

Football: Plenski out to claw William Tennent back to prominence

By Drew Markol Staff writer | Posted: Thursday, September 10, 2015 11:45 pm

WARMINSTER — Like all coaches when they come to a new program, Leo Plenski wondered what he was getting into as the new coach at William Tennent.

As it turns out, what he got was a dedicated group of seniors willing to listen, learn and spread the word about Panthers football.

"I have to give the seniors on this team so much credit," said Plenski, who left his alma mater of Bristol after three seasons as head coach to take over at Tennent. "I'm their third coach in four years, and that's hard for any team. But these guys have been working every day and want to improve.

"I told them when I got here (in February) that I'm not only looking to build the program, but that I want to win now. And, as a senior, that's what you want to do because you won't be here next year."

And, even though it's been just one game, the Panthers have already started to flip things around. The team they lost to in the opener in 2014, Mastery Charter North 21-13, they turned around and beat 31-19 last week.

"The new coaching staff really knows a lot and they have a plan," Tennent senior tight end/defensive end Luiz Diaz said. "It's a different mindset for us as seniors now, because it's now or never. That's the way we're looking at it."

Plenski has pretty good numbers to work with — Tennent's roster is in the 50s, with a freshmen class of 30 getting ready — and it's a team full of enthusiasm.

"We don't have a lot of kids with varsity experience, and we're hoping to get that before the league (Suburban One League Continental Conference) starts," Plenski said. "But one of the big things for us is that everyone has bought in to what we're trying to accomplish. And I couldn't ask for more as far as the attitude of the team. They come ready to go every day."

Leaving Bristol wasn't easy for Plenski, but if he didn't, he wouldn't have been true to himself or to what he's always told his players, regardless of where he was coaching.

"I always tell the kids that I'm coaching that you have to try to succeed in whatever you do in life," Plenski said. "And when this opportunity arose to coach at William Tennent, it was a chance for me to



New William Tennent football coach Leo Plenski during practice with his team on Thursday, September 10, 2015, at the school in Warminster.

go to a bigger school and try to succeed. We had some very good teams at Bristol, and they will continue to, but this was a new challenge for me here.

"I love Bristol, and I live in Bristol. To travel down Street Road to get here is kind of weird, but I'm getting used to it. It will be very exciting to see what transpires for us here."

The challenge on the field will truly kick in for the Panthers at the end of the month, when they open their SOL Continental Conference schedule against defending conference champ Quakertown (Tennent has games against Samuel Fels and Oxford before then).

The SOL Continental will likely be the most competitive of the three SOL conferences, as just about any of the eight teams could win it.

"Like any team, we want to win all of our games," burly 295-pound Tennent senior offensive lineman Hayden Arnold said. "And we want to try to get to the (District One) playoffs. Just winning last week, against a team that we had trouble beating, was very important. We just need to keep it going."

The Panthers went 1-5 in the SOL Continental in 2014 (plus a forfeit win over Central Bucks West), with three of those losses coming by seven points or less.

"I don't think there's a game on our schedule that we can't win if we play like we can," Plenski said.

"Our league is very competitive, and every team in it is good. We want to be right there in the mix and play exciting football, and I think that's what these kids will do."