

The 1963 Pioneers



The 1963 season was the second after the “split” into Conestoga and Great Valley. Coach *Paol* said that he wasn’t using the split as an excuse, but as it did in any other school district that split, it took a toll on the team.

The team finished the season with a 21-0 victory over its arch rival West Chester. The Pioneers played their best game on a rainy night against Plymouth Whitmarsh when they tied the undefeated team 14-14. And they defeated Penncrest 14-0. All of these successes came at the end of the year, and they gave the 1964 life.

Conestoga’s offense was led by halfback Lenny Elisio, quarterback Jay Reis and end Steve Pierce, who set a school record by catching 32 passes.

Pictured left are Coach Ujobai, Coach Paolantonio and Coach Ramsay.



First Row: Andy Harris, Lenny Elisio, Win Harris, Jay Reis, Harvey Linderman, John Wyatt, Floyd Biggers, Jim Hennessey, Skip Spear, Steve Pierce, Skip Comsia, Gerry Tarrant, J. Richmond

Second Row: Duane Holland, Robert Muriless, Rick Corey, Ed Durrell, Terry McDonnell, Phil Kennedy, T. Colby, John Boardman, Tom Arena, Steve Domenick, Tom Crawford, John Shain, Bruce Enders

Third Row: George Taylor, Lou Young, Steve Schifter, R. Sterling, Jeff Smith, R. Metz, Don McClemmy, Jim Tift, W. Clair, Duke Deans, Jim Harris, Coach Ujobai

Fourth Row: Vernon Calloway, Coach Paolantonio, Conrad Hamilton, Jeff Allen, Jim Ford, Jim Porter, Clarke Welburn, Gregg Moore, G. Griffith, J. Adrian, P. Collier, J. Woodward, D. Laughlin, J. Picou, Coach Ramsay

Phantoms Romp Pioneers, 44-19

By **BILL HAUCK**
(Of the *Local News Staff*)
September 30, 1963

Phoenixville High School spotted Conestoga two touchdowns in the first quarter, then came on to crush the Pioneers 44-19 with a vaunted group attack that didn't let up until the final whistle, on the Phantoms home field, Saturday afternoon.

Everything seemed to be going in the Pioneers favor in the first quarter as Conestoga scored two TD's marching 72 yards on both occasions.

Prevalent Passing

Most prevalent was the passing of Conestoga quarterback, Jay Reis. On the first push, the Pioneers with the aid of passes good for 19 and 18 yards traveled to the Phoenixville 5, where it looked like the drive might bog down. Len Elisio, Pioneer back, then dropped back and threw a short pass to Steve Pierce in the end zone. Floyd Biggers kicked the extra point and Conestoga led 7-0.

Following the kick-off the Pioneers let the Phantoms have the ball for one series. Again taking a fourth down punt on its own 28, Conestoga began its second march up the field. With the aid of a roughing-the-kicker penalty, tow passes for 20 and 11 yards and a 16-yard dash by Reis, the Pioneers once again found themselves on the Phoenixville 4. Here Gerald Tarrant went over for the second TD. The PAT was missed, but Conestoga led by a comfortable 13-0 score.

Three First Downs

The Pioneers kicked off and on a series of plays Phoenixville reeled off three first downs. The game went into the second quarter, and after an attempt to pass out, the Pioneers intercepted. A strong defense forced Conestoga to punt. The Phantoms took over at their 39. On the first play from scrimmage, they broke through for their first TD.

The Phantoms scored a second TD quickly to go up 14-13. Conestoga on three Reis passes good for 29, 20 and 2 carried to the Phoenixville 27, but the half ended stopping the Pioneer drive.

During the third quarter, there was no scoring. As the game went into the fourth period, Phoenixville had possession of the ball, and they scored to lead 20-13. From this point on, the Phantoms struck for three more scores and a field goal.

Conestoga came back for one more score. With the ball on its own 47, Reis threw out flat to Tarrant, who then ran the remaining distance of 53 yards for the Pioneers last tally.

Conestoga's Reis connected 14 times of 26 attempts for 222 yards in the air.

Conestoga Line-up

ENDS: Spear, Pierce, Hamilton, Greenwood

TACKLES: Ford, Harris

GUARDS: Tifft, MacClammy, Kenneyd

CENTERS: Wyatt, Moore

BACKS: Reis, Elisio, Tarrant, Hennessy, Durrel, Biggers, Landerman, Corey.



QB Jay Ries



Running Back
Lenny Elisio



End Steve Pierce



Running Back
Floyd Biggers

Gerry Tarrant

Upper Merion Passing Rout Conestoga, 31-7

By **BILL HAUCK**
(Of the *Local News Staff*)
October 5, 1963

Conestoga High School found its way only once to touchdown land as it fell to a heavy second half barrage of Upper Merion Passes 31 to 7 at Teamer Field, Berwyn, last night. And the Pioneers lost its fleet footed running back, Gerald Tarrant, who suffered a dislocated knee in the final moments of the first half. Tarrant's injury held up the game for 30 minutes until he could be taken from the field by the

Berwyn Fire Company ambulance to the Bryn Mawr Hospital.

The game was played on even terms during the first half until the Spartans generated enough steam to march 57 yards for its first score.

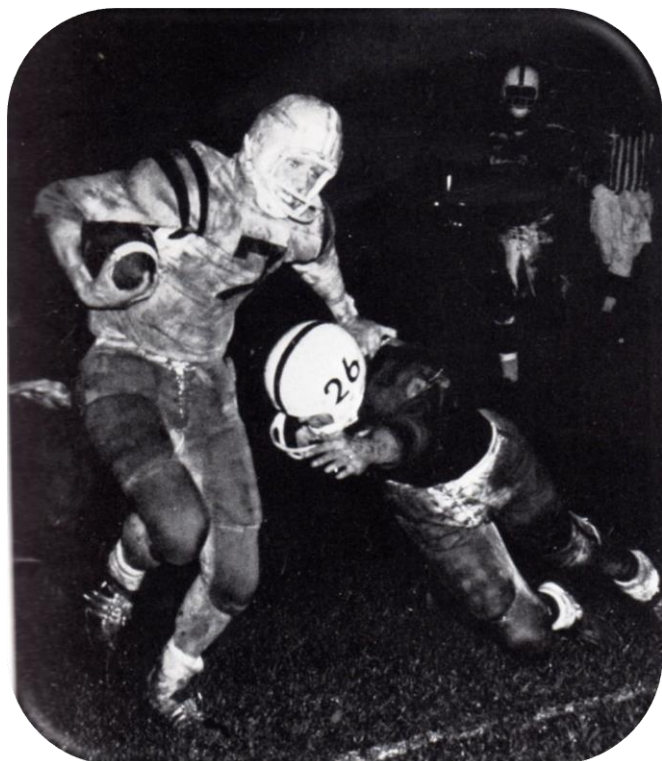
Pioneers In Running

Prior to this, good runs by Ed Durrell, Lenny Elisio and Tarrant kept the Pioneers in the running with Conestoga traveling into UM territory.

In the third quarter, UM scored 18, and in the fourth quarter they scored 7. After an exchange of the

ball on downs, the Pioneers put up a strong defense that sent Upper Merion rolling back to its three-yard line and forced the Spartans to punt.

The ball rolled out of bounds on the UM 26. From there, Conestoga marched the remaining distance for its score with Reis going over on a keeper play. Floyd Biggers, Pioneer back, kicked the extra point.



Springfield Triumphs Over Conestoga

Daily Local News
October 14, 1963

A stubborn Conestoga High School football team dropped its second Suburban II League game and third straight of the season after a wild second quarter against the Cougars of Springfield High, at the Delco field, 14 to 7, on Saturday afternoon.

Again, the Pioneers showed vast improvement over previous outings, but lacked the punch to score when they lost the ball on downs in the fourth period at the 20-yard line with just moments to play.

Long March

Conestoga, on a long march, drove to the Cougars' 10 early in the second period, but lost the ball on downs. It was at this point when Springfield made its first tally on a 90-yard run by back Ed Mason.

The Pioneers came right back. On heady maneuvering of his team, Jay Reis, Pioneer QB, and the boys from the Upper Main Line marched 67 yards for their lone TD. At the seven, Reis dropped back and threw to Harvey Landerman, Pioneer back, for the score. Floyd Biggers then kicked the PAT, and the score was even 7-7.

Cougar back Mason scored Springfield's other TD on a 26-yard pass play.



Ridley Twp. Air Attack Routs Conestoga, 36-7

By **BILL HAUCK**
(of the *Local Sports Staff*)
October 21, 1963

Ridley Township High School took to the air after being held to a 7-7 tie during the first half by Conestoga's Pioneer eleven and bombed the Upper mainliners 36 to 7, at Berwyn, Saturday afternoon.

As the game stood at the half, it looked like possibly the Pioneers were working toward their first win and upset of the season, as Conestoga found itself with a 7 to 0 deficit with the first three minutes following the opening kickoff. But, the Pioneers came right back and converted a recovered RT fumble into a 37-yard drive and a TD to knot the score. Later the Upper Mainliners just before the half ended put up a sterling defense on its one-yard line to halt an RT drive that ended in a fumble with Conestoga recovering.

Conestoga began to move from its own 40 following the second kickoff, but they were forced to punt. The ball was

pulled in on the RT 25. The running back broke loose and made it to his own 37. He fumbled, and Conestoga recovered. At this point, the Pioneers began to click and with hard running by Lenny elision, Pioneer back, and two passes by Jay Reis, Pioneer QB, good for 19 yards, Conestoga worked the ball to the RT one. Elisio drove over center for the TD. Floyd Biggers kicked the PAT, and the game was tied at 7-7.

During the third quarter, both teams kept well within each others 20 yard markers. Then came the storm - just after the fourth period opened. And Ridley Township scored four TDs.

Pictured above: Pioneer defensive back Bill Clair moves in to stop Ridley Township end's progress.

Pioneers Winless

Radnor High Defeats Conestoga 21-7

By **BILL HAUCK**
(Of the *Local News Staff*)
October 30, 1963

Conestoga High School's chances of remaining in contention for Suburban II honors was eliminated last Friday afternoon, when Radnor High defeated its old rival 21-7.

The Pioneers rolled along in fine fashion for their only tally, but they consistently bogged down whenever another scoring opportunity came up. One

fact remains, Conestoga did not let down, and after going over the Pioneers season play to date, I found that interceptions have led to Conestoga's downfall.

After observing the Pioneers in most of their games, one quality that stands out is their ability to come back for a score after having been scored upon. This has happened in at least three of the Pioneers five games.

Radnor scored early in the second quarter, but the Pioneers came right back and knotted it at 7-7.



Pioneers Play 'Giant Killer,' Tie Colonials

By **BILL HAUCK**
(Of the *Local News Staff*)
November 3, 1963

Conestoga High School became "giant killers," when the Pioneers connected for an 84-yard pass-run play to tie the power packed Plymouth-Whitemarsh Colonials, Suburban II league leaders, on a rain soaked Teamer field, at Berwyn last night, 14-14.

Gritty Jay Reis, Conestoga QB, whose arm never seems to tire, worked it overtime as he kept the air filled with passes until the final whistle, hitting for 8 of 19 for a total of 133 yards, in an all-out effort to win the game. Two other Pioneer backs, Craig Greenwood pegged one good for 25 yards, while Lenny Elisio threw another for 9 yards.

Ignoring the weather, both teams went into the air during the final period in a hectic passing duel that netted the Pioneers the stalemate and an upset over the heavier Colonials from Montgomery County. It was the first stop-gap for PW who had been riding at the top of the league undefeated and untied.

The big pass play for Conestoga came with just 2:25 remaining in the game, after the Pioneers checked the powerful running of the Colonials and took the ball over on downs, at their own 16. On the next play Reis dropped back, spotted Jim Hennessey, Pioneer back, 20 yards down field and threw to him. The lanky back took the ball on the run at the Conestoga 47, and out raced two PW defenders for the tally. Floyd Biggers, Conestoga halfback, booted the extra point, his second of the evening, knotting the score at 14 all.

What followed was a hectic final two minutes, with both teams filling the air with passes. Conestoga in kicking off tried an on-side boot that was almost successful. However, the Colonials recovered, and the Pioneers defense held them.

QB Reis attempted three passes. On fourth down, Conestoga end Craig Greenwood, went back to punt, but instead he passed to Lenny Elisio, who ran to the PW 25. A 15-yard Conestoga penalty set the team back. Reis attempted three more passes. The final one was intercepted, and time ran out.

During the second quarter, both teams penetrated deep into each other's territory. Conestoga got to the 11, with some hard running by Lenny Elisio, who moved for 48 yards on one carry. A fourth down pass was knocked down by a Colonial defender behind the goal line to end the Pioneer threat.

In the third quarter, Conestoga attempted an onside kick but the Colonials recovered on their own 47. On the next play, they fumbled, and Conestoga recovered on the 48. From this point, the Pioneers began to drive for their first TD. Conestoga rolled on the ground until it reached the PW 21. Then Reis took to the air connecting for three of four passes to the Colonials 6. At this point Reis dropped back and hit Stephen Pierce, Pioneer end, waiting in the end zone for the score. Biggers booted the extra point, and the game was knotted at 7 to 7.

Bill Paolantonio, Conestoga coach, said after the game he was delighted with his team's play. "The blocking and tackling was the best our boys did all year. As far as our continuing to throw after we score the tying touchdown – well, our boys wanted to win, and they kept trying. No one can say we let down for a moment. Our team had desire and played to win all the way."

Pictured above is Lenny Elisio (#21)



Conestoga Beats Penncrest, 14-0, For First Victory

Daily Local News

November 11, 1963

Conestoga High School ended a seven-week victory drought Saturday morning as Jay Reis and Steve Pierce hooked up for a pair of touchdown passes to carry the rejuvenated Pioneers to a 14-0 Suburban II football victory over Penncrest of Lima.

An erratic performer in Suburban II circles, Penncrest gave little resistance to the overpowering Pioneer aerial attack, which netted 181 yards and seven first downs. Reis threw to both his ends and a bevy of backfielders, completing 13 of 20 passes. "The passing was big factor in the win," said Pioneer Coach Bill Paolantonio.

Wanted to Play

"The kids are green, and we've had a lot of injuries," continued the elated coach. "But they wanted to play today, and now that the season is running out, I guess they decided it was time to win a few." The Pioneers looked every bit the superior team on the sticky Penncrest field.

Limiting the Lions to a scant nine offensive plays in the first half, Conestoga dominated control of the ball, although it scored only a single touchdown.

Engineering a drive from his own 17, Reis capped a 14-play series with a 25-yard touchdown strike to Pierce. Floyd Biggers, the leading ground gainer for the Pioneers, teamed up with Jim Hennessy for first down sprints to keep the initial scoring thrust in motions.

Reis Strikes

Len Elisio penetrated to the Lion 10 before the scoring play, but a holding penalty nearly killed the threat as the Pioneers were stepped back to the 25. Reis struck on the next play, and Biggers converted from placement for a 7-0 Conestoga lead at 4:15 of the second period.

After failing to post a single first down and completing only one pass for a total net gain of minus two yards in the first half, Penncrest came alive in the second round, showing some of the play that carried the Lions to victories over Upper Merion and Radnor.

But the Pioneers had already made their bid for the victory and stood firm on the only Penncrest penetration inside the Conestoga 20.

The Lions made their longest advance on the initial series of the second half, marching 45 yards in eight plays. But once inside the Pioneer 20 to the 15, the Lions were driven back by a five-yard penalty and three incomplete passes.

Pioneers Thunder

Taking possession on its own 25, Conestoga thundered back for its second tally. Reis passed twice to Pierce and once to Elisio for first downs, adding 20 more yards and a first down on a screen pass to Hennessy.

Biggers drove eight yards to set the stage for Reis' jump pass to Pierce in the end zone. The nine-yard strike completed a 75-yard thrust, which consumed 11 plays. Biggers converted for his second extra point and a 14-0 Conestoga lead at 1:35 of the third quarter.

Short drives and punt exchanges consumed the remaining time as Hennessy and Bill Clair halted two Lion drives with pass interceptions.



Rams Beat Conestoga in Aerial Battle, 35-13

By **BILL HAUCK**
(Of the *Local News Staff*)
November 16, 1963

It rained passes at Berwyn last night. When it was all over Conestoga was on the short end of a 35-13 score in an air battle with Harriton High School before 1500 chilled fans on Teamer Field.

Oddly enough each team completed 50 percent or better of their tosses, with Conestoga connecting on 14 of 24, while the Rams from Lower Merion Township hit for nine of 18.

The Rams drew first blood late in the first quarter after the two teams were battling on even terms. But Conestoga came right back on the kickoff, when Lenny Elisio, Pioneer back, took the ball at his own 25 and went all the way to the Harriton 35. In five plays, the Pioneers reached the Ram 15. At this point, Dick Corey, who

was filling in at quarterback for the injured Jay Reis, went back and threw to Steve Pierce, waiting all alone in the end zone. Conestoga missed the extra point, and the Pioneers had to settle for a 7-6 margin.

Harriton scored once more in the first half, and then they poured it on in the second half. With the game in its closing moments, Conestoga started on its own 36, after taking the kick-off, and marched to the Ram seven. Corey then dropped back and threw to Bill Clair, who leaped up inside the end zone between two Harriton defenders for the score. A pass from Jim Hennessy to Pierce completed the seven points, and shortly after the game ended at 35 to 13.

Conestoga completed its Suburban II league play for the season. They will close out with their final game against West Chester at Berwyn on Thanksgiving Day.

Conestoga Tops West Chester in Turkey Day Rivalry

By **JOHN P. BRITT**
Local News Sports Editor
November 29, 1963

The difference between a "healthy" squad and the one that's "healing" had a lot to do with the outcome of the annual Thanksgiving Day rivalry between Conestoga and West Chester, as Conestoga walked off with the turkey, 21-0, yesterday on the Pioneers home field. "Injuries really hurt us out there," West Chester Coach Al Bruno said following his team's ninth straight defeat.

Conestoga Coach Bill Paolantonio was a study in contrast after his team racked up its second victory of the year. "I'm really happy for the kids, it's been a long season," Paolantonio beamed.

"Most of our kids were healthy out there today, and they had the confidence. That was the difference," the Pioneer coach continued.

It didn't take Conestoga long to show what confidence could do. In less than three minutes, the Pioneers had run up a seven-point lead over West Chester.

Pioneers Roll

The Warriors kicked off, and the Pioneers started their drive from their own 43. A steady ground game moved the ball up to the West

Chester 15, and then Lenny Elisio barreled his way around end to go the distance for the first score. Craig Greenwood's conversion was good.

The West Chester offense sputtered and was unable to crack through the tough Pioneer defense, despite the fact that numerous opportunities arose.

Uses Opportunity

Late in the first quarter, Conestoga recovered a fumble on the West Chester 40, and the Pioneers were not about to let opportunity slip through their fingers as the Warriors did.

On the strong running of Lenny Elisio and Dick Corey, the Pioneers took the ball up to the West Chester one-yard line. Corey took it in from there.

Craig Greenwood came back to split the uprights for the second straight time, and Conestoga took a 14-point lead before the first period was completed.

West Chester got down as far as the Conestoga 15 on the next series, but the Pioneer line dug in and the pass defense tightened up. The WC drive was stopped in its tracks.

14-0 At Half

Neither team was able to score again in the first half, and the halftime ceremonies started with Conestoga holding a 14-point lead.

After forcing West Chester into a punting situation early in the third period, Conestoga took possession of the ball on its own 48 and methodically moved it for the third and final touchdown of the game.

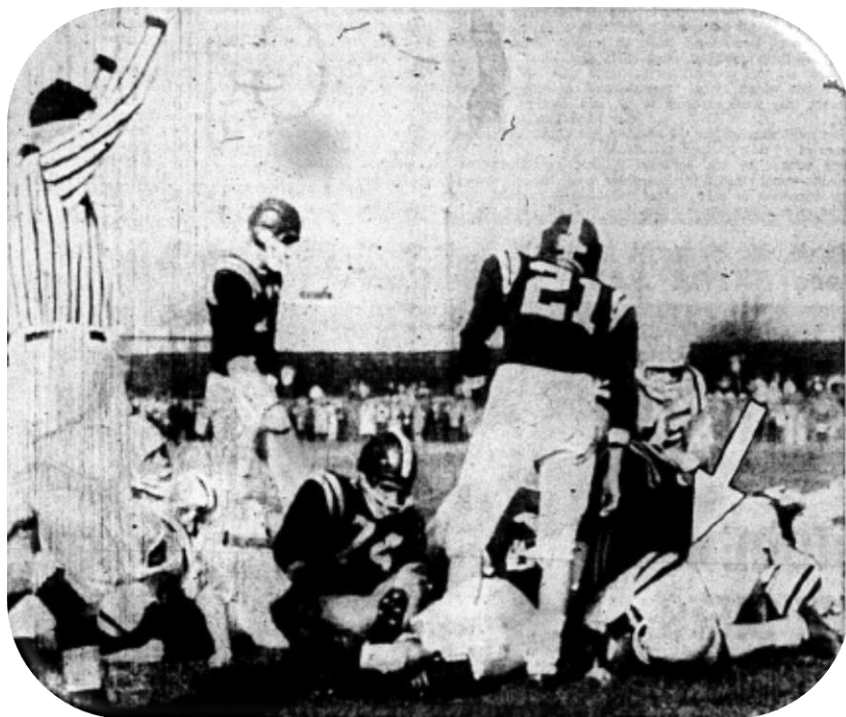
The passing of the Conestoga quarterback Jay Reis was the big weapon for Conestoga in its third scoring drive of the game.

In the seven plays it took Conestoga to move the 52-yard distance, Reis threw three times, completing two of them, one for a touchdown.

QB Not Ruffled

The big play was a 26-yard pass play from Reis to end Jim Hennessey that put the ball on the West Chester 15. Reis attempted to pass again, but this time it was batted down. The Conestoga quarterback didn't get ruffled when his pass didn't strike, and he came back with another aerial to Steve Pierce for the score. Greenwood's kick was true again, and the Pioneers held the winning margin.

Paolantonio, remarking about the Pioneers sudden surge at the end of the season, said, "the kids just started believing in themselves. I think that early score was a big help, but we did a couple of things in there besides that which looked pretty good to me."



PIONEER POWER – Official gives signal that a touchdown was scored as Conestoga back Dick Corey powers his way through the middle of the line for the Pioneer’s second six-pointer in the first period of thanksgiving Day game at Conestoga.



SIX-POINT STRIKE – Conestoga end Stephen Pierce pulls in Jay Reis pass at about the four-yard line before going in for the Pioneers’ final touchdown in the third period of yesterday’s game.

Conestoga Seniors on the 1963 Team



Floyd Biggers



John Boardman



Skip Comsia



Tom Crawford



Lenny Elisio



Jim Hennessey



Phil Kennedy



Terry McDonnell



Steve Pierce



Jay Reis