

WILCO PREVIEW



Tide rising for improved Columbia

Columbia went into the 1980 football season with nowhere to go but up.

After all, the Chargers were coming off a winless 1979 and were trying to shake a 14-game losing streak.

They finally did, but not until game No. 5 when they beat Putnam. That was only the beginning for Columbia, however. By the time the campaign ended, the team was definitely up.

The Chargers finished their season with two straight wins, the first a stunning 21-20 upset of Barlow and the second a 12-0 shutout of Hood River.

The two season-closing wins left the team with a 3-6 record, but more important, it gave the players something to believe in for this year.

"The kids are still riding high on the emotion from last year," says Charger coach Roger Clark, who is entering his third season at Columbia with the largest football turnout the school has ever had.

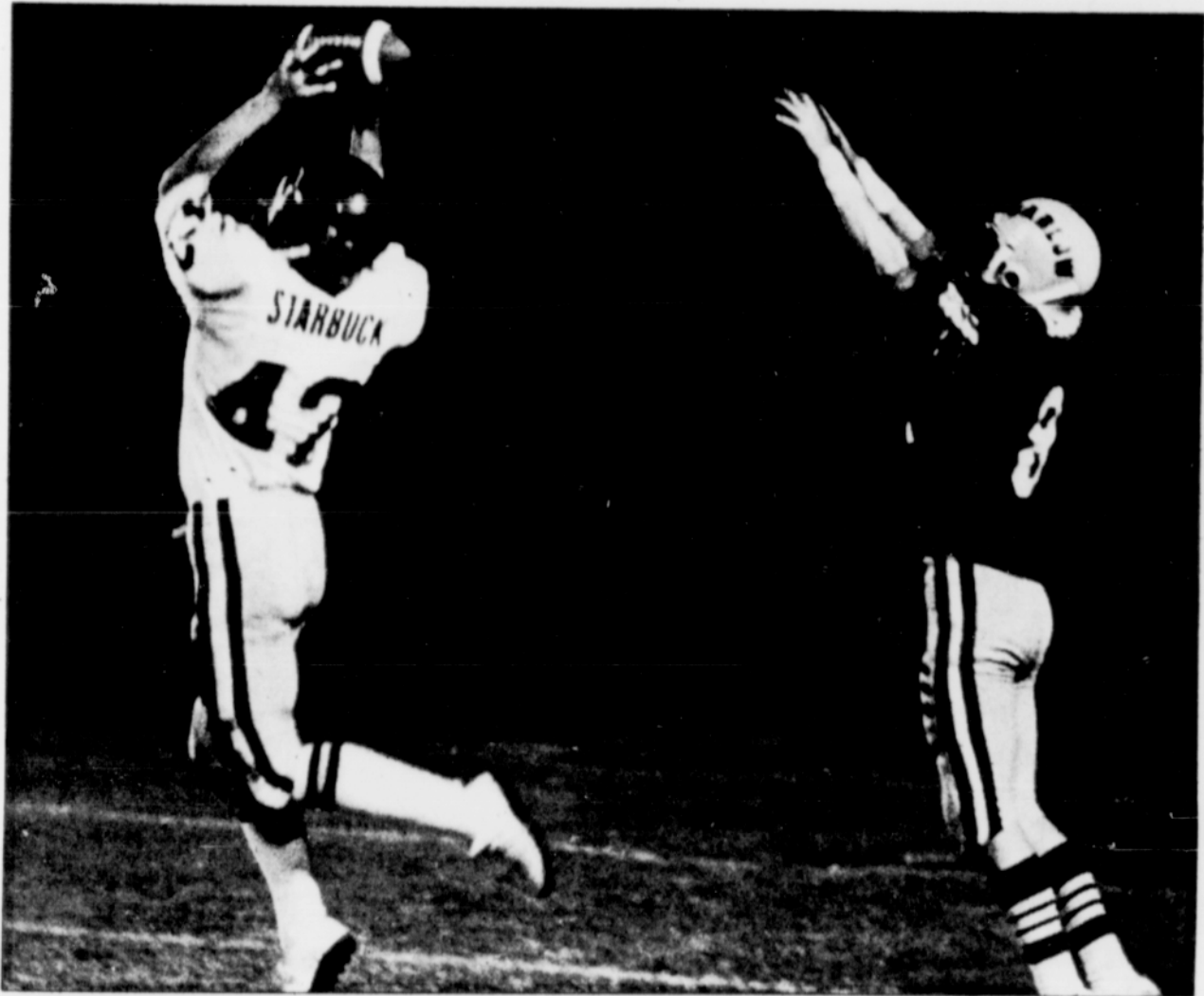
"The things we stress — hustle and great attitude — the kids have really responded to this year," Clark says. "We wish we had 30 more bodies out here, but you can't worry about things like that. We're pleased with the kids' efforts. They really want to do everything we ask of them. It's the best group I've had here to be around."

The Charger defense is where the team's experience is at. As a result, it should be the Columbia's strong point, at least early in the season. It may have to be, since the Charger attack, depleted by graduation, will need time to retool.

"Our defense is going to have to play very well for the first couple of games," says Clark.

Clark says he is making almost daily changes in his depth chart as he tries to put together the best possible defensive unit. Returnees to the squad include end Craig Jenkins, tackle J.C. Davis, linebacker Alex Law and the entire 1980 secondary of Toby Ross, John Starbuck, Dave Shepherd and Todd Henderson.

"Those are the people coming back, but that doesn't necessarily mean they'll be our starters," Clark says. "They don't have the positions locked up. There are other people out here, some of them lettermen who didn't start last year. All



(Continued on Page 12) As John Starbuck did against Barlow last year, Chargers hope to rise to the occasion in 1981.



Backs Craig Jenkins, Dave Shepherd, Mike Shearer and Bob Lewis won't leave Columbia high and dry.

Depth new for Charger backfield

When Columbia football coach Roger Clark sets his starting lineup for the Chargers' Sept. 4 opener with arch-rival Reynolds, he'll have an interesting dilemma.

In seasons past, Clark's choices for running back were rather limited. The Chargers didn't have the big turnouts of other schools and were in the position of making do with what they had.

This year, though, Columbia has four senior running backs, all of whom want to start and are going all out in preseason practice to achieve that goal. It may make Clark's job a little easier when the season starts but right now, it's making it a little more difficult.

"The kids are having to battle for their spots," he says.

The four seniors — Craig Jenkins, Dave Shepherd, Bobby Lewis and Mike Shearer — figure it's going to go right down to the wire.

"We have four good backs but only two of us can start," Lewis says.

Lewis was a starter at the beginning of last season. When Columbia's prospective

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