

TIGER FLASHBACK

BANKS COUNTY

1991

The 1991 version of the Banks County Leopards ventured ten miles south on Highway 441 with visions of a second consecutive victory over the Tigers dancing in their heads. But, when the final horn sounded the little cats must have thought that they had been in World War II because they were simply shell-shocked by the REAL CATS to the tune of (40-11).

On the second play of the game, Leopard halfback Shawn Smith was massacred by the Tiger defense, as he coughed up the ball giving the Tigers possession at the BC 43.

It didn't take the Tigers long to get on the scoreboard as they scored in five of their seven possessions on the evening the first coming on a 7-play, 43-yard drive. After two plays, Jason West gained 5 yards and a first down at the 30. An offside penalty against the Leopards on third and three gave the Tigers another first down at the 18.

Halfback Vernard Gillespie then burst over left guard for the game's initial tally behind the blocking of Andre Pattman, Michael Brown, Gary Brown, Phillip Cox and Richard Vickery. Gillespie finished the night with 14 carries, 180 yards and two touchdowns.

Quarterback Jason Pittman plunged in over right tackle for the two-point conversion giving Commerce and early (8-0) lead with 6:57 remaining in the first stanza.

Two possessions later the Leopards drove into Tiger territory, but an unsuccessful run of only two yards on fourth and four gave the Tigers possession once more at the Commerce 34.

The Tigers then began a 12-play, 66-yard drive for their second tally of the night on this clear and mild evening, as they converted on one fourth down opportunity and twice on third down to keep the drive alive.

The big playmaker in the excursion was QB Pittman who completed two passes of 17 and 11 yards to Kevin Neely and Adam Wilson respectively. Pittman kept the ball, primarily on the option, for 27 yards on seven attempts the last of which was a two-yard sneak over left guard for the second Tiger score of the night.

Pittman's pass to Wilson was good for the two-point conversion mounting the Tiger lead to (16-0) at the 6:00 mark of the second period.

Two possessions later, Banks County began its first scoring drive of the night which was culminated by a 32-yard field goal by Michael Fulbright to cut the Tiger lead to (16-3) with only three ticks left on the first half clock.

If Banks County had gathered any thoughts of a comeback, Vernard Gillespie canceled them very quickly when on the second play following the second half kickoff, he took a last second option pitch from Pittman and skirted right end and down the sideline in front of the press box and raced 84 yards untouched to the goal line to place the death dagger right into the heart of the Leopards.

Pittman tacked on another two points as he again ran the quarterback keeper over right guard giving the young men from Tigertown a (24-3) insurmountable lead with 10:29 to play in the third period.

Banks County then mounted a forty yard drive down to the Tiger 33 where a fourth and three halfback pass attempt was batted down by Tiger defensive back Chuck Thompson.

Commerce then put on one of its patented ball-control drives of 67 yards in 8 plays to ring up the pay station once more. An 11 yard run by Gillespie, a 17 yarder up the middle by Jason West and an option keeper around right end by Pittman set up the score as fullback Lamar Bowles burst up the middle for the final five yards to make Merrill Bagwell change the score on the scoreboard once again.

Pittman made it two for two on PAT pass attempts this time hitting Adam Wilson over the middle to increase the Tiger lead to (30-3) with 2:20 remaining in the third period.

With 11:01 remaining in the game, Leopard halfback David Browner scored from 11 yards out for the first Banks County TD of the evening which was one of 7 plays and 67 yards. Brian Martin passed to Shawn Smith for the two-point conversion and now the score read (32-11) with the Commerce Tigers on the big end of the score.

Unfortunately for the Leopards, Coach Steve Savage's crew was not through. Pittman and company responded with a 14-play, 80-yard touchdown march of their own with Pittman scoring both his second TD of the evening on an 11 yard scamper around right end and he also tacked on his third two-point conversion of the evening at 2:17 to give the Black and Gold clad Tigers a (40-11) victory.

Others who played on the 1991 Tiger squad were: Corey Wood, Russell Shore, Bobby Carroll, Bryan Shore, Michael Ward, Phillip Seabolt, Jeff Phillips, Michael Reynolds, Kiah McWilliams, Joe Ewing, Jeff Davis, Brad Daves, Keith Savage, Clifton Bonds, BuJhune Daniels, Marlon Huff, Stef Rucker, Si Gray, Jeff Culpepper, Sammy Simmons, Johnny Morris, Corey Jackson, Kenyatta Smith, and Will Golden.

Partially compiled from *THE COMMERCE NEWS* reports.

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