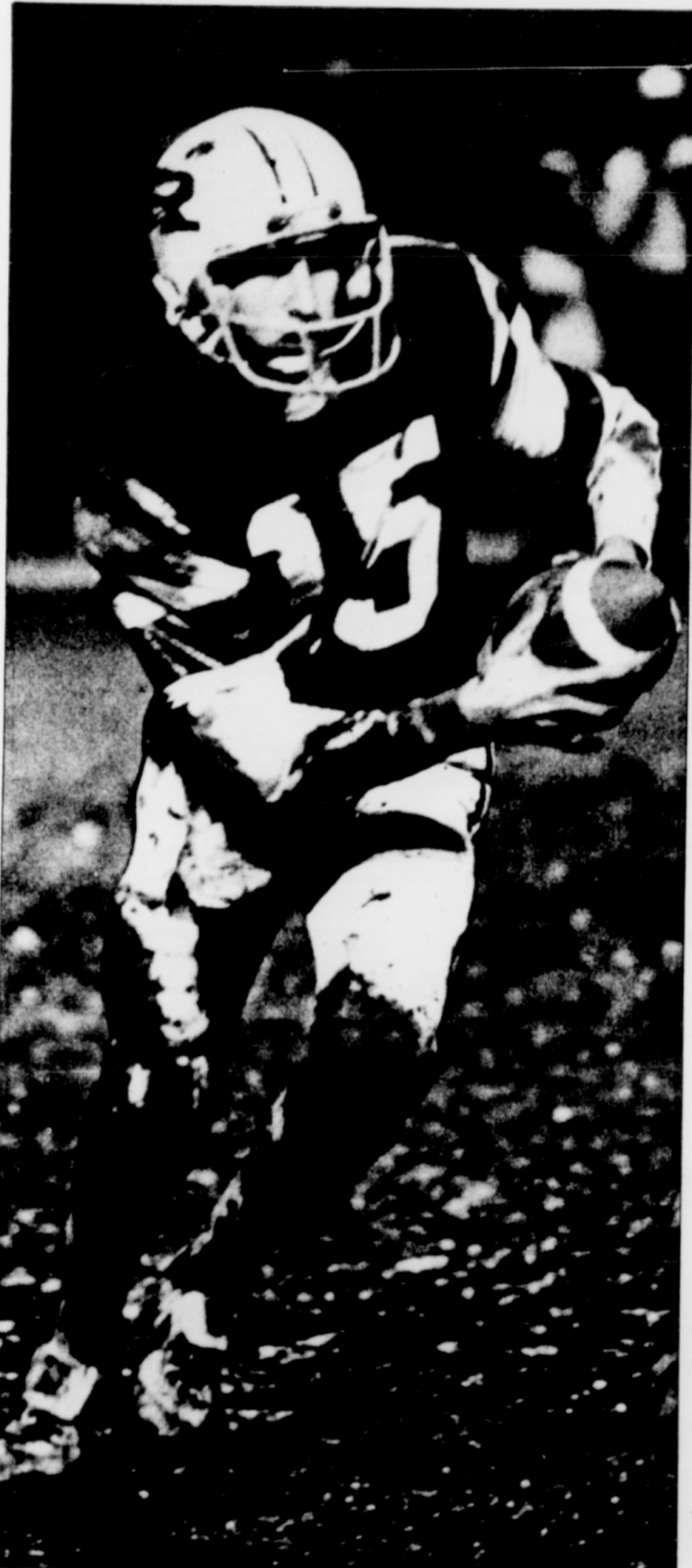


WILCO PREVIEW



Lancers think Stanley has the tools

*To help team do things right;
like win Wilco League title*



There's nothing sloppy about Jack Stanley's passing.

One of the saddest moments in the last Wilco League football season came when Reynolds quarterback Todd Rispler injured his neck in a game against Barlow and was told not only would he miss the rest of the 1980 season, but he would be wise never to play the sport again.

Now everyone feels sympathy for Rispler, who, at the time only a junior, was well on his way to becoming one of the best quarterbacks in the league and would have raised Cain this fall.

But you know what? There isn't anyone who feels real sorry for Reynolds right now.

And you know why? Because as good as the Lancers, 7-2 and league champions last year, would have been this year with Rispler, they're still going to be pretty dang good without him.

No tears needed here, thank you.

'I think the offense can go out and be confident it can move the ball. Because it's done it before.'
— Craig Ruecker

The reason is fairly obvious when it is taken into consideration the fact that eight full-time starters return to the Lancer offense. That's a pretty good starting point in anybody's book. And Reynolds coach Craig Ruecker is not one to pretend it isn't.

"I think the offense can go out and be confident it can move the ball," Ruecker says. "Because it's done it before."

There it is in a nutshell. These returning starters weren't merely going through the motions out there last year; they were members of one of the most potent offenses around. Here they are:

When Rispler went down late in the season, stepping into to replace him was Jack Stanley. Stanley, who is 6-1 (5-8 of which are legs) and weighs 172, performed admirably in the last three games of the season, including a 14-for-20 performance against Pendleton in the state playoffs.

"Jack is not the great runner Rispler was," Ruecker says. "But he is an outstanding drop-back passer. And with our tailbacks we don't need a great running quarterback."

To be sure, the Lancers have a couple of primo tailbacks in Melvin Renfro and Dane Gjesdal, both returnees from last year. Ruecker goes so far as to say his may be the best tailback tandem in the state. "Somebody in the state might have a tailback who is as good or better than ours," he says. "But I don't think anybody has two who are better than our two."

He may be right, but just to be on the safe side, Ruecker will employ some blockers ahead of Renfro and Gjesdal, anyway. Immediately in front will be Vince Wappler, "one of the best blocking fullbacks anywhere," in Ruecker's words.

1980 WILCO STANDINGS

	W	L	PF	PA
Reynolds	7	2	127	91
Milwaukie	7	2	180	95
Gresham	7	2	162	66
Clackamas	7	2	196	90
Barlow	6	3	154	76
Centennial	4	5	147	74
The Dalles	3	6	128	212
Columbia	3	6	56	171
Hood River	1	8	82	253
Putnam	0	9	101	225

Ahead of him will be an experienced offensive line led by guards Eric Byhre (5-9, 172) and Brian Marsh (5-11, 185), tackle Steve Dempsey (6-3, 200) and center Lee Graham (6-0, 185). If the Lancers are different in any respect this year it is their size and strength. "I don't know whether it's tradition or what," Ruecker says, "but we have never seemed to have the big guys. But I feel good about our size this year. We don't have a lot of 220-pound guys but we have a lot of quality 185-, 190-pound guys."

Even some of those who aren't that big act as though they were. Renfro, all 5-10, 165 pounds of him, has been known to bench press 275 pounds.

The Lancers also have experience at receiver where Chris Eischen, one of the team's best athletes, returns, as does Darrin Heine. At tight end, watch for junior Tony Domingue. At 6-5, 217, he won't be hard to spot. "He's one of our most pleasant surprises," Ruecker says. "He's a player."

Ruecker is thinking about also making Domingue a defensive lineman and is sure he will have Eischen on the other side of the ball in his secondary, which returns intact. Renfro will flank Eischen at the other safety position while Gjesdal and Steve Campa hold down the corners.

"Since we like to run out of the I formation a lot," Ruecker says, "and since we like to alternate our tailbacks I feel confident using both tailbacks on the other side of the ball. They'll get their rest."

As experienced as the Lancers are offensively, the only other returning man they have on defense is tackle Tim Reed. "He's a super player," Ruecker says, "but he's the only guy we have back up front." Still, he gives the Lancers five players with starting experience on defense.

Ruecker is looking at Dempsey, Graham, Jeff Rink and Kendall McLeod at the linebacker spot, and may use Wappler as a defensive end.

"We have to shore up on defense," Ruecker says.

But that's only if the offense lets go of the ball. And at Reynolds that may not happen too often.

DICK BALTUS