11	84	Curt Hiller	End	10
82	John Bollman	End	11	38	Byron Lengsfield	End	10
85	Frank Cook	End	11	87	Charles Rosenberg	End	10
80	Steve Tifft	End	11	67	Richard Martin	Guard	10
62	David Alexander	Guard	11	61	Jeff Young	Guard	10
64	David Heaton	Guard	11	76	Jeff Christman	Tackle	10
71	David Beadling	Tackle	11		Kenneth Thompson	Tackle	10



Mike Byrd 23, Larry Thompson 12, Nick Elisio 21, Scott Morrow 77, Marc Steinbring 60, Steve Braun 81, John Hoffman 52, Coach Paolantonio kneeling

Tifft, Welburn Spark Pioneers to 29-0 Win

Daily Local News September 27, 1966

Steve Tifft, Conestoga's junior end was on the ball – for much of the game Saturday against Marple-Newtown and helped spur the Pioneers to their first win of the season taking a 29-0 victory over the visiting Tigers. Tifft recovered three fumbles by the Tigers and made a tackle in the end zone for a safety on another play.

Conestoga got top offensive performances from halfback Craig Welburn and quarterback Chuck Vogan to cop their first Suburban Two League win.

Didn't Get Down

Pioneer coach Bill Paolantonio was jubilant with the triumph. "The biggest thing is that we didn't get down or behind in this game, the boys wanted to win it, and the breaks turned our way," he said. Paolantonio also noted that Pioneers have a regular fumble drill in practice.

Conestoga's defense, which was rugged all day, held a deep Tiger penetration at the 27 at the start of the second period to take over the ball. Vogan went five yards on a keeper.

The ball went to Welburn on the next play on a reverse. The lanky halfback who is a top flight hurdler and sprinter for the track team displayed some of his form in both as he hurdled two of his own players and outraced several Marple defenders to the goal line for a 68-yard score.

Sophomore placekicker Todd Parrish then booted the first of three extra points to give Conestoga the lead, 7-0.

Tifft made a key fumble recovery near the end of the half after Marple-Newtown had recovered a fumbled punt on the Pioneer two. With 1:25 left, Tifft pounced on a loose Tiger fumble at the three to help the Pioneers keep the lead.

Tifft was on the ball again in the third period. Don Ingham hit quarterback Jeff McLaughlin forcing him to drop the ball while attempting to pass. Tifft gathered the ball in at the 31.

After a running play and penalty gained six yards, Welburn took off on the reverse play again carrying down the left sideline, jumping over tacklers and treading the sideline for a 25-yard touchdown run. Parrish converted, and Conestoga led 14-0.

Score Safety

Marple-Newtown took the kickoff at the 29 but a five yard penalty and a tackle by Jeff Porter of Conestoga helped force the Tigers back to

the 20. The snap to the punter was wild again. Tifft was in on the punter who didn't get hold of the ball until he was in the end zone. Tifft made the tackle for the safety.

The Pioneers made two more fumble recoveries in the period, one by sophomore Jeff Young on a fumbled punt that seemed to be good for a touchdown but officials ruled the play dead at the line of scrimmage and brought the ball back. The Pioneers recovered a lateral at the Marple 12 a few seconds later but the drive stalled on four downs.

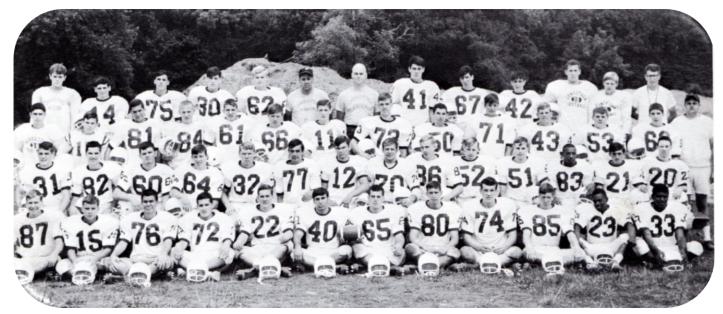
Marple-Newtown continued to suffer on punting situations. Another bad snap sailed over the punter's head with Tifft recovering the pigskin at the two yard line. Three plays later Vogan sneaked over for the score.

Conestoga regained possession of the ball four plays later. Welburn nearly broke loose for the third time as he carried the ball from his own 15 to the Marple 20 for a 65-yard gain before begin caught.

Parrish moved the ball to the 15, and Drew Knowlton carried twice for the first down at the eight. Three plays later Vogan inched over from the one. Parrish converted with 4:39 to end the scoring.

The Pioneers will play at Harriton Saturday.

1966 Team Photo



Front row: Charles Rosenberg, Kris Thoemke, Jeff Chrsitman, Bob Zogby, Charles Vogan, Bob Swanson, Tony Domenick, Steve Tifft, Bob Hill, Frank Cook, Mike Byrd, Warren Smith.

Second row: Bill Tumilty, John Bollman, Marc Steinbring, David Heaton, Drew Knowlton, Scott Morrow, Larry Thompson, Chris Dexter, Jeff Porter, John Hoffman, Don Ingham, Craig Welburn, Nick Elisio, Bob Weller

Third row: Byron Lengsfield, Lewis, Steve Braun, Curt Hiller, Jeff Young, Todd Parrish, Larry Welch, Cliff Duncan, James Johnson, David Beadling, Jeff Hyde, Henry Gulbrandsen, John DiAddezio, Coach Ramsay Back row: Bruce McMillan, William DiDomenico, Bruce Collier, David Alexander, Coach Paolantonio, Coach Golden, John Purtell, Richard Martin, Steve Scartozzi, Ken Thompson, Bill Smith, Coach Ujobai

Conestoga Dealt 18-6 Loss By Harriton

Daily Local News October 4, 1966

Conestoga's Pioneers lost their second game of the season to Harriton yesterday, 18-6. Harriton leads Suburban South with a 3-0 mark. Conestoga is 1-2 in league play.

Conestoga Suffers Loss to Haverford

Daily Local News October 11, 1966

Conestoga suffered its third Suburban South League loss as league leading Haverford edged the Pioneers, 14-7 at Brookline. The 'Fords who stopped Ridley's 23-game win streak earlier in the season scored in the first and third periods to hole the Pioneers at bay. Conestoga scored in the last period with Drew Knowlton plunging in from the two.

Pioneer Defense Stops Penncrest

Undefeated Visitors Fall To Conestoga by 13-6

By JOHN BRITT

(Local News Sports Editor)

Conestoga coach Bill Paolantonio likes to say very politely that his team extended itself in upsetting previously undefeated Penncrest, 13-6, on the Berwyn field last night, but in every day language the Pioneers just gutted it out.

Conestoga bottled up the explosive Penncrest attack with one of those rare performances when a team comes up with the big defensive plays to break down the opposition's drives. The Pioneers were at fault only once on defense last night, and it cost them six points.

"Boy, they really hit out there tonight," beamed an elated Paolantonio amid the pandemonium of the Pioneer locker room following the big victory.

Pioneers Hit Hard

The "hit" that the Pioneers put on Penncrest accounted for a number of fumbles throughout the game that broke down drives and enabled Conestoga to completely control the first half.

"We figured that we had to stop this Townsend and then we might have a good shot at stopping them. We let him get loose only once, and you saw the result," Paolantonio told a locker room visitor, explaining the one TD his squad relinquished.

Outside of that, however, the Pioneers managed to put the skids to the vaunted Penncrest offense at every turn and found a number of "heroes" coming up with the big play when it was really needed.

Hill Recovers, Sets Up TD

Penncrest ran off only seven plays in the first quarter, giving up the ball on fumbles the first two

times it gained possession. End Jeff Porter and tackle Bob Hill scooped up the fumbles. Hill's recovery set up Conestoga's first TD when the Pioneers took over on the Penncrest 29.

Conestoga fought its way into the end zone in nine plays. Warren Swanson, Bill Tumilty and Nick Elisio shared the load with Tumilty driving over from the one for the TD with just 1:24 remaining. Larry Thompson then booted the extra point through the uprights and the upset was in the making.

Conestoga threatened to score again in the second quarter when the Pioneers drove from their own 13 to a first and goal at the Penncrest five. Bill Tumilty knocked off a big chunk of that yardage when he went off right tackle and cut back to the left side on a 40-yard sprint. The Penncrest defense held, however, and Thompson's field goal attempt from the 15 with just 23 seconds to the half missed on the left side by inches.

Porter, Domenick, Dexter Intercept

The Pioneers continued to come up with the big defensive plays in the second half. Penncrest was fired up and appeared to be driving for a score as they knocked off big yardage with a couple of runs, but then Jeff Porter intercepted a pass to stop that drive.

Conestoga missed a golden opportunity to score when they put a hard rush on the Penncrest QB on a passing play. The pass was batted up, and guard Tony Dominick intercepted at the Penncrest 14. Once again, Penncrest stopped the Conestoga offense from going in when the Pioneers were inside the 20.

Penncrest appeared ready to roll again and moved from its own 13 to the 48 in just five plays, but then tackle Chris Dexter intercepted another pass, and the Pioneers were in possession on the visitor's 33.

(continued on next page)

Pioneer Defense Stops Penncrest

Elisio Scores

With the help of a 15-yard penalty and strong running by Bob Swanson, the Pioneers moved to the one, and Nick Elisio took it in on a keeper with just 24 second remaining in the third quarter.

With 10:30 remaining in the game, Penncrest was still very much alive, but a 15 yard penalty the next time they got the ball just about killed any hopes they had. It prevented the Lions from getting a first down, and Conestoga went into time-killing maneuvers.

Quarterback Elisio took over at his own 25 and used Todd Parrish, a 170-pound back, to literally jam the ball down Penncrest's throat. The Pioneers picked up four first downs in 16 plays, consuming 6:50 of the remaining time. Parrish bulled his way through the Penncrest line on 10 of those plays.

Penncrest took over on its own 20 with just 45 seconds remaining, and Paolantonio made sure the Lions weren't going to unleash the bomb. The Pioneers used only three men to rush and had a flock of pass defenders.

"We just wanted to prevent them from getting off the long pass. With that amount of time left, we figured we could give them the short passes and runs for first downs and still run out the clock," the coach concluded.

> Daily Local News October 15, 1966



BIG SCORE – Conestoga's Bob Hill (74) signals along with official that the TD is good as Bill Tumilty dives in from the one-yard line for the Pioneers first score in their 13-6 upset over previously undefeated Penncrest. Photo by Harold Bard



Todd Parrish (53)

Pioneers Upend Upper Darby, 16-6, With Ball Control

Daily Local News October 25, 1966

Conestoga's Pioneers used ball control tactics in the second half plus the good left foot of Larry Thompson to upend Upper Darby, 16-6, in a morning game Saturday at Berwyn.

Pioneer coach Bill Paolantonio said afterwards that he wanted to control the ball in the second half after the Royals scored in the closing moments of the first half on long passes.

Thompson booted a 15-yard field goal in the final period to put the game out of reach with three minutes remaining.

Ball Control

"We wanted to control the ball in the second half," Paolantonio indicated, "and I guess we did a fairly good job of it." Conestoga had the ball for 42 plays while the Royals held it for 10 plays.

The Pioneers coach was pleased with his team's second league win in a row that evened their Suburban Two mark at 3-3. The win was made sweeter by the fact that it was attained although three players were missing with injuries including Craig Welburn, Don Ingham and Bob Swanson.

Conestoga made the most of the running game against Upper Darby with Bill Tumilty, Drew Knowlton and Todd Parrish gaining the real estate directed by quarterback Nick Elisio.

Pass to Porter

The Pioneers scored first after they recovered a fumble at the enemy 42. A 15-yard pass to Jeff Porter at the 15 was the key play. Knowlton took it over off left tackle from the two. Thompson booted the point after.

Neither team got much of an attack going until the final minutes of the half when Upper Darby got their lone score.

Conestoga went 86 yards in 17 plays with the opening second half kickoff to score their other touchdown. They stayed strictly on the ground with Tumilty, Parrish and Elisio lugging the leather. Parrish took the ball over from the two for the score. The kick was wide.

Two series later Conestoga took advantage of a break that seemed like it might have gone against them. John Bollman's punt to the Royals rolled by receiver Ron Wilds at the 20 and went down to the 10.

Here Wilds picked it up and seeming had good blocking as he headed up the left sideline. But, a Pioneer man broke through the wall to hit Wilds, and the Royals' back fumbled the ball at his 44. Chris Dexter recovered for the Pioneers.

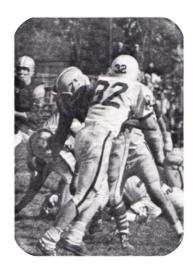
Conestoga moved to the 29. Then a fourth down pass play to Tumilty moved the ball down to the three. Upper Darby stiffened, and Thompson split the uprights with his left-footed kick to clinch it.

Springfield Nips Conestoga

Daily Local News October 31, 1966

Conestoga scored the first and last touchdowns in the game, but the Cougars won the second period, to end out the Pioneers 19-13 in a Suburban South League game at Berwyn Saturday.

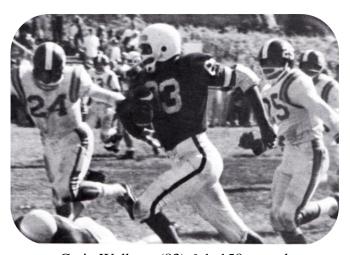
The Pioneers scored first as Todd Parrish ran over from the two-yard line. Larry Thompson converted the point after. Nick Elisio tallied the final Conestoga score with a oneyard run.





Far left: Drew Knowlton (32) 6-0, 175-pound senior halfback

Left: Todd Parrish (53) 5-9, 170-pound sophomore running back Drew Knowlton blocking



Craig Welburn (83) 6-1, 158-pound senior wingback



Bill Tumilty (31) 5-11, 160-pound senior halfback



BALL CARRIER: Jeff Porter (86) 6-3, 180-pound senior end

Don Ingham (51) 6-1, 180-pound senior center

Jeff Young (61) 5-11, 170-pound sophomore guard

Conestoga Jars Cheltenham, 21-7, For 4th Victory

Daily Local News November 7, 1966

Conestoga defeated Cheltenham, 21-7, for their fourth win of the year at Berwyn, Saturday, in a non-league game.

Quarterback Nick Elisio helped guide the Pioneers to all three scores, and he carried over on sneaks two times from the one-yard line. Sophomore Todd Parrish delighted the home fans as he made a 77-yard run. Larry Thompson booted two extra points while Parrish ran for the third extra point.

Conestoga plays at Chester Saturday morning in their prelude to the Thanksgiving Day game with West Chester.

Pioneers Top Chester, 26-6

Daily Local News
November 14, 1966

Conestoga's Pioneers finished their Suburban South League season Saturday by evening their league record at 4-4 with a 26-6 victory over Chester.

Conestoga scored twice in the first period to take a 13-6 lead into the locker room at Chester at halftime. Senior Bill Tumilty and sophomore Todd Parrish each scored two touchdown for the Pioneers.

Tumilty tallied twice on a two yard plunge and a 10-yard scoring jaunt. Parrish powered over from the one-yard line while he carried over from the 10 for the other score.

Quarterback Nick Elisio ran for one extra point while Larry Thompson kicked the other PAT.

Coach Bill Paolantonio's crew will be prepping now for their Thanksgiving Day game with old rival West Chester.

Conestoga is now 5-4 in over-all competition.



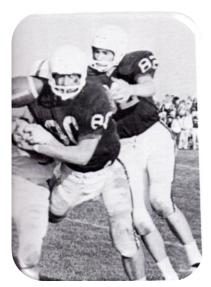
Chris Dexter (70) 5-11, 175-pound left tackle



Craig Welburn (83) 6-1, 158-pound wing back, Bob Hill (74) 6-1, 215-pound right tackle



Todd Parrish (53) 5-9, 170-pound sophomore running back



Steve Tifft (80) 5-11, 170-pound junior end John Bollman (82) 6-0, 155-pound junior end



Todd Parrish (53) Nick Elisio (21) 5-7, 155-pound senior quarterback

No Picnic on Turkey Day

By BOB DOUBLE

(Of the Daily Local News Sports Staff)

The granddaddy of all local Turkey Day games is the West Chester-Conestoga clash that is 63 years old. Conestoga holds a 30-25-5 edge over the Warriors, and they have won eight straight games not counting last year's 13-13 tie.

West Chester has finished the season with three impressive wins and seemed to be aiming for the Pioneers. The Warriors who missed a chance last year to stop the streak of Conestoga wins should be chomping at the bit to put a loss on the Pioneers' side of the ledger.

Conestoga playing in the tough Suburban South League has come on well near the end of the season, and the team will pose the biggest threat to the Warriors since Great Valley and Phoenixville played them.

Equal Size

Both teams will be about the same size up front with both lines averaging around 182 pounds. West Chester may have a slight edge in weight in the backfield. West Chester has a balanced attack, which can take advantage of running or passing opportunities while Conestoga uses the pass in key situations but relies on a good ground game for its scoring punch.

Quarterback Mike Bannan has paced the Warriors all year leading the team with his passing and he will give the Pioneer aerial defense a workout.

Conestoga has utilized a good ball control running game along with a stiff defense to come up with a 5-4 mark. The high point in the season was a 13-7 upset victory over league leading Penncrest in which Conestoga parlayed both qualities for the win.

Balanced Running

Both teams have good runners like the Warriors' Dave Parsons, Korky Kelly and Buzz Shank and the Pioneers' Bill Tumilty, Todd Parrish and Craig Welburn. Pioneer signal caller Nick Elisio can call on Jeff Porter and Steve Tifft for receiving.

West Chester's defense has given up more than two touchdowns this season only once while Conestoga has allowed three in three games. Defensive ability should be the deciding factor.

DOUBLE'S PREDICITION
WEST CHESTER – 17 CONESTOGA 13

Pioneers Upend West Chester

Sophomore Sparks Attack For ConestogaBy BOB DOUBLE

(Of the Local News Sports Staff)

Conestoga coach Bill Paolantonio put it best when he said, "the greatest thing about Todd Parrish is that he's a sophomore." The Pioneer coaching staff all echoed the same opinion after the 5-9, 170-pound fullback helped spark the Pioneers to a 28-17 win over West Chester yesterday morning with his powerful running.

Parrish, with tremendous blocking from the forward wall, scored two touchdowns and was instrumental in allowing Conestoga to stick to its game plan of ball control. The hard-to-bring-down sophomore was a workhorse carrying 34 times picking up 190 yards.

The game, which was played before more than 6,000 fans at West Chester State College's Farrell Stadium, was Conestoga's 31st win in the series which started back in 1903. The Pioneers now own a 31-25-5 lead, and they have won nine of the last 10 games.

Conestoga stayed mainly on the ground working inside against the Warriors in off tackle slants or other plays up the middle. Paolantonio said that he wanted his team to work for ball control which is what they maintained in the second half.

Control Ball

Conestoga had the ball for 43 plays in the second half while the Warriors could run off only 26. "We followed the game plan, and it worked. It's a good thing we didn't have to get out of it," he said afterwards.

Parrish scored the final two touchdowns for Conestoga and provided most of the impetus for the scoring drives. With West Chester leading 17-14 the Pioneers marched 62 yards in 13 plays for the decisive score.

Parrish carried eight times in the drive before going over from the four. Larry Thompson booted the third of four extra points to make it 21-17 as the third period ended.

West Chester came back when they got the ball to move to the Pioneer 40, but Drew Knowlton fell on a fumble in the Warrior backfield at the 43 to stop the drive.

Elisio Leads Team

Conestoga led by quarterback Nick Elisio moved into score and kill over six minutes worth of time in plays. Conestoga was faced with several fourth down and inches calls but either Parrish or Bill Tumilty cracked the line for the first down each time. A 15-yard penalty got the drive off well, and Parrish and Tumilty hit the line for good gains. Parrish belted in from inside the one for the final score.

Paolantonio praised Elisio for his leadership of the team. "He followed the game plan to the T. It was a tremendous team victory. The kids really went out there and blocked and tackled," he added.

West Chester had the ball for only three more plays before Conestoga took over with 4:37 left and ran out the clock.

Smith Goes Distance

Another Conestoga sophomore, Warren Smith made a key play at the start of the second half. The 6-1, 180-pound back took the opening kickoff at his own four and sprinted up the right side line following the blocking for the touchdown.

The win was Conestoga's sixth against four losses while West Chester ended the year with a 7-2-1 log and a tie for second place in the Ches-Mont League.



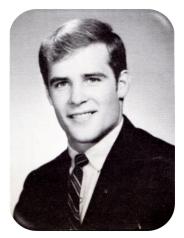
GAPING HOLE – Conestoga's Todd Parrish heads for open hole in West Chester defense after taking handoff from quarterback Nick Elisio. He gets a block from Bill Tumilty (31), DLN Staff Photo





VICTORIOUS COACH – Conestoga coach Bill Paolantonio is hoisted on the shoulders of his team after the Pioneers copped a 28-17 triumph over West Chester in the 61st game of the series at West Chester State College's Farrell Stadium yesterday. Steve Braun (81), Don Ingham (51), John Purtell (41)

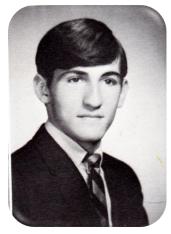
1966 Seniors



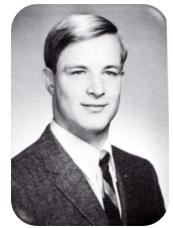
Chris Dexter Left Tackle



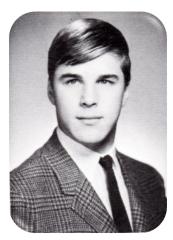
Tony Domenick Right Guard



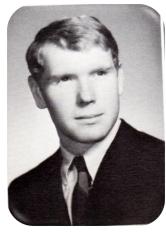
Nick Elisio Quarterback



John Hoffman Center



Don Ingham Center



Drew Knowlton Left Halfback



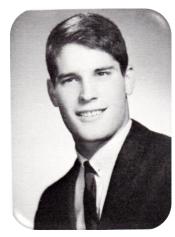
Jeff Porter Right End



Marc Steinbring Tackle



Larry Thompson End



Bill Tumilty Right Halfback



Craig Welburn Wing Back



Bob Weller Back

