T-rrific!

Bosch leads Connetquot to Division I Title in 24-7 victory over Longwood; T-Birds to face Farmingdale in Long Island Class I Finals Saturday night

by Terry Tuthill

Connetquot coach Nick Masi stood soaking wet on the sidelines, patiently counting down the final seconds of his team's 24-7 victory over the Longwood Lions.

"This is knocking on the door of the best feeling I have ever had," Masi said, although his clothing was saturated in the 45 degree weather. "I didn't feel we were going to do well this year."

But now that his team has doused him with the water bucket, Masi knows they have done well, and now must face Farmingdale for the Long Island Championship this Saturday at Hofstra University.

As for Longwood, there was no controversy surrounding this game as opposed to their last meeting with the T-Birds. Longwood won a protest in that game, after seemingly losing the game in the last play of the game, forcing the teams to replay the last three seconds of the game. It resulted in the T-Birds' only loss of the season.

"The tiny cloud following us is gone . . . we did the things we planned to do this game," Masi said. "They stopped [Chad] Bosch once, but they're not going to get him twice."

While Chad Bosch was leading the offense, the T-Bird defense kept the Lions in their own territory for most of the game.

Connetquot forced a Longwood fumble on the third play of the game, giving the T-Birds possession on Longwood's 45-yard line.

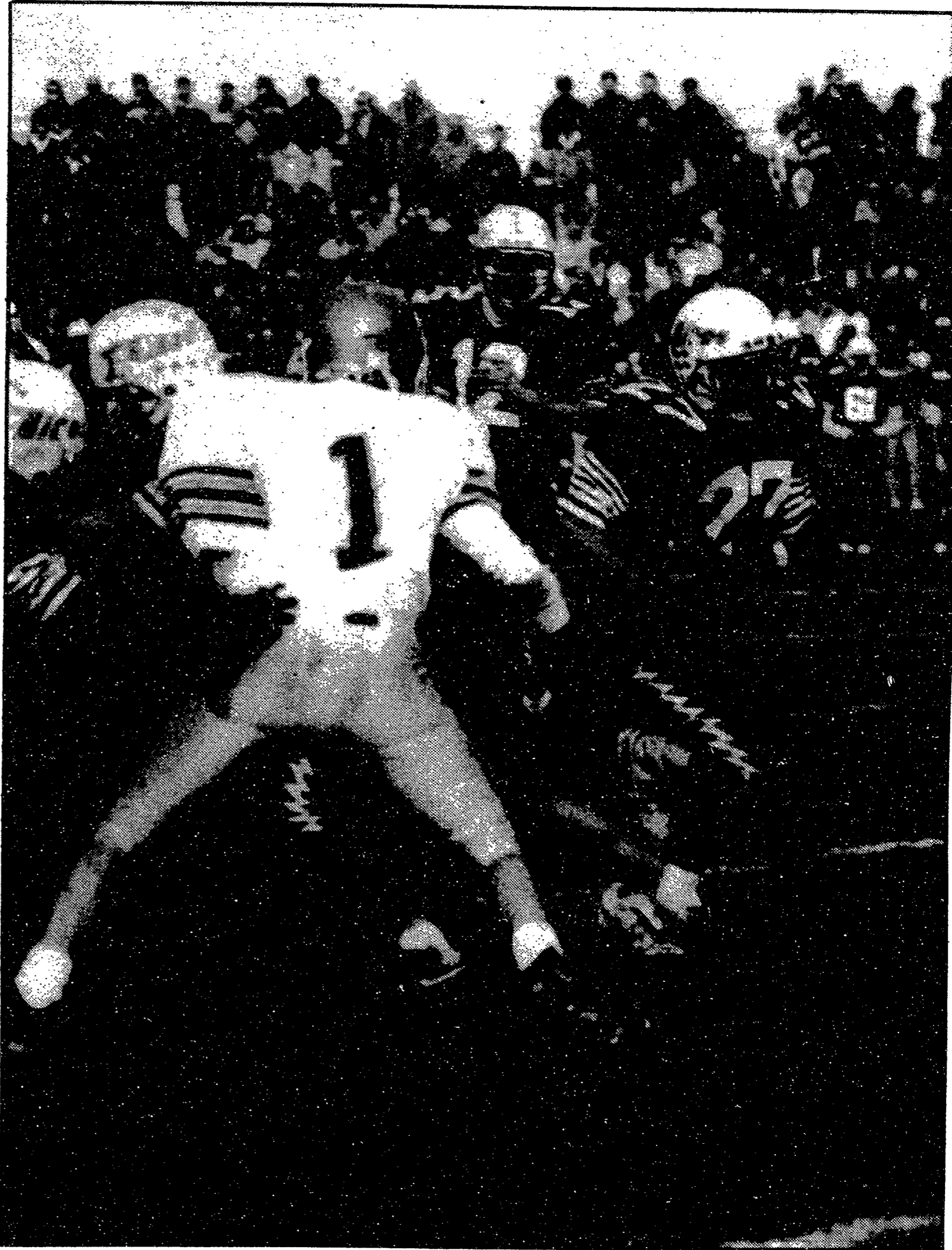Bosch carried four times for 28 yards to help set up Scott Coppola for a 36-yard field goal.

Connetquot increased its lead to 10-0 following another Lion fumble after only one play on their next possession. Starting at the Lion 41-yard line, Bosch ran off right tackle for 13 yards, and Brian McGuire went up the middle for four yards. On a play fake to Bosch, Coppola found Jim Melchiona in the top left corner of the end zone for a 22-yard touchdown. Coppola added the extra point.

Longwood's troubles continued on the ensuing kickoff, as Coppola nearly kicked the ball into the end zone. Longwood's kick returner Eric Brown was nailed at their own 15-yard line by John O'Connell. Connetquot forced a punt after three plays.

Bosch, who gained 186 yards on 26 carries, received the punt and broke three tackles for a 26-yard return, once again giving the T-Birds good field position at the Longwood 20-yard line. But on third and 11, Coppola was sacked for a 12-yard loss. With Bosch back to punt, he faked, ran to his right, and threw a 21-yard pass to Chris Burke just short of a first down to end the drive at the 11-yard line.

The T-Birds kept up the pressure on defense, forcing two straight punts deep in Lion territory, the second of which gave the T-Birds the ball at the Lion 25-yard line. McGuire capped the short drive with a one-yard touchdown run through the middle. Coppola added the extra point for a 17-0 lead.

Longwood finally got on the scoreboard after four plays, with Eric Brown scoring on a 37-yard

Connetquot's Chad Bosch (#27) gained 186 yards on 26 carries for Connetquot during the T-Birds 24-7 victory over Longwood in the Suffolk Division I finals Saturday.   photo by Terry Tuthill

pass from Ken O'Connor.

Both teams became sloppy before the half. Connetquot fumbled twice, once on a reverse when Bosch and McGuire fumbled the handoff. Jim Melchonia got one back for the T-Birds, intercepting an O'Connor pass.

Bosch scored the only touchdown of the second half on a five-yard run.

Like Connetquot, Farmingdale (7-1-2) emphasizes the ground game. However, Farmingdale uses two running backs, almost Seniors Mike Townsend has rushed for 928 yards while Senior Matt Gentile has 408 yards.

Although both coaches don't know what to expect from each other, Daler coach Don Synder expects a tough game.

And Chad Bosch? Yes, he's heard of him.