

Balanced attack helps East edge Conestoga

Daily Local News

September 4, 1999

By **DANIEL COSGROVE**

Staff Writer

West Goshen—The Conestoga High School football team traveled to West Chester East hoping senior Marquis Weeks, its standout tailback, would be able to outrun the Vikings to victory.

Weeks who rushed for 1,451 yards and 19 touchdowns last season, was unstoppable half the time, rushing for 145 yards on 13 carries. But half the time proved not enough as a stable of East runners, led by and explosive offensive line, sliced through Conestoga's defense en route to a 28-21 win Friday night in the nonleague season opener.

East used five carriers to outgain Weeks, who Conestoga went to exclusively. East appeared to have

lost momentum late in the third after Conestoga senior Rich Watson tied the game 14-all with a 90-yard kickoff return for a score.

Conestoga's frantic drive late in the game produced a Dewey Burke 12-yard touchdown pass to Watson and cut the lead to 28-21. A recovered onside kick made things interesting in the final seconds, but time ran out on the Pioneers.

"(Conestoga coach) Matt (Gibson) had his kids fired up. They didn't quit. Marquis is a great athlete. I have so much respect for him. Our kids can say they played against one of the best backs in the state."

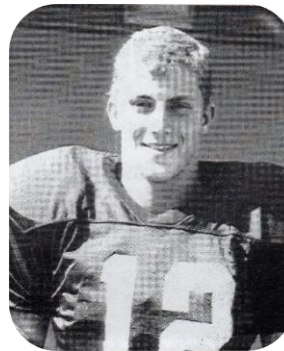
It was Weeks who answered Hallager's first score with a 49-yard touchdown run late in the first. A missed point-after attempt allowed East to hold a 7-6 lead at the end of the quarter.



MIKE WHAM
Senior 6-1, 165
Wide Receiver
Cornerback



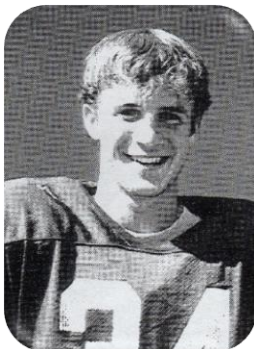
CHRIS DEMASKEY
Senior 6-1, 150
Wide Receiver
Cornerback



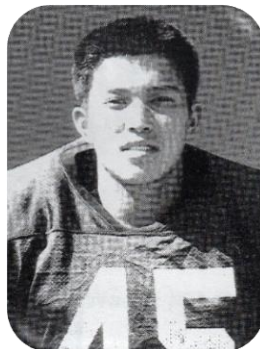
RICH WATSON
Senior 6-1, 190
Quarterback
Safety



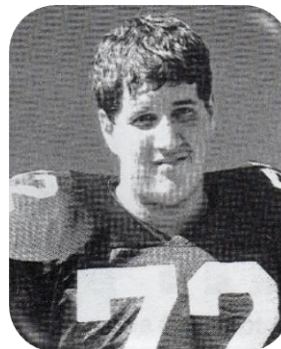
ANDY SIRAVO
Senior 5-9, 175
Fullback
Linebacker



CHRIS MURPHY
Senior 5-10, 165
Wide Receiver
Cornerback



ALBERT LEE
Senior 5-10, 180
Tight End
Linebacker



NATE FELDMAN
Senior 5-9, 200
Offensive Guard
Defensive Tackle



JOE LEONARD
Senior 6-3, 215
Center
Defensive Tackle

Conestoga takes Central opener

Weeks runs Wild

Daily Local News

September 11, 1999

By **DANIEL COSGROVE**

Staff Writer

BERWYN—Conestoga High School football coach Matt Gibson may tire of talking about Pioneers tailback Marquis Weeks in postgame interviews this season. The senior standout—who has received scholarship offers from 13 of the top college programs in the country—will be the focus of every opponent's defense, and the focus of many in the stands.

For now, though, Gibson doesn't mind praising Weeks, especially when he rushes for 270 yards on 17 carries and scores three touchdowns—including one on defense—as he did Friday in a 40-0 victory against Central League opponent Radnor. He is 44 yards away from gaining 4,000 for his career.

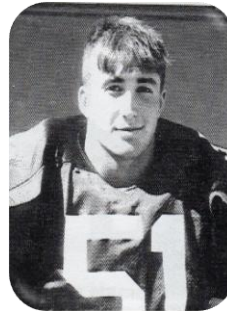
"We don't think about (statistics). Marquis doesn't think about it," Gibson said. He's the most team kid I know. He wants to win a Central League Championship."

Weeks and company took the first step Friday. The Pioneers (1-0, 1-1) finished off the Raiders after play was suspended Thursday evening due to lightning. They started Friday staked to a 6-0 lead midway through the first thanks to Weeks' 43-yard touchdown run. Weeks' running game was in top form. He took the opening play from scrimmage Friday 13 yards for his second touchdown, giving the Pioneers a 12-0 first-quarter cushion.

It was indicative of the rest of the game. The Pioneers' offensive line opened gaping holes for

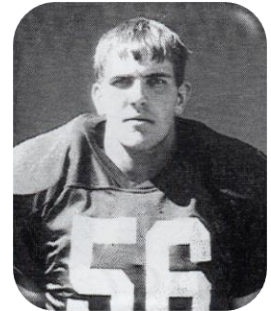
Weeks, who used a combination of speed and power to break off double-digit gains. He opened the second half with a 97-yard touchdown run followed, all but sealing it at 27-0 early in the third.

"The coach said right before (that play) that we needed a knockout punch," Weeks said of the run, the longest of his career. "I didn't think I was gonna break it all the way, but the hole was huge. When I saw the hole, I just exploded."



MILES BOWER

Captain
Senior 6-0, 200
Offensive Guard
Linebacker



PETE KELLER

Senior 6-0, 220
Offensive Tackle
Defensive Tackle

"If nobody blocks for (Weeks), he's not going anywhere," Gibson said. "I'm really pleased with (the play of) Miles Bower and Pete Keller on the left side of the line."

Conestoga's ground game overshadowed its defense, which held Radnor to 163 yard total offense

Weeks shows off defensive prowess in Pioneers' win

**“We knew (Springfield would) come out emotional.
All week we talked about weathering the storm. Our kids did a great job,”
said Conestoga football coach Matt Gibson**

Daily Local News

September 19, 1999

By **DANIEL COSGROVE**

Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD—Conestoga senior Marquis Weeks abilities as a running back are well documented, but this year he's also making his name in another area—defense. After picking off a pass last week and returning it 54-yards for a touchdown, he repeated the feat Saturday.

Down 7-3 to Springfield in the second half, Weeks 43-yard interception return for a TD changed the course of the game for Conestoga. The Pioneers went on to beat the Cougars, 31-7, improving to 2-0 in the Central League and 3-1 overall.

“This puts us at 2-0 in the league, right where we want to be,” Conestoga coach Matt Gibson said. “The defensive coaches this week put us in a position to win, and it helps when you have a talent like Marquis.”

Early in the third quarter, Weeks stepped in front of his man on a sideline pass to make the interception, and had nothing but green in front of him. The return gave Conestoga a 10-7 lead and the spark it needed.

The Pioneers' running game took over the second half. Quarterback Dewey Burke completed a touchdown drive early in the fourth quarter with a sneak, giving Conestoga a 17-7 lead. After a defensive stop, a sustained drive produced

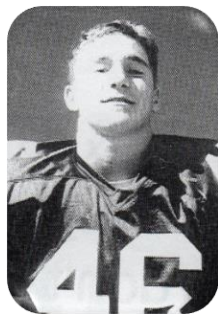
Weeks 7-yard TD run. The insertion of sophomore fullback Eric Hildenbrand was just one of the reasons Conestoga was able to move the ball in the second half, Gibson said.

“I'm very proud of our offensive line,” he said. “(Springfield) had us frustrated a bit (in the first half), we couldn't get Marquis to the outside. We made a few changes at the half. Our kids really executed at the end of the game—when you go three, four yards a carry, then pop one for seven.”

Weeks wound up with 219 yards, 64 coming on a touchdown run late in the fourth, on 31 carries. He has a realistic shot of gaining 5,000 yards for his career. Coming into the game, he needed only 44 to surpass 4,000.

“We have a well-conditioned line, the line just took over in the second half,” Weeks said. “All week (defensively) we were practicing getting physical with the receivers. All I did was jam my receiver. (After making the interception), I knew the quarterback wasn't gonna catch me. He was too big.”

A Matt Hildenbrand 27-yard field goal put Conestoga on the board five seconds before intermission. “We didn't play really well in the first half,” Gibson said. “We knew (Springfield would) come out emotional. All week we talked about weathering the storm. Our kids did a great job.”



**ERIC
HILDENBRAND**

Soph 5-8, 175
Fullback
Safety



**MATT
HILDENBRAND**

Senior 5-8, 165
Kicker

Haverford High upends' 'Stoga

Daily Local News

September 25, 1999

By **JOHN LOHN**

Special to the *Local News*

HAVERFORD—As the calendar turns to October and eventually November, only then will Haverford realize its place in the quest for the Central League title. But, should the Fords find themselves in the championship position two months down the road, Friday night's 25-20 victory over Conestoga will be viewed as the major step toward league prominence.

Trailing by 13 points with 1:41 remaining in the first half and Conestoga running back Marquis Weeks running all over the Fords for 150 first-half yards,

Haverford found a way to turn the game in its favor. Weeks second touchdown, a 52-yard jaunt down the left sideline, made the score 20-7. Quarterback Bob Peterson directed the Fords on a seven play, 71-yard drive that pulled Haverford to within 20-13.

Without question, the game's final 24 minutes, undoubtedly, belonged to Haverford. However, it was Haverford's defensive effort that generated the win. Although Weeks gained 230 yards on 32 carries, Haverford forced four Pioneer turnovers.

"Marquis is going to be in the spotlight," said Conestoga coach Matt Gibson. "And with the glory, comes disappointment too. We wanted the ball in his hands."

Strath Haven blanks 'Stoga

Daily Local News

October 2, 1999

By Liz Sullivan

Staff Writer

BERWYN—Conestoga High's football team never had many chances to execute plays, control the clock and thus score points. On Friday night, the Pioneers lost to Strath Haven 14-0 at Teamer Field in a Central League matchup.

Conestoga ran 37 offensive plays in the game, compared to 75 for Strath Haven. "Strath Haven is a good football team," said Conestoga head coach Matt Gibson. "They were able to control the ball very well. It's a matter of execution and right now, we're just executing our offense very well."

The Panthers defense held Conestoga running back Marquis Weeks to a season-low 67 yards on 17 carries. Weeks only managed one long run, for 30 yards, in the third quarter. Overall, the Pioneers managed just 70 yards rushing in the game.

Said Strath Haven linebacker John Mulhern: "We tried to stay outside on Weeks and keep him inside. We knew he liked to run outside. We just didn't want him to have any big runs." The Pioneers tried mixing things up with their offense.

Sophomore quarterback Dewey Burke, a left-hander, was 6-for-9 for 45 yards and one interception. "We tried to get it to other kids," said Gibson. "We just didn't execute. We're behind the eight-ball right now. Our offense is not running many plays."

Pioneers top Penncrest

Daily Local

October 10, 1999

By **JOHN LOHN**

Special to the Local News

MIDDLETOWN—One week after rolling up 304 yards in a win over Springfield, 264 on the ground, Penncrest's offensive unit lost water pressure Saturday and dripped its way to a 24-7 Central League defeat to Conestoga.

While Penncrest struggled offensively, its defense found a little more success. Despite yielding 24 points and 169 yards on 30 carries to Pioneers running back Marquis Weeks, the Lions did manage to hold 'Stoga to 224 yards.

Weeks scored the Pioneers' first two touchdowns on 24 and 4-yard runs. A 22-yard scoring strike to Andy Shea from Dewey Burke in the third quarter and a 33-

yard field goal by Matt Hildenbrand rounded out the Pioneers' scoring.

Weeks, however, was more impressed by his team's defensive effort. "We came in thinking we had to stop the option," the senior said. "We didn't know they were without Bowman. I thought we did a good job stopping what they wanted to do.

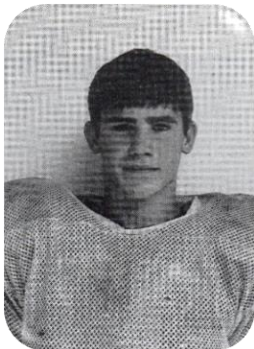
"Offensively, we wore them down a little. I thought they were a little tired in the second half. We kept going at them trying to



ANDY SHEA

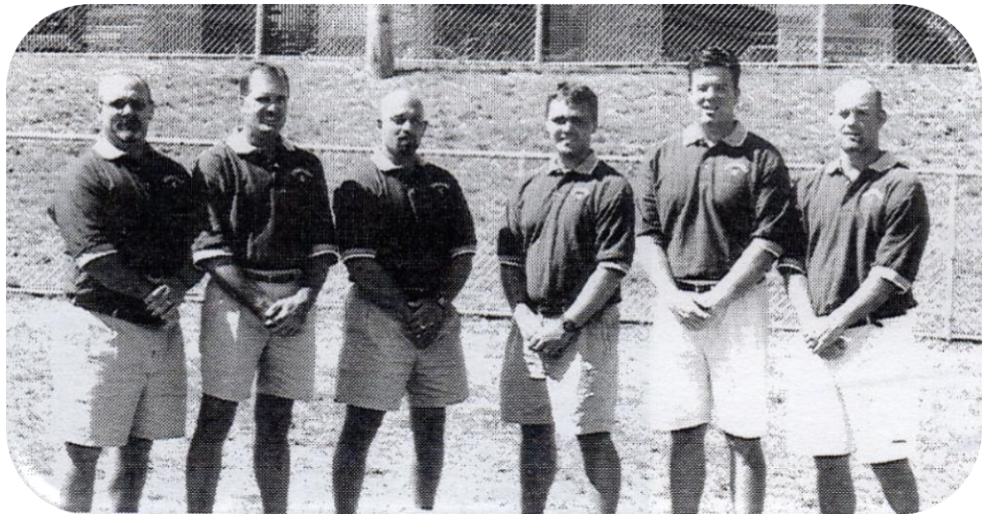
Captain
Senior 5-11, 180
Wide Receiver
Cornerback

wear them out."



EDDIE ROGERS

Senior 5-11, 150
Wide Receiver
Safety



Coaching Staff

Mike Cangi, Pete Ricci, Larry Cinciripino, *Head Coach* Matt Gibson, Dan McShane, Kevin Pechin. Not pictured: Jeff Smith

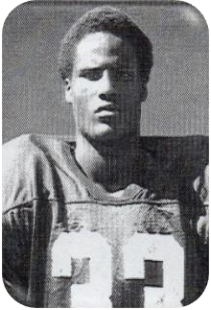
Pioneers fall

Weeks Reaches Milestone

Daily Local

October 16, 1999

By **CARLO IACONO**, Staff Writer



MARQUIS WEEKS

Senior 6-0, 190
Tailback
Cornerback

BERWYN—While Conestoga High School senior running back Marquis Weeks provided the flash, the Upper Darby football team used smash-mouth running to claim a 35-21 Central League win Friday evening at Teamer Field. Upper Darby pounded the Conestoga defense to the tune of 23 first downs and 290 yards of rushing offense.

Weeks, who signed a letter of intent to attend the

University of Virginia earlier in the week, gained 207 yards on 22 carries with two spectacular touchdowns. The yards gave him over 5,000 for his career as a Pioneer. His tackle-breaking touchdown runs of 76 and 54 yards might have left people talking, but ultimately didn't make a difference in a game Upper Darby (4-3

overall, 4-2 Central League) controlled at the line of scrimmage.

After torching Upper Darby for those touchdown runs in the second quarter, Weeks was silenced in the second half. He gained only three yards on three carries in the third quarter. He gained 186 of his rushing yards, enough to break the 5,000 barrier, in the first half.

"I wish the (5,000 mark) would have come with a victory," Weeks said. "It was one of my personal goals before the season started. I am looking for more yardage and more wins."

After Upper Darby converted a fourth-and-nine for a touchdown on its first drive, Conestoga paralyzed both Weeks runs into a 14-7 lead. The first Weeks score was a 76-yard electrifying run that involved four cutbacks, three broken tackles, and ended with a right-to-left cut clear across the field and an outrunning of the Upper Darby secondary.

Not to be outdone, Weeks added a 54-yard touchdown run two minutes later. This run involved Weeks breaking a tackle in the backfield that should have resulted in a loss of yardage. He then eluded a tackle at the line of scrimmage, broke to his left and disappeared past the Upper Darby secondary.

Juniors

Kneeling: Anthony Beard, Brian Chu, Matt Duncan, Dan Plastino

Standing: Bill Perrone, T. McKinley, Dave Wimer, Tom Watson, Joe Holobovich, Jon Puk

Not pictured: J. R. McMackin



Weeks' 2nd-half TD difference in 7-6 victory

'Stoga upsets Ridley

Daily Local

October 23, 1999

By **BRYAN DAVIS**, Staff Writer

BERWYN—Ridley High School stymied Conestoga's running back Marquis Weeks for six straight possessions. But the seventh possession of Friday night's game will haunt them for a long time.

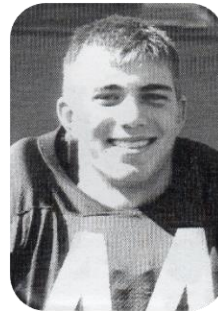
Weeks scored on a 19-yard touchdown run on the first possession of the third quarter and Conestoga made two key open-field tackles to preserve a 7-6 Central League win on a rainy Friday night.

The Pioneers (4-3, 4-4) took the opening kickoff in the second half and let Weeks do what he does best—run. "We wanted to establish Marquis in the second half," said Conestoga coach Matt Gibson. "He ran much better and the offensive line blocked very well."

Weeks, who was held 27 yards in the first half, accounted for all 65 yards on the eight-play march. He had three runs of 10 yards or more as he took full advantage of a temporary break in the rain and the absence of Ridley's best defensive lineman Mike Dollard.

"I was a little frustrated in the first half," said Weeks. "But the field got a little drier and I was able to cut better." Weeks completed the drive as he bounced out of a tackle just past the line of scrimmage and

cruised into the end zone. Weeks rambled 10-yards on a second-and-one to end the game.



CHASE BOWER

Soph 6-3, 205

Tight End

Linebacker

Neither team had much success moving the ball in the first half. Conestoga did not record a first down until late in the half when quarterback Dewey Burke found Chase Bower for 28 yards to the Ridley 20. Matt Hildenbrand's 35-yard field goal attempt fell short on the final play of the quarter.

The Green Raiders' Justin Goodwin returned a punt down the left sideline 40 yards until Hildenbrand brought him down on the Conestoga 43. "I was hoping they would make the tackle far up field," said Hildenbrand. "I did my best and stuck my nose into him. I didn't know at the time how big a play it will be."

The Conestoga defense turned the tables on Ridley in the final 24 minutes and held it to two first downs. "We knew they couldn't pass in this weather," added Weeks. "We concentrated on shutting off the run and they couldn't move the ball."

Weeks finished the night with 136 yards rushing on 21 carries in his final home game.

Pioneers hold off Lower Merion

Daily Local

October 31, 1999

By **DARREN YORKMAN**, Staff Writer

ARDMORE—The Conestoga High football team hit the road Saturday afternoon and salvaged a 16-14 Central League win over Lower Merion.

Coming off of last week's emotional win over rival Ridley, the Pioneers (5-4) struggled to get things going in the first quarter. After spotting the host Bulldogs a 7-0 lead in the first quarter, highly touted senior running back Marquis Weeks sparked life into the Conestoga offense.

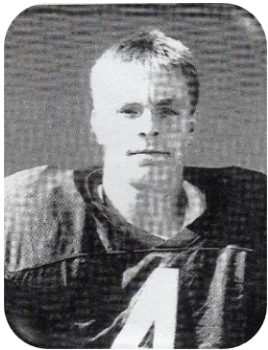
With 33-seconds remaining in the quarter, Weeks ran off guard Miles Bower's block before cutting back inside for 28 yards giving the Pioneers a first and goal at the Lower Merion 4-yard line. Two plays later, sophomore quarterback Dewey Burke hooked up with senior fullback Matt Milnes for the touchdown. Senior Matt Hildenbrand's kick evened the score at 7-7 early in the second quarter.

It was simply a case of poetic justice that Milne made the touchdown reception since it was his block that set up the long Weeks scamper that started the

scoring drive. On the Pioneers' next offensive series Conestoga head coach Matt Gibson inserted freshman John D'Agostini in at quarterback for Burke, looking for a change of pace. The offense responded and Hildenbrand atoned for missing an earlier attempt from 42 yards out by kicking a 28-yard field goal that put Conestoga on top 10-7 with 6:31 remaining in the first half.

"We planned on making the switch, we went with Johnny because we felt that he might be able to give us a lift," Gibson said. Late in the third quarter, from the Lower Merion 46-yard line Weeks swept right, bouncing outside off right tackle. After receiving a clearing block from his other fullback, sophomore Eric Hildenbrand, he found a small crease and weaved his way 37 yards through the Bulldogs defense, giving the Pioneers first and goal from the 9.

Three plays later Weeks followed a Milne block into the end zone, giving Conestoga a 16-7 lead on the first play of the fourth quarter, after a missed extra point by Hildenbrand. Late in the fourth quarter with Lower Merion driving for a go-ahead score, safety Steve Shea forced a fumble that Conestoga recovered. With Lower Merion out of timeouts, the Pioneers ran the clock out.



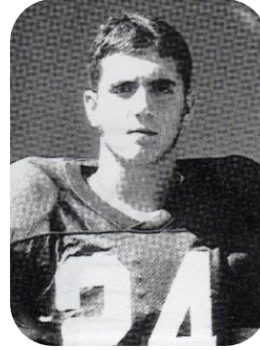
DEWEY BURKE

Soph 5-11, 180
Quarterback
Safety



MATT MILNES

Senior 5-10, 180
Fullback
Linebacker



STEVE SHEA

Soph 5-10, 185
Tailback
Safety



JOHN D'AGOSTINI

Frosh 6-1, 175
Quarterback
Safety

Interboro rallies past 'Stoga

Daily Local

November 6, 1999

By **PAUL MOSER**, Special to the Local News
PROSPECT PARK—Rich Lowry's arm hung a little bit low following his performance in Interboro High's 35-20 non-league football victory over Conestoga on Friday.

Faltering early to Conestoga and star running back, Marquis Weeks, the Bucs found themselves in

an unfamiliar position in the first half—behind. During the first half the Bucs (10-0) fell behind 14-7.

However, Weeks ran in his third touchdown of the game to give the Pioneers a 20-14 lead. In the second half, the Bucs shut down the Pioneers offense and held Weeks in check. Interboro took control in the second half with its ability to control the clock. Led by Gary Sheffield, who had 173 yards on 34 carries, the Bucs kept Conestoga off the field.

Pioneers defeat Sun Valley

Weeks piles up big yardage

Daily Local

November 13, 1999

By **CHUCK SMITH**

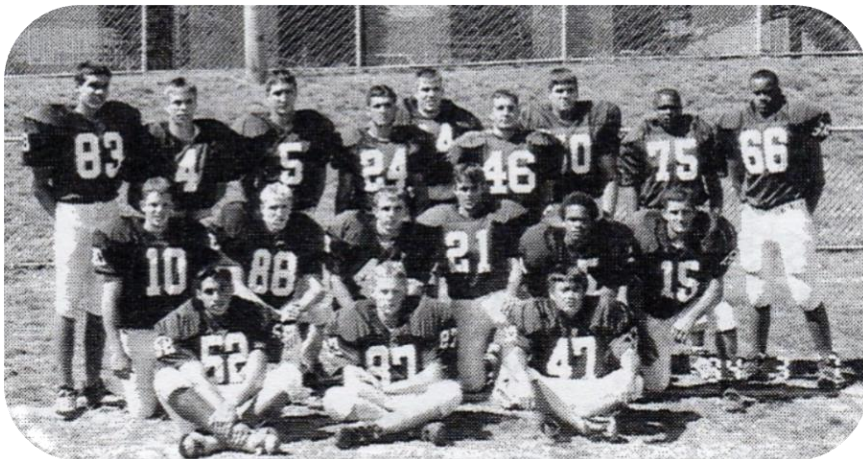
Special to the Local News

ASTON—Sun Valley knew Conestoga's Marquis Weeks was good, but seeing is believing. Weeks led the Pioneers to a 44-20 victory and piled up 311 yards and five touchdowns along the way.

"We knew Weeks was a good back and we didn't give him gaping holes to run through," said Vanguard's coach Joe Possenti. "We just didn't wrap him up and tackle well. When you play a back as good as him, you can't make mistakes like that."

Sun Valley had its difficulties tackling the Virginia bound senior. Weeks was almost unstoppable. The Conestoga tailback surpassed 2,000 yards in a season and 6,000 for his career.

Sophomores



Sitting: Mike Messina, Chris Stuart, Quyen Dang

Kneeling: J. Weller, Mark Choate, Blake Avery, Pete Decker, Terrance Smith, Joe Santoleri

Standing: Pete Hellberg, Dewey Burke, Tyler McCraw, Steve Shea, Chase Bower, Eric Hildenbrand, Calvin Corvaia, Aris Byrd, Ron Shepherd

Not Pictured: Jose Granados

Senior back uses line well, leads Pioneers to 13-7 win

Weeks does it all as 'Stoga edges Marple

Daily Local

November 26, 1999

By **DARREN YORKMAN**, Staff Writer

NEWTOWN SQUARE—The Marple Newtown High Tigers and the Conestoga Pioneers met on Thursday morning for the 23rd time on Thanksgiving Day.

The Pioneers who hold a slight edge in the Central League rivalry (12-10-1), ended with a slight edge on the scoreboard, 13-7, behind the strong running of running back Marquis Weeks. Weeks, who did everything but drive the bus for the Pioneers and head coach Matt Gibson, needed only 207 yards entering the game to reach 6,000 for his scholastic career.

With a strong, game winning 65-yard touchdown gallop in the fourth quarter, Weeks surpassed that milestone and cemented his place as one of the greatest running backs in Chester County history. He finished the game with 233 yards on 33 carries. His final career total: 6,026 yards.

"Marquis is a great back, and we had some great blocking from our fullbacks today," said Gibson. "Our coaches were telling us to stay to the left side, our fullbacks stepped up and Marquis just went with it."

The defense from Marple Newtown started well by holding Weeks to seven yards on three carries in Conestoga's first offensive series. 'Stoga senior Matt Hildenbrand's punt was blocked by Marple Newtown's Dan Mitchell and Tigers' senior Tom Mitros recovered the ball on the Conestoga 7-yard line.

Conestoga knew where its strength was, and the Pioneers gave the Tigers' defense a steady dose of



KEVIN NACIOS
Senior 6-3, 220
Offensive Tackle
Defensive End

Weeks. Running behind left tackle Kevin Nacios, Weeks blew past defenders, running 48 yards for the tying touchdown in the second quarter.

"With the mud and everything, our fullbacks had to do most of the blocking, our line has done a great job blocking all year," said Weeks, who is bound for the University of Virginia next year.

Conestoga (6-3, 7-5) had little problem with its offensive game plan in the second half.

The Pioneers would run Weeks left, then Weeks right, then Weeks up the middle. After only recording one first down in the first half, 'Stoga had the third quarter clock for a Thanksgiving Day appetizer holding the ball for 9:22, but scoring no points.

Finally, with 1:52 left in the game, Weeks displayed why it is so important to keep the opposing defense on the field. He blew by the worn out Tiger defenders for the 65-yard TD run. "They were getting tired, the left side of their line was weak all game. I saw the hole, swiped one arm away, saw some daylight and took off," said Weeks of his last scholastic touchdown run, "I can't get discouraged. I'll get three or four yards a carry, but eventually I'll get a big one."

"I commend the Marple players. It just goes to show that records mean nothing in a rivalry game like this," said Gibson.

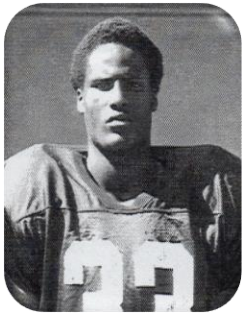
'Mr. 6,026' closes out career in style

Daily Local

November 26, 1999

By **DARREN YORKMAN**, Staff Writer

After Conestoga High running back Marquis Weeks ate up the Marple Newtown defense, amassing 233 yards in Thursday's 13-7 Central League victory, the talented running back was still hungry for more.



**MARQUIS
WEEKS**

"I'm going to ride all the way to New Jersey and eat," said the University of Virginia bound Weeks after his Thanksgiving Day game, the last of his scholastic career. Fittingly the last was the best for Weeks as he surpassed 6,000 yards for his career on Thursday. He finished the year with 2,305 and racked up 6,026 yards in his four seasons at Conestoga.

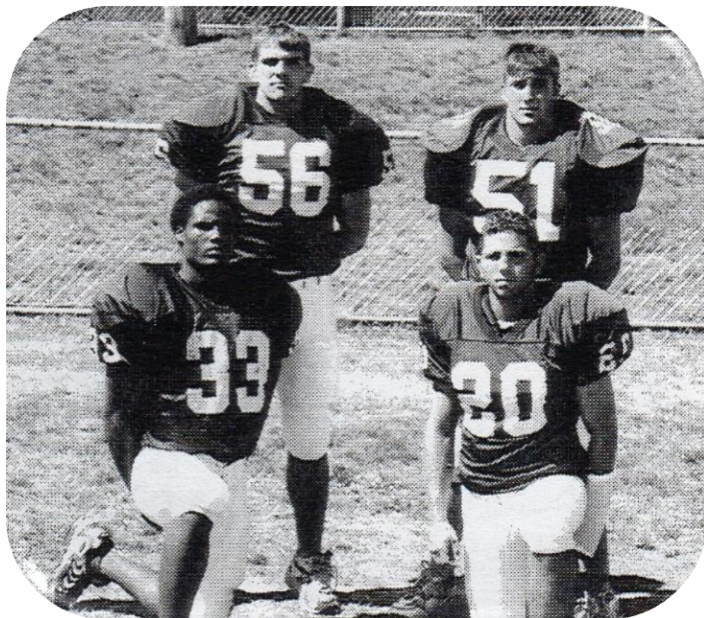
The number of yards is an incredible feat, but is magnified when you take into consideration that Weeks had under 200 yards in his freshman season.

"This is definitely my best year here, it's our first winning season," said Weeks, smiling as he reflected on his good times. That smile remained on his face when he talked of the bad times also, like when he ran for only 36 yards against Strath Haven earlier in the year.

That positive outlook on life is what Conestoga head coach Matt Gibson will miss the most now that Weeks is moving on. "It's an honor to coach him, not only is he great on the field, but off it as well. He is a can do person and a great team oriented person," said Gibson of Weeks, "He does not let the accolades get in his way. The odds are that I might never get a running back of that caliber again."

Now Gibson must try to adjust to life next year without a very special running back. "Somehow we will have to compensate for his loss, because I don't think that there is any way you can replace someone like that," continued Gibson.

Weeks realizes that the college game is a little different than what he has seen in high school, but he's already thinking team-first. "I'll probably sit the first year and get some playing time on special teams. If I have to move to defense or something I will, but I doubt it. I'm a running back," said Weeks.



1999 Captains

Kneeling: Marquis Weeks, Andy Shea

Standing: Pete Keller, Miles Bower

In 1999, Matt Gibson took over the reigns of the Conestoga Football program. In his first season, the team amassed a seven win – five loss season. Senior Marquis Weeks made headlines each week as he finished the 1999 year with 2,305 yards to end his Conestoga career with 6,026 yards. Marquis, Andy Shea, Pete Keller, and Miles Bower were the 1999 Captains. Several underclassmen made their mark during the season: Sophomores - tight end/ linebacker Chase Bower, quarterback Dewey Burke, tailback/ safety Steve Shea and fullback/ safety Eric Hildenbrand, and Freshman quarterback John D'Agostini.