

# Vikings pound the Pioneers, 21-0

*Daily Local*

September 11, 1994

By **STEVE PILONI**, Staff Writer

WEST GOSHEN—Pat Randolph's era got off to a shaky start when Conestoga was penalized 15 yards for showing up at the field late and delaying the start of the game. It didn't get much better from there as Conestoga only rushed for six yards.

Conestoga's deepest penetration was to the East 34-yard line. Unable to run the ball against East's swarming 4-4 alignment, the Pioneers took to the air. Quarterback Rob Sprague attempted 30 passes and completed 14 for 107 yards. But a couple of dropped balls and East's constant pressure kept Conestoga out of the end zone.

"Offensively, our whole operation stunk from me on down," said Randolph, the former Ridley High

standout. "I may have panicked a little bit. I didn't try to establish the run after the first quarter. I felt we could do things running the ball, but we didn't get it done."

Although he was very disappointed with his team's offensive showing, Randolph had praise for the Pioneers defense. Graham Hicks, Mike Dennis and Doug Franklin recovered fumbles, and Jesse Knight picked off a pass.

"Any time you take the ball away that many times and don't do anything, you don't deserve to win," said Randolph. "The defense did a great job. They played well enough for us to win."

"Our execution on offense is very poor right now. We had some good drives, but we stopped ourselves." With a little help from the East defense.

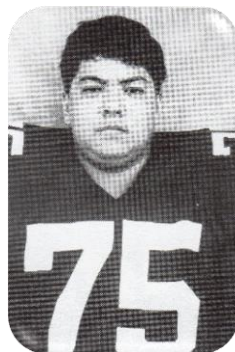
NOTES: Last season, Conestoga didn't attempt its 30<sup>th</sup> pass until the third game.



**GRAHAM HICKS**  
Junior 5-11, 196  
Wide Receiver  
Defensive Back



**MIKE DENNIS**  
Senior 5-11, 190  
Running Back  
Defensive Back



**DOUG FRANKLIN**  
Junior 5-10, 214  
Offensive Lineman  
Defensive Lineman



**JESSE KNIGHT**  
Senior 5-10, 197  
Running Back  
Linebacker

# Randolph returns but Ridley knocks off his Pioneers

*Daily Local*

September 18, 1994

By **CARLO IACONO**, Staff Writer

FOLSOM—Conestoga High School rookie football Coach Pat Randolph proved last night that you could always go back home and things will remain the same. This time, however, Randolph and his team were on the receiving end of a 40-7 pasting by his alma mater Ridley High School at Phil Marion Field. The 1983 Ridley graduate and rushing record holder returned home to face his old teacher and mentor, coach Joe McNicholas. What unfolded was familiar Ridley rout that Randolph had the perspective of seeing from the other side.

“It was strange to stand out there and see a sea of green standing on the other side,” Randolph said. “I was looking forward to the game as a definite

challenge. I was a little excited, a little nervous and a little of everything.”

Conestoga (0-2 overall) played with excitability and a bundle of nerves to make several early penalties and turnovers in fueling its first Central League-loss. Conestoga linebacker Jessie Knight recovered a Small fumble and eluded several Raiders to gain a 72-yard return for a touchdown. After the successful point after, Conestoga was down by only six and 47 seconds from the safe-haven of halftime.

But a nice kickoff return, two long pass-completions to Carroll, and an 11-yard scoring strike to Small was all that was needed to deflate Conestoga and close the half at 21-7. “I felt going in that we would have to play errorless football and then we could pull it out,” Randolph said. “The defense played tough, but (the last score and turnovers) took the wind out of our sails.



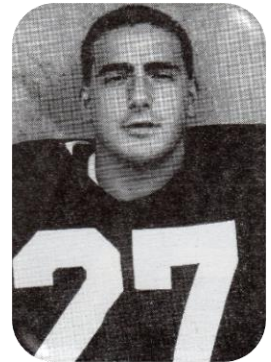
**TIM BROWN**  
Senior 5-11, 212  
Quarterback  
Defensive End



**STEVE GERSBACH**  
Senior 6-1, 185  
Tight End  
Linebacker



**ERIK SWORDS**  
Senior 6-0, 160  
Quarterback  
Running Back



**TOM HAMILTON**  
Senior 5-11, 183  
WR/TE  
Defensive Back

# Pioneers ring up first win of the year

*Daily Local*

September 24, 1994

By **TOM METZ**, Staff Writer

BERWYN—It may have been a bit rough around the edges but it was a win. After Conestoga High School's football team knocked off Lower Merion 14-6 for its first win in three attempts, first-year "Stoga" coach Pat Randolph immediately ushered the team off the field and back inside the school for a raucous post-game pep rally.

"It feels good to get a win because the kids have all worked so hard for it," said Randolph. "I just got the kids in here to get the taste of it all and let them be excited." "I know I feel damn good and I hope it's contagious," added Randolph.

The positives of the Pioneers performance were a pair of touchdown passes from Rob Sprague to Mike Morey and a gutsy, bend-but-don't-break defense. The negatives were two first downs and 75 total yards in the first half and a game-total of 10 penalties. "Penalties have been killing us and we have to find a way to address that," said Randolph. "That is embarrassing. It was a game of battles, where you win some and lose some and we hung in there. It was a back-alley brawl."

Sprague and Morey connected for the game's first score on a nine-yard completion with 44 seconds left in

the second quarter and again for 35 yards, to ice the game early in the fourth quarter. "Mike is a big-play guy for us," said Randolph. "He started slow in camp but he can certainly make the big plays. (Wide receivers Todd Ill and Greg Cannito) can do the same thing but we just have to find a way to be more consistent."

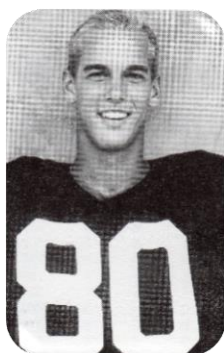
Morey caught three balls for 75 of Conestoga's 98 passing yards. Offensively the Pioneers (1-1, 1-2) definitely do need to develop more consistency. In the first quarter the Pioneers held the ball for just 10 plays and did not get a first down until inside the final minute of the first half, when Sprague hit Morey for 31 yards.

Five of the Pioneers' nine first downs in the entire game, came on their final drive of the game on a tired Aces defense. "The last three weeks the defense has played well enough to win," said Randolph. "It doesn't look it because of the scores but we have been killing ourselves with turnovers and penalties on defense."

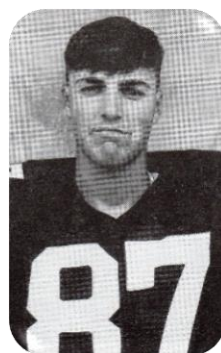
"I don't know how much longer they can keep doing it," added Randolph. "I can't say enough about our defense," said Randolph. "It's the bend-but-don't-break philosophy and they bent about as far as they could but they didn't break. They got that big stop on the two-point conversion which was huge," added Randolph. "They held them to one score which is all you can ask."



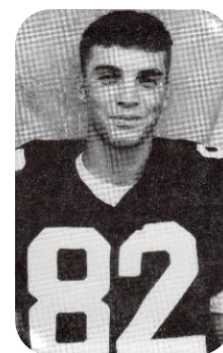
**ROB SPRAGUE**  
Senior 6-4, 199  
Quarterback  
Defensive Back



**MIKE MOREY**  
Senior 6-2, 158  
Wide Receiver  
Defensive Back



**TODD ILL**  
Senior 5-11, 173  
Wide Receiver  
Defensive Back



**GREG CANNITO**  
Senior 5-9, 150  
Wide Receiver  
Defensive Back

# Conestoga rolls past Radnor

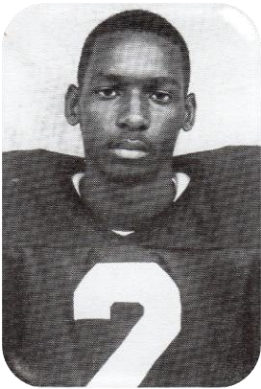
*Daily Local*

October 1, 1994

By **NEIL GEOGHEGAN**, Staff Writer

**BERWYN**—For what was a relatively convincing victory, the Conestoga High School football contingent didn't seem overly thrilled with Friday's 37-25 Central League triumph over visiting Radnor.

The Pioneers (2-1, 2-2 overall) looked unstoppable in the first half while scoring the game's first 23 points. Conestoga built a 30-6 half-time advantage and appeared to be on the verge of blowing out the winless Raiders.



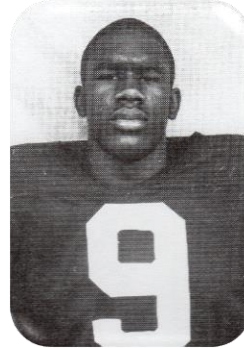
**STEVE JACKSON**

Junior 5-11, 157  
Running Back  
Wide Receiver

But then came the second half and an unexpected Radnor surge. The Pioneers looked lethargic and played sloppy in the final two quarters. "We still have a lot of work to do," said Conestoga coach Pat Randolph. "When you have somebody down, you have to keep them down. You can't let them crawl back into the game like that."

With five scoring drives in seven possessions, the Pioneers opened the game impressively. Junior running back Steve Jackson caused much of the damage with three touchdowns. His five-yard scamper gave Conestoga a 10-0 first quarter lead,

and a 22-yard screen pass for another score soon followed.



**BRENDON HOLLAND**

Junior 5-8, 168  
Running Back  
Linebacker

Teammate Brendon Holland then scored from seven yards out to make it 23-0 late in the first half. In the meantime, Radnor's offense was almost non-existent, accounting for just one first down and negative yardage well into the second quarter.

Mike Dennis provided the Pioneers only real second half highlight with a 47-yard TD run. The senior was stopped at the line of scrimmage, but managed to break free, get to the outside and into the clear.

"It was real sloppy," Randolph admitted. "It was just a real bad half for us. But I have to give all the credit in the world to Radnor."

Jackson had just three carries in the second half but finished with 81 rushing yards and 219 of total offense. He called for his teammates to look for the positive and learn from the mistakes.

"Our team has to stay focused," he said. "We let down a little bit in the second half. But that shouldn't take away from the good things we did. We scored 37 points and we did a lot of good things that we haven't done yet this season."

# Pioneers fall to Springfield by 44-6

*Daily Local*

October 8, 1994

By **NEIL GEOGHEGAN**, Staff Writer

BERWYN—The Conestoga High School football team was thoroughly outplayed and outclassed Friday against the 10<sup>th</sup> ranked Class AAAA squad in the state. The Pioneers gave visiting Springfield (Delco) an early scare.

“We got beat the old fashioned way—we got beat up,” said Conestoga coach Pat Randolph. “But they are a good football team, no question.” Defense has been a strength so far this season, but the Pioneers didn’t even come close to containing Springfield running back, Marty Brown, who danced and juked his way to 193 rushing yards and four touchdowns.

“For his size, he’s a deceptive runner,” Randolph said. “He’s got the ability to pick and choose his holes and he’s got deceptive speed.”

Conestoga paralyzed a pair of gritty-defense stands to take 6-0 lead after the first quarter. Springfield drove deep into enemy territory on its first two possessions of the game. But the Pioneer defense held both times, forcing a fumble at the five and then holding the Cougars on downs at the 15.

Conestoga’s lone offensive highlight in the game came on the final play of the first period when senior running back Jesse Knight broke loose on a 75-yard TD run. The PAT was blocked. But just when it looked like the upset may be materializing, the Cougars exploded for 21 second quarter points to take command. And the catalyst was the elusive Brown.

# Pioneers beaten by Haverford

*Daily Local*

October 15, 1994

By **TOM METZ**, Staff Writer

BERWYN—They knew what was coming but just could not stop it. “Every play they ran we did a hundred times in practice,” said Conestoga head coach Pat Randolph. “We had intense practices and we had good practices; I just don’t know.

Friday night at Teamer Field the Pioneers failed to stop Haverford High’s potent but basic Wing-T running attack and suffered a 47-19 Central League loss. “They run their offense very well,” said Randolph. “(Hammond) is a strong runner and is deceptively fast.”

The Pioneers (2-3, 2-4) made one fatal mistake in their defense of the Fords’ attack. “We can’t look in the

backfield, you have to read the guards and read your keys,” said Randolph. “If you get caught looking into the backfield they will run dives all night.”

“We practiced without a ball in practice so the kids would get used to reading the keys and not looking for the ball,” added Randolph. “If you read the guards they will take you to the ball. It’s simple but complicated.”

Offensively the Pioneers managed to throw for 239 yards on the arm of quarterback Rob Sprague. Sprague connected with Todd Ill and Mike Morey on scoring passes of 44 and 35 yards. The Pioneers showed a bit of the versatility of which Randolph spoke on their first touchdown when Ill scored on an end around from 15 yards out.

“We played two tough teams in a row and I’m proud of the team,” said Randolph. “We have five games left and we will try to stay upbeat and positive.”

# Pioneers rally for 28-21 win over Strath Haven

*Daily Local*

October 22, 1994

By **NEIL GEOGHEGAN**, Staff Writer

WALLINGFORD—It took an unfortunate injury to one of its own to finally wake up a slumbering Conestoga High School football team Friday evening.

The Pioneers were visibly shaken when defensive back Joe Norcini went down after being clipped early in the second half. After a long delay, he was carried off in an ambulance and that seemed to unleash a Conestoga team that opened the game very flat. With a sudden burst of emotion, the Pioneers roared back from a two-touchdown deficit to topple a stunned Strath Haven unit 28-21 in Central League action.

“It was all emotional,” said two way senior Mike Dennis, who played possessed in the second half. “We were real flat, but I think the Joe Norcini incident played a big part in the comeback. We played with emotion and left it all out on the field.” “I hate to say that somebody has to get hurt for us to play like that, but it’s the big reason.”

The road win evens Conestoga’s record at 3-3 in the Central League, 3-4 overall. Strath Haven—the defending District 1 Class AAA champs—fall to 1-5, 1-6 overall. Trailing 21-7 at halftime, Conestoga got the wake-up call on the Panthers’ first possession of the third quarter. The Pioneers went on to totally dominate the second half, outscoring the Panthers 21-0 and preventing Strath Haven from registering a single first down on its final half dozen offensive series.

“I’m really proud of my defense,” Conestoga head coach Pat Randolph said. “They did a nice job. They won it for us.” On the first play following Norcini’s

injury, Dennis stripped the ball from Panthers’ runner Tom Gordy and rambled 22 yards for a touchdown to cut the deficit in half.

The momentum clearly shifted away from Strath Haven, never to return. “I tried to tackle the guy, I saw the ball was there so I stripped it from him,” Dennis explained.

Dennis then wrapped up a memorable performance with two more conventional scores. His two-yard TD run tied it up late in the third quarter, and his three-yard scoring plunge put the Pioneers ahead for good with 2:51 left on the clock. The play culminated a seven-play, 63-yard drive was a prime example of power football at its best.

“Offensively, it’s nice to play smash-mouth football,” said Randolph. Dennis added a first half TD giving him four for the game. The 5-foot-11, 190-pound senior accounted for 24 of his team’s 28 points. Dennis finished with 111 yards of total offense, including a workmanlike 15 carries for 73 yards on the ground. “He’s an outstanding player,” Randolph said. “You know he’s going to show up and he loves to play the game. We don’t have to worry about him. There is no question he’s a leader by example.”

Conestoga quarterback Rob Sprague was 5-for-11 for 128 yards through the air—including a 32-yarder to Mike Morey that set up the Pioneers first score—and a 38-yard screen pass to Dennis that preceded the winning TD.

Norcini was taken to a nearby hospital with a concussion, but is expected to recover and will be awarded the game ball. “(Strath Haven) coaching staff gave me the game ball to give to Joe,” Randolph said. “I thought that was a classy thing to do.”

# Pioneers hold off scrappy Penncrest

*Daily Local*

October 29, 1994

By **NEIL GEOGHEGAN**, Staff Writer

BERWYN—With its running attack in peak form, the Conestoga High School football squad held off pesky Penncrest 26-20 on Friday to notch another Central League victory and also give the Homecoming crowd at Teamer Field something to celebrate.

Thanks to the work of backfield duo Jesse Knight and Steve Jackson, the Pioneers racked up 439 yards on the ground. But Conestoga (4-3, 4-4 overall) needed every yard to overcome a frustrating assortment of turnovers, penalties and other costly mistakes.

“We just make things hard on ourselves,” Conestoga head coach Pat Randolph said. “We do some stupid things. We shouldn’t have any feet left because we shoot ourselves in the foot so much. And all the penalties—those things can kill you.”

But when you can run the football the way the Pioneers did against the Lions it can make up for a multitude of sins. Even without bruising running back Mike Dennis, Conestoga cranked up its running game. Knight carried the ball 29 times for 239 yards and a touchdown, and Jackson added 171 on 13 tries and three TD’s.

“It’s always nice to run the football and play smash-mouth football,” Randolph said. “I’m from the old school and that’s what it is all about.” But a slow, mistake-filled start nearly undermined the effort. In the first quarter, Penncrest moved the ball inside the Conestoga 25 on three occasions, but the Pioneers defense held twice. The third, however, ended with a 12-yard touchdown run by Mike Green and gave the Lions a 7-0 lead. An interception set up the score.

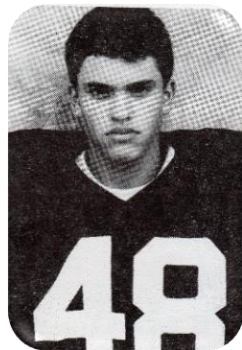
Penncrest then went ahead 14-0 when defender Ryan McQuade returned a second Conestoga interception for a touchdown. The Pioneers regrouped to score 26 straight points, and the running of Jackson and Knight was the difference. Jackson raced 48-yards on the screen pass to make it 14-7 at halftime, and then Knight tied it with a 65-yard touchdown jaunt early in the second half.

Jackson capped a 77-yard drive last in the third quarter with a 29-yard scoring run to put the Pioneers ahead for good, and then added a 59-yarder a couple minutes later.

“Steve is a shifty-type back,” Knight said. “He likes to cut back across the grain and he’s elusive. I like to go straight ahead and get whatever I can get. So trying to tackle the two of us is a big adjustment for the defense.”



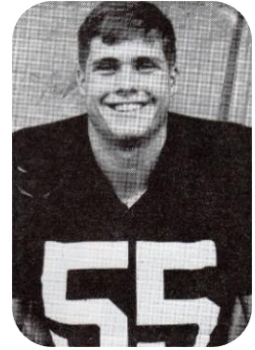
**JOE NORCINI**  
Senior 5-8, 155  
Wide Receiver  
Defensive Back



**DAVID SUDHAUS**  
Senior 5-8, 145  
Defensive Back



**MIKE LEVISTON**  
Senior 5-8, 240  
Offensive Lineman  
Defensive Lineman



**STEVE BRADLEY**  
Senior 6-2, 192  
Offensive Lineman  
Linebacker

# Conestoga beaten by Upper Darby

*Daily Local*

November 6, 1994

By **MATT HODLOFSKI**, Staff Writer

UPPER DARBY—Football games are won and lost in the trenches. The Conestoga High School football squad knows that theory all too well. The Pioneers were defeated handily by Upper Darby, 42-7.

Upper Darby (6-2, 7-2 overall) scored a touchdown on every possession it had in the first half, blowing the Pioneer offensive and defensive lines off the ball all afternoon.

“Our defense is not good at all,” Conestoga head coach Pat Randolph said. “We looked forward to playing today, but we are just not ready to play a big game. You just don’t play like that, a team has to be able to tackle.” Conestoga (4-4, 4-5) used just two plays from scrimmage to score after kick returner Jessie Knight returned the kick 48 yards to give the Pioneers excellent field position. Quarterback Rob Sprague connected with Todd Ill on a play action pass for the 36-yard touchdown.

“No one gave up today,”—Knight said. “We got our butts kicked up front. We are not getting off the ball offensively or defensively.

# Raiders outscore Pioneers, 48-33

*Daily Local*

November 12, 1994

By **SCOTT PAIDA**, Staff Writer

BERWYN—Coatesville High School football coach Jack Helm said that Friday evening’s 48-33 non-league victory at Conestoga proved that the Red Raiders can get their offense moving when they have to.

Against the Pioneers, they certainly had to. And move it they most certainly did. Conestoga stayed right in the game through three quarters, heading to the fourth trailing by eight points.

The Pioneers got on the scoreboard first when Mike Morey caught a 10-yard touchdown pass from

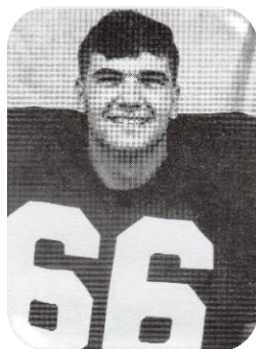
Rob Sprague on Conestoga’s first possession. Morey’s second touchdown catch of the quarter got the Pioneers close, but they missed the extra point.

Conestoga again stayed close, though, on a pair of touchdown passes by Sprague. Sprague, who finished with 298 yards passing, connected with Steve Jackson for scores of 70 and 16 yards. Four of the Pioneers’ five touchdowns came in the air.

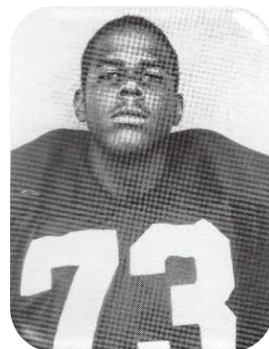
“We’re an opportunity-type offense,” said Conestoga coach Pat Randolph. “If you give us the pass, we’ll take it, if you give us the run, we’ll take it. It just so happens that we thought they had a lot of trouble covering our four wide outs. It seemed to work for us, so we just stuck with it.”



**DAN MORGAN**  
Senior 6-1, 217  
Offensive Lineman



**PETE MELCHIORRE**  
Senior 5-9, 179  
Wide Receiver  
Defensive Back



**LANCE CANNON**  
Senior 6-2, 224  
Offensive Lineman  
Defensive Lineman



**DAN HARTIGAN**  
Senior 6-1, 190  
Offensive Lineman  
Defensive Lineman



# Conestoga rally falls just short, 30-28

*Daily Local*

November 25, 1994

By **CARLO IACONO**, Staff Writer

BERWYN—Fixing mistakes is always hard to do in a football game. That is what Conestoga High School spent the better part of Thanksgiving doing in its 30-28 loss to Marple Newtown High School at Teamer Field.

Conestoga was desperately trying to convert a two-point conversion with 1:14 remaining to redeem an effort that was littered with turnovers, penalties and personal fouls.

Steve Jackson accepted a handoff from quarterback Rob Sprague and met a wall of defenders. Jackson back peddled ten yards to lateral the ball to Jesse Knight, who proceeded to run clear across the field to meet another pack of Tigers.

Knight reversed course back to the side from which he came and looked as if he was going to be successful only to be stopped at the four yard line. The Pioneers failed to convert on an earlier conversion and kick, finished the season at 4-7 overall (4-5 Central League).

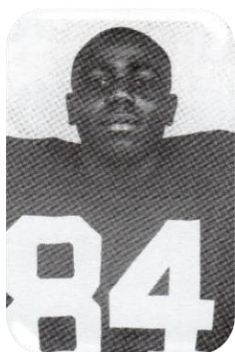
"We turned the ball over, made stupid penalties and personal fouls hurt us," Conestoga coach Pat Randolph said. "Turnovers have been a problem for us all year."

After trading field goals, Conestoga mounted a 5:01 drive to close the first half. The 14-play drive featured the running of Jackson (four consecutive rushes for 25 yards) and capped by a one-yard run by Mike Dennis. Kicker Todd Ill's point after floated wide left and the Pioneers went into halftime down 10-9. Dennis almost gave the Pioneers a win all by himself as the third quarter closed and the fourth began.

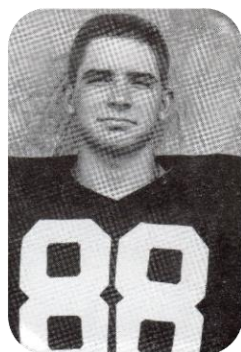
Playing ball control up until that point, Sprague opened up the offense with passes to Jackson. Dennis closed the drive with its only run—a 24 yard draw up the middle. Sprague then failed to connect on the passing conversion and the Pioneers still trailed 17-15.

Dennis picked off two consecutive Gicking passes to fuel the Pioneers only lead of the game. Sandwiched between the interceptions was a 36-yard draw run for a touchdown by Sprague. Ill's conversion gave the Pioneers their only lead at 22-17 with 9:45 left.

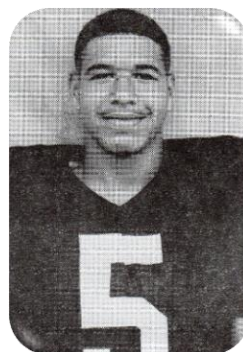
Dennis busted that door wide open when he caught a screen pass from Sprague and ran 56 yards to get with two. That is when the laterals of desperation failed. There was still hope for Conestoga as they recovered the rushing onside kick. But that was nullified by an offside call against the Pioneers—its sixth infraction of the day.



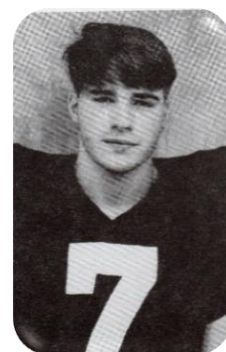
**ALEX HAMER**  
Senior 5-10, 175  
Wide Receiver  
Defensive Back



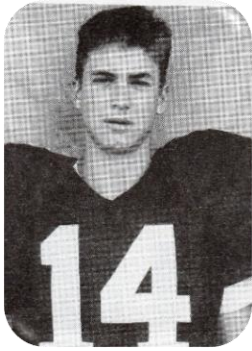
**PHIL KUBAT**  
Senior 5-9, 198  
Tight End



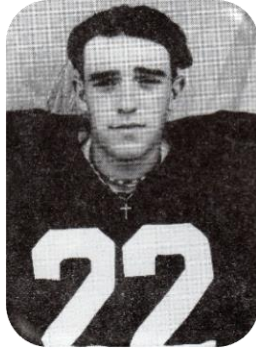
**BYRON THORNTON**  
Junior 5-9, 160  
Quarterback  
Wide Receiver



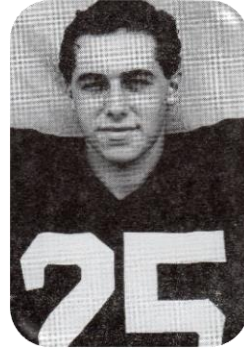
**JOE CASSIDY**  
Junior 5-10, 182  
WR/RB  
Linebacker



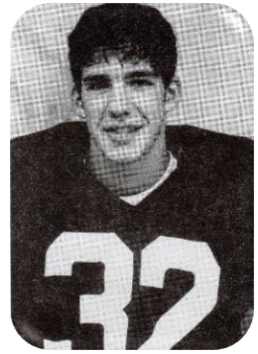
**RORY LINEHAN**  
 Junior 6-3, 172  
 Wide Receiver  
 Defensive Back



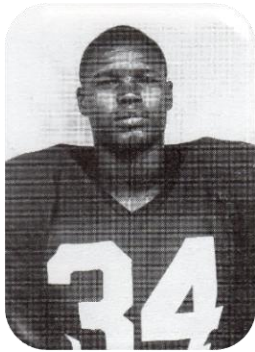
**BRANDON WALSH**  
 Junior 5-11, 172  
 Wide Receiver



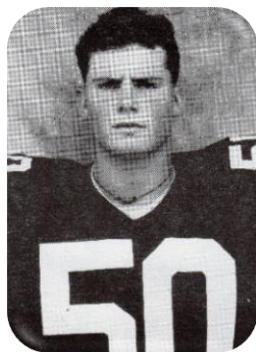
**GABE LERMAN**  
 Junior 5-8, 165  
 Running Back  
 Wide Receiver



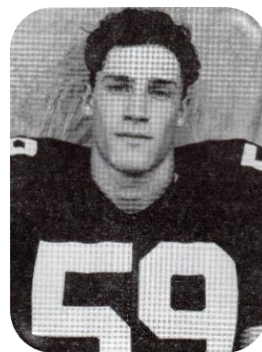
**BRENNAN  
 MCGEORGE**  
 Junior 5-10, 163  
 Running Back  
 Defensive Back



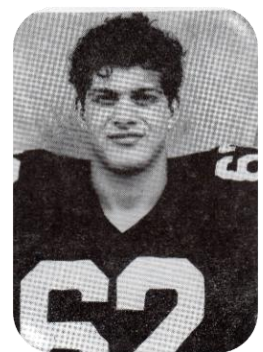
**MAURICE WEEKS**  
 Junior 5-11, 191  
 Running Back  
 Linebacker



**ERIC SCHMALZ**  
 Junior 6-2, 199  
 Defensive Back



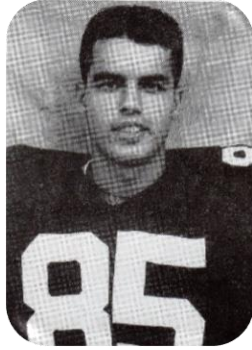
**MIKE BLOUGH**  
 Junior 5-10, 182  
 Offensive Lineman  
 Linebacker



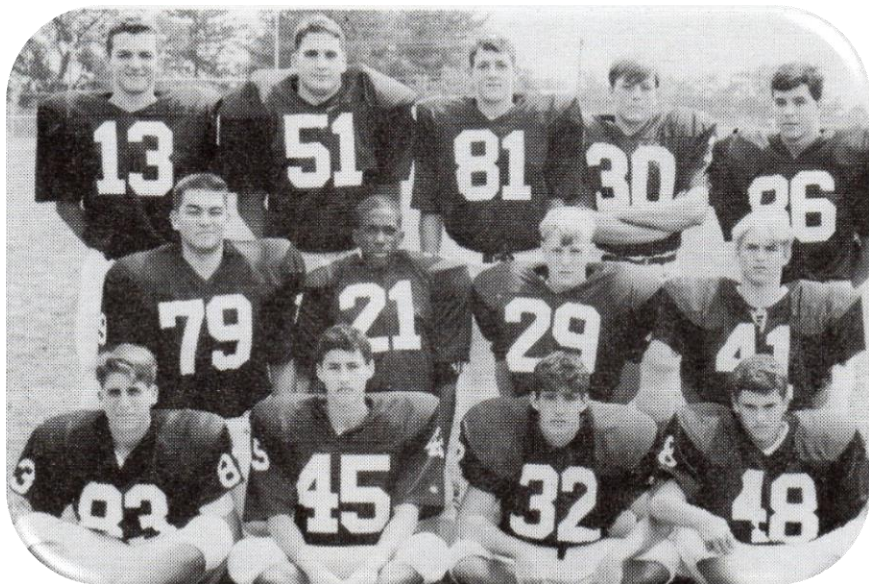
**BRAD HURLEY**  
 Junior 6-1, 201  
 Offensive Lineman



**STEVE GLEASON**  
 Junior 6-3, 210  
 Offensive Lineman  
 Defensive Lineman



**MATT KIDWELL**  
 Junior 6-5, 197  
 Offensive Lineman  
 Defensive Lineman



## Sophomores

**Front Row:** Byron Cotter, Lee Cure, Brennan McGeorge, David Sudhaus

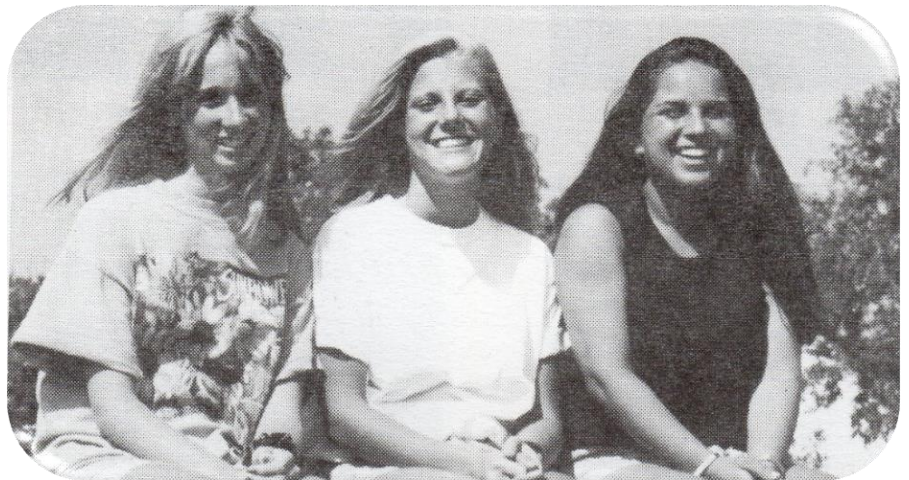
**Middle Row:** Joe Seavey, Dante Coles, Beau Choate, J Ward

**Back Row:** Ben Quereau, Dave Jaros, Colin Osborne, Chris Werner, Steve Norcini



## Captains

Rob Sprague and Steve Bradley



## Managers

Kathryn Dodd, Heather Thalmann, Rachel Lundy

In 1994, Pat Randolph, a Ridley High School football star, assumed the role of Head Coach of the Conestoga football program. In his first year, his team went four and seven with wins against Central League opponents Lower Merion, Radnor, Strath Haven and Penncrest. Team captains were quarterback Rob Sprague and lineman Steve Bradley. Defensive standouts were Grahm Hicks, Doug Franklin and Jesse Knight. Mike Dennis was an outstanding two-way player. Rob Sprague, Mike Morey, Steve Jackson and Brendan Holland lead the offensive production.