

TIGER FLASHBACK

BUFORD

1988

The Buford Wolves, sporting a four game winning streak over the Tigers, rolled in with their band of canines with an undefeated (4-0) record with intentions of mauling the Tigers again, but Barry Brooks & Company had in mind an altogether different opinion, as they rounded up the stray dogs and pummeled the Gwinnett County wild hounds by a (34-14) score.

Following the opening kickoff, the Wolves steadily drove into Tiger territory down to the Commerce 20 yard line, but four consecutive incomplete passes thwarted the thrust into Tiger Country.

Brooks then orchestrated his first of five Tiger TD drives, as the Tiger wishbone attack drove 80 yards in 12 plays behind the bullish running of fullback Scott Burley and the nifty darts and dashes of halfback Kevin Wood. On first down at the Commerce 41, Burley burst up the middle for 24 yards.

Two plays later, Brooks hit tight end Blake Wilson on a 10-yard pass for a first down at the Buford 24. On the succeeding play Brooks faked a handoff to Burley and then pitched to Wood on the option who in turn scampered around right end for 24-yard score on the first play of the second period with 11:53 remaining in the half.

Kicker Cedric Wood scooped up the bad PAT snap and attempted a pass which fell short of the mark, but the Tigers had seized the lead (6-0) and one they would never surrender.

The Buford return man, Lee Glasper, fielded the kickoff at his 13, started up the right side then reversed his field and bolted down the left sideline untouched for an 87-yard TD to tie the score at 6-6 where it remained following a bad snap that foiled the PAT attempt for Buford.

Following the kickoff, Coach Ray Lamb's forces under the guidance of Brooks put the wishbone in gear for another long drive. Taking over at the 41, Brooks kept on an option play and darted through right tackle for 23 yards to the Buford 36.

Kevin Wood kept the drive alive with a two yard run on a third-and-short attempt at the Wolves' 27. Later, an attempted pass, Brooks scrambled from the pocket and overthrew Tim Nicholson who was all alone in the end zone.

Two plays later however, Brooks this time was on target and hit split end Tyrone Rollins slanting across the middle for a scoring pass of 26 yards with 8:21 remaining in the second quarter.

Brooks was successful on the two-point conversion run as the Tigers had snatched a (14-6) lead from the Wolves.

The Tiger defense stymied the next Buford possession forcing a 44 yard punt which squirted into the end zone.

From the 20, the Tigers moved relentlessly for the score going 80 yards in 7 plays. Highlights in the drive were a 9-yard pass from Brooks to Wilson, a 36-yard run around right end by Wood on an option pitch from Brooks and a 15-yard burst over left tackle by fullback Burley to the nine. Brooks then scampered around right end for the tally from nine yards out, as he kept the pigskin on the option play.

Brooks' two-point conversion pass fell incomplete, but the Tigers held a (20-6) lead with only 2:05 left in the half.

As the second half began, the defenses of both teams dominated the action. Commerce then took possession of the ball at its own 8 yard line following a 55 yard punt by the Wolves' Marcus Smith. On the first play thereafter, HB Kevin Wood burst up the middle and turned on the afterburners for a 92-yard TD jaunt. But, Commerce was penalized for illegal use of hands and the ball was returned to the Tiger 4 yard line.

The Tiger fans were again ecstatic just three plays later when Brooks circled right end and down the sideline in front of the Tiger faithful for a TD on an 80-yard thing of beauty, and this jaunt counted. The well-oiled Tiger machine was now in high gear.

Wood's PAT kick was good and Commerce had a commanding lead of (27-6) with 11:19 left in the game.

On the kickoff, return man John Cooper failed to gather in the bounding pigskin where Thomas Pace alertly fell on the elusive ball giving the Tigers possession with first and goal at the 4-yard line of the Wolves.

On the second play thereafter, Kevin Wood bucked over right tackle from two yards out to give the Tigers a (34-6) advantage following Cedric Wood's successful PAT with 10:37 remaining in the game.

Buford then mounted its only scoring drive of the evening covering 77 yards in 14 plays. The march was culminated when Marcus Smith plunged into the glory land from one yard out. Lee Glasper made the successful two-point conversion run cutting the Tiger lead to (34-14) with 3:09 remaining in the game.

As the game came to a close, the Tigers were again threatening to score at the Buford 27 yard line .

The Tigers ran up 412 yards total offense with 362 on the ground and 17 first downs while limiting the Wolves to 186 yards total offense and only 9 first downs.

The 1988 Tigers later went on to post an (8-3-0) record also defeating Franklin County, Madison County, Jefferson, Union County, Dawson County, Banks County and Towns County while losing to Oconee County, Dacula and Dacula once more in the first playoff game of the season on a last play field goal from a good distance out.

Other members of the 1988 squad were: Waylon Rucker, Jason Waters, J. Ben Bray, Richie Backer, Lamar Bowles, Josh Massey, Craig Patrick, Corey Gillespie, Gregg Allen, Gary Beck, Emory Walker, Brian Mathis, Scott Fitzpatrick, Lance Leavens, Kelly Slater, Clay Seymour, Andy Barnett, Michael Brown, Jason Watson, Tracey Brown and Chad Herbert.

Partially compiled from *GWINNETT DAILY NEWS* reports

July 1992, Jeff Prickett