F211

TIGER FLASHBACK
WASHINGTON-WILKES
2010

Having gotten off to a difficult (0-3-0) start for the 2010 season, the Commerce Tigers traveled down Highways 441 and 78 to Washington to do battle with another set of Tigers in the form of an old rival in Washington-Wilkes dating back to the inaugural contest with Washington High in 1940.

The Commerce ground game was superb on this night, as they knocked out 18 first downs and 377 total yards all by way of the infantry in recording their first victory of the young season. The northern set of Tigers on this mild late summer evening won this scoring track meet by a score of (41-34).

In an attempt to gain the upper hand early, Coach Steve Savage reached way down into his bag of tricks and called for kicker Josh Swistak to attempt an onsides kick on the opening kickoff, however WW recovered at the hosts 45 yard stripe, whereupon these blue Tigers marched 55 yards in five plays to score the game's initial tally on a 35-yard TD run by halfback T.J. Mickins. With the successful PAT, WW led early (7-0).

Commerce growled right back in this cat fight when Tiger quarterback Cody Streetman on the first snap thereafter ran the option to the right side and kept the pigskin around end then cut back to the middle of the field. He then veered left toward the sideline and sprinted in front of the Tiger bench toward the goal line. Assisted by great downfield blocking, the young signal caller scored, as he crossed the goal line while he was being tackled by a WW defender. Swistak's PAT kick was good and the game was tied at seven with only 2:13 having elapsed on the clock in the first period.

Two series later, WW scored once more on a 9-yard run by Eric Scott which culminated an 88 yard drive. With the successful PAT, WW had now lunged back into the lead at (14-7).

Commerce then scored 24 points unanswered points on its next four possessions beginning with a 78 yard drive in which the ground oriented Tiger offense knocked out four first downs primarily behind the tough running of fullback Jamal Browner and QB Streetman

who got the Tigers down to the WW 17 where Swistak entered and booted his first of two field goals in the game with a successful 33 yarder. This kick cut the WW lead to (14-10) with 7:13 remaining in the second stanza.

The Commerce defense led by Serguio Rojas, Kyhrie Harris, Swistak and Addison Davis then forced a WW punt from midfield after a short drive, as the Tigers now took possession at their 26 yard line with 3:49 remaining in the half. In this short span of time, Commerce was able to put 14 more points on the board for a (24-14) halftime lead.

Behind the running of Streetman, Browner and Jessie Savage, the Commerce offense went the distance on an eight-play, 64-yard drive culminated by Streetman's 10-yard option keeper around right end for the score which gave the Tigers their first lead of the evening of (17-14) at the 1:17 mark of the half following another Swistak PAT.

On the fourth play of Washinton-Wilkes next possession late in the half, quarterback Teverrius Jone's bullet pass down the left sideline was picked off by alert Commerce defensive back Marquavius Little who sped down the Commerce sideline for 46 yards to the WW four where a personal foul penalty on the hosts moved the ball to the two.

Streetman, two plays later, scored on the option keeper to pay dirt with only 16 ticks left on the halftime clock to give the Commerce Tigers a (24-14) lead following another successful Swistak kick.

Later as the second half began, Commerce opportunistically scored its 24th consecutive point, as the Tigers brilliantly blitzed through the city of Washington and its defense just as William T. Sherman did the city and Georgia in the Civil War. The highlight of the drive was the opening kickoff when Little entered the fray once more by returning the second half KO for 60 yards to the WW 34 where another late hit by a host defender gave the visiting Tigers another superb scoring opportunity at the WW 19.

Five plays later Streetman sneaked over the goal line from two yards out for the tally. It was his fourth of five eventual TD runs on the night. Another successful boot by Swistak gave Commerce a (31-14) lead at the 9:05 mark of the third period.

WW then answered this 24 point run by Commerce with a TD on a 17-yard run by QB Jones which cut the Commerce lead to (31-21).

Not to be denied, Savage's charges came right back and trekked down the field on a 64-yard drive in three snaps culminated with a 12 TD run by Streetman which was set up by his gallop of 50 yards on an option keeper one play earlier. The Tiger lead had now leaped to (38-21) midway of the third period.

WW once more answered the bell and scored in nine plays with the drive being capped by a 10-yard TD run by Mickens which again narrowed the WW margin of deficit by seven to (38-28) with eighty seconds left in the third period.

Next, disaster struck Commerce when Streetman lost a fumble at the Commerce 45. On the first play thereafter QB Jones hit receiver Desmond Jackson with a long 43 yard pass to the two. One play later, Jones scored on a two yard run for the score. However, the all important PAT kick was blocked by Tyler Adams who burst through the line on a great effort. This fine defensive effort left Commerce with an advantage of a mere four points at (38-34) with only four ticks left in the third period.

Fireworks for both teams filled the first three periods, but the final frame for the most part found both teams shooting blanks.

Two possessions following the last WW score, Commerce drove down to the host Tigers five yard stripe where the march stalled and Swistak kicked his second field goal of the game. This one was true from 22 yards out, and Commerce led (41-34) with 3:52 left.

WW then marched quickly to the Commerce 35 and faced a third and nine situation. However, QB Jones' desperation bullet pass to the left with 39 seconds left in the game was much overthrown. The black and gold clad Tigers then took a knee one snap later to end the game with a much needed and well-deserved victory for Commerce.

On this night, Commerce put on a tremendous offensive show all on the ground. The Tiger defense also came up with some big plays throughout the contest in critical situations in support of the offensive fire power.

Streetman gave a gallant performance with 31 carries for 265 yards and five touchdowns.

The Commerce Tigers of Coach Steve Savage in this his 22nd and final season at the helm of his alma mater went on to post a 2010 season record of (5-6-0) as they also defeated Athens Christian, Riverside Military Academy, Prince Avenue and Social Circle while losing to Jefferson, Franklin County, North Oconee, Athens Academy, George Walton and Bremen.

Others on the 2010 team who played well versus WW were: Jake Vaughn, Garrett Wilson, Chance McClure, Micah Eason, Zach Harmon, Chase Barnett and Michael Moon.