

TIGER FLASHBACK

CARTERSVILLE

1980

The 1980 Cartersville Purple Hurricanes blew into town with intentions of making it two in a row over Commerce, having defeated the Tigers 21-18 in the 1979 region championship game at Commerce.

However, the Gold and Black used an opportunistic offense and a bend but not break defense to squeak out a (21-13) victory, as they added two goal line stands in the second half to preserve the victory.

"We were real lucky," said Coach Ray Lamb. "Our defense just rose to the occasion," he added.

Cartersville featured the running of halfback Robert Lavette, later to be a star at Georgia Tech. The shifty running back finished the evening with 142 yards in 26 carries but was held to no touchdowns by the Tiger defenders.

On the other hand, the Tigers were led by the Lamb brothers duo of Bobby and Hal who put on some dazzling pre-halftime aerial excitement for the home folks.

Unable to move the pigskin following the opening kickoff, Cartersville made a grave error deep in their own territory when punter Ted Chastain fumbled the snap from center and Tiger defensive end Lane Woodall pounced on the loose pigskin giving the Tigers a gift in field position at the Cartersville seven yard line.

Two plays later, HB Clark Williams skirted left end from four yards out and the Tigers had seized the lead with only 3:16 having elapsed in the opening contest of the year. Tony Smallwood booted the PAT giving Commerce an early (7-0) advantage.

Two possessions later, Cartersville took over at its 38 and using a relentless ground game, the Purple Hurricanes marched 62 yards in 12 plays to score. With first down at the Tiger 1, Commerce threw up a stiff defense, but on third down Cartersville quarterback Tony GiGiacomo muffed the handoff to fullback Butch Moore, but the little zephyr's scoring opportunity was saved when teammate Neil Vaughn recovered in the end zone for a Purple Hurricane touchdown.

Ted Chastain toed the PAT and the score was knotted at (7-7) with 10:06 remaining in the half.

Hey, football fans this was only the beginning of the fireworks in the first half.

The Tigers came back on the field like gangbusters and mounted their only drive of the evening starting at the Commerce 23. Fullback Terry Cook plunged for a first down at the Tiger 35. QB Bobby Lamb, four of six on the night for 209 yards passing, threw a 20 yard bullet to tight end Brad Klugh to the Hurricanes 45.

Running the option to perfection, Lamb while being tackled, pitched to HB Taylor Rucker who streaked around right end and down the sidelines for 39 yards to the Cartersville 6 yard line. Cook then bulled over right guard for the TD at 7:21. Fullback Smallwood's successful kick increased the Tiger advantage to (14-7) with 7:21 to go in the second stanza.

The Hurricanes immediately blew back into contention. After Lavette gained three on a buck over right tackle, GiGiacomo lofted a 68-yard scoring strike to flanker Lamar West who strode into the end zone untouched. Then came an important development in the game.

Linebacker Rick Zak burst through the line and blocked the PAT attempt by Chastain leaving the Tigers with an ever-so-slim lead of (14-13) with 6:09 remaining in the first half of play.

Near the end of the half, Cartersville linebacker Harvey Robinson intercepted a Lamb pass at the Tiger 30. Three plays advanced the Purple Hurricanes just nine yards, whereupon a fourth down incomplete pass gave the ball back to the Tigers at the Commerce 21 with only 28 seconds remaining in the half.

Cook gained 11 yards before Lamb hit Williams on a swing pass to the right that gained 30 yards to put Commerce in business at the Cartersville 39 only to have but five seconds left before the horn would sound.

On the final play of the first half, Lamb went to the air again, this time connecting with brother Hal who split two defenders to make a leaping grab.

The sophomore receiver then eluded two would-be tacklers, and sprinted into the end zone untouched as the horn sounded to cap a 4-play, 79-yard Joe Montana type rally in only 28 seconds. Truly remarkable was this drive. Smallwood was again true giving the Tigers a (21-13) lead.

The second half was all Cartersville it seemed, as the Hurricanes drove into scoring position three times, but each time was denied a touchdown by the gallant Commerce defenders.

First, Cartersville drove 58 yards in 16 plays to the Tiger 8 following a 14-yard run by Lavette leaving the Hurricanes with fourth and three game situation. Cartersville coach

Gerald Barge elected to go for the field goal. Chastain's attempt fell short and the Tigers had dodged bullet number one.

Cartersville began its second long scoring attempt to begin the fourth stanza, as the Hurricanes marched 11-plays and 71-yards to the Tiger three before the forward wall of Woodall, Clay Hendrix, Nathan Anderson, Terry Howard, Rick Zak, Brian Hill, Todd Jones and Phillip Allen again would not succumb to the onslaught and denied the invaders once more on an incomplete fourth down pass by the Cartersville quarterback.

Bullet number two had ricocheted off the Tiger armor.

For the second time in the half, the Tigers were three downs and punt. Here came the Hurricanes for the third time in the half, but doggedly the Commerce defenders were heroic in stopping a fourth and ten pass attempt for only a two yard gain to the Tiger 27 with 52 seconds remaining in the game.

Commerce had repelled bullet number three, as the Tiger defenders walked tall when the chips were down in this second half.

Tiger character was exemplified on this night as they made numerous goal line stands, showed their one minute offense capabilities and were opportunistic when the opponent made mistakes exemplifying the numerous qualities needed in order to be successful. The Tigers showed their class on this night in 1980.

The 1980 Commerce Tigers went on to post a 6-4-0 record as they also defeated Madison County, Hart County, North Gwinnett, East Hall and Loganville but lost four contests to Buford, Oconee County, Duluth and Jefferson.

Others on the 1980 squad were: Tim Seabolt, Steve Orenstein, Bill Finch, Keith Lacey, Kenny Wood, Eddie Allen, Brit Wilson, Steve Allen, Todd Jones, Tim Nunn, Rodney Bell, Tim Pritchett, Vaughn Howington, Tracy Milford, Delano White, and Mark Howell.

Partially compiled from *THE COMMERCE NEWS*, *ATHENS DAILY NEWS* and *THE ANDERSON INDEPENDENT* reports

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