

Bazemore Jokes About Soggy Turf

Weather and family reunions highlighted the talk as Valdosta State Class AA champion Wildcats climbed off their chartered bus at Memorial Stadium yesterday where they will meet West Springfield, Mass., this afternoon in the seventh annual Peanut Bowl classic.

The Wildcats, 40 strong rolled into Columbus after their 190 - mile bus trip at 4 o'clock. A police escort led the bus and a group of Bowl committee officials and sportswriters and photographers through the city and back to Memorial Stadium.

Coach Wright Bazemore, a graduate of Mercer University in Macon, immediately sent the Wildcats into the dressing room and tested the Stadium turf.

He found a soggy field that did not please him too much, but in his joking manner, he appraised it:

"If I had any halfbacks that could sidestep they would probably slip down, but we didn't bring any of those backs with us."

Quarterback Sammy Hardin, who has already signed a grant-in-aid Auburn, was greeted by his grandparents who reside in Phenix City. Sammy, who has two brothers, linemen Billy and Fomby, on the team, also found their mother waiting on them here.

Bazemore sent the group through a 45-minute workout on the Lions Club Municipal golf course's 18th fairway, but the practice was designed only to limber up the winners of 13 games already this year.

He reported that none of his crew were injured seriously enough to hamper their play, but several members of the starting lineup will be bruised slightly.

Meanwhile, the West Springfield gridders worked out yesterday morning, and attended the tea party yesterday afternoon at the Teen Tavern where the Bowl queen was selected. Of course, neither team attended the Peanut Bowl Ball at the Ralston Hotel last night.

The two teams are quartered at Fort Benning, in adjoining barracks. Both teams will also leave tomorrow, West Springfield boarding a train at 3 o'clock that afternoon.

Should Valdosta open the game kicking off today, the three Hardin brothers from Phenix City will be in the starting lineup for the Georgia champs. All three are on the kick off team.

Ken Stambaugh, who has covered 17 bowl games with his motion picture camera, will make it 18 when he shoots color movies of the pre-game parade, the actual game, and the halftime ceremonies.

George Theeringer, Columbus' own sterling radio sportscaster, will narrate the movie which is to be shown in Valdosta's Ritz Theater Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. The Ritz is a member of the Martin Theaters chain.

Cats Fight Off Terrific Terrier Rally to

Massey, Warren, Walker Star In Defensive Play

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more quickies in the third period. On the strength of a 42 - yard heave, Plumb to Mattoon, they rolled 81 yards for their second. Shortly thereafter, Hardin fumbled on the 32 and the Terriers recovered. Plumb promptly made 24 on a pass to Al Klein and Klein went over from the three on the next play.

The Valdosta spirit, however, was not gone. The Cats took the kickoff, drove 63 yards along the ground and George made one for the fourth TD. They were rolling again when two quick breaks—one of them rather freakish, converted another impending Valdosta TD into the 26th Terrier point.

Driving again, the Cats pushed to the enemy 11 when Renfroe fumbled and Blanchard recovered. Plumb then threw a long one to Blanchard. Three Valdosta defenders were under the ball when it came down. All three of them grabbed for it, knocked it into the air and saw it float into the arms of Ken Mattoon who carried the rest of the way on a play that covered 74 yards.

Valdosta's most anxious moment came less than a minute from the end. After running out the clock on three rushing plays, George went into punt formation at his own 46. Blanchard and

Mattoon, easily West Springfield's outstanding linemen — broke through to block the kick and recover on the 46. One play was nullified as both outfits were offside. Plumb then faded to pass, couldn't find a receiver and set sail down the side-lines. He was stopped 11 yards later as the final gun went off.

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West Springfield elected to receive after winning the toss. George kicked off and Rolandini returned to the Terrier 22. On the first play, Ernie LaBranche fumbled and Walker recovered on the 21. The Cats, however, tried just two plays before George fumbled and the enemy again took over on their own 16.

Plumb passed to Klein for nine, then ran for 19 and the first first down of the game. Greer then recovered the second Terrier fumble and Valdosta was set up on the Yankee 32.

George immediately ran for 12, then alternated with Fleming and Renfroe to lug the oval to the goal in 10 plays, none of which went more than five yards. George finished it from the one then booted the first of his four vital extra points. Eight minutes and 12 seconds had elapsed.

Two minutes later, after George's kickoff, Plumb slid to right on the split-T quarterback option play. Jimmy Walker smacked into him as he was attempting a lateral to Klein. The ball sailed free. Renfroe picked it up on the seven and trotted across.

Two successive offside penalties gave West Springfield a first down at their own 32 after the next kick. Massey and Fleming combined to cut down three rushing plays and Blanchard punted as the second quarter opened.

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Starting on their own 28, the Wildcats went to the opposing 22 before losing out on downs. Renfroe made two on the first play, John Robert O'Neal went for four and George made 11. Hardin then threw for the first time and hit Wetherington for 32 yards to the enemy 23. George made one, but two passes went incomplete and the third, Hardin-to-George, failed to gain.

Again Blanchard was forced to punt after Massey and Warren led the defense that set the Terriers back 12 yards in three plays. The Cats were assessed 15 yards for clipping on the punt return and took over on their 23. Hardin threw to Renfroe for 18 then bootlegged to the right for 17. His next pass, a long one, was intercepted by Plumb at the Terrier 45 and returned to the Valdosta 28.

On the strength of a 14-yarder from Plumb to Klein, the Yankees made it to the nine. Behind Warren, Valdosta stopped three rush-plays inside the five, but Plumb fooled them on fourth down and passed three yards to Blanchard for the score. Klein's rush for the point failed and the first half ended.

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Rolandini kicked off to open the second half and Massey returned from his 18 to his 47 on a fine run. After a five-yard backfield in motion penalty, O'Neal went off the left side for 14 and Renfroe added four for the first down. George made six, but he and O'Neal were each stopped cold on the two following plays and George punted. The kick went dead on the West Springfield 12.

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With the running of George Rolandini to pick up first down yardage and tighten the Valdosta defense, Plumb's passes sparked another Terrier tally. Rolandini made eight of the first two tries, and Klein added five before Rolandini came back for eight more. Plumb threw ten yards to Mattoon, then picked Mattoon again and heaved one that carried 42 yards to the Valdosta 13. Rolandini hit for five of them, and Plumb found Blanchard in the end zone for the remaining eight. Klein fumbled on the point try, but Blanchard picked it up and carried on across the goal line.

Hardin intercepted on the Terrier 39. George and Hardin carried 11 and 13 yards and the scoring door was again open. But Renfroe fumbled on the 11 and the enemy took over.

After Plumb ran 5 yards to the 26, the Terrier star faded and threw downfield to the Valdosta 45. Three Cat defenders were waiting, but the ball bounded out of their hands and into the clutches of the ever-alert Mattoon, who went the rest of the way, unmolested.

With three minutes left, Rolandini kicked off. Walker took it on the 25 and returned to his 45. George ran into the line three times for a nine yard total, then tried to punt. Blanchard and Mattoon blocked the boot and recovered on the Wildcat 46. Both sides were offside on the next play, helping Valdosta run out the clock. Plumb then went back to pass, found nobody open and ran for 11 yards. Time ran out before the Terriers could huddle again.

VALDOSTA	W. SPRINGFIELD	
17	First Downs	9
249	Yds. Rushing	83
54	Yds. Passing	197
8	Passes Attempted	18
4	Passes Completed	10
1	Opp. Passes Int.	1
2	Punts	2
11.5	Punt average	35.5
55	Yds. Penalized	54
303	Total Offense	280

Yards Rushing, Individual Valdosta

George 116 in 26 carries
Renfroe 21 in 8 carries
Fleming 56 in 10 carries
Hardin 28 in 4 carries
O'Neal 18 in 3 carries

West Springfield

Plumb 29 in 14 carries
Klein 16 in 4 carries
H'ton 3 in 1 carry
R'dini 32 in 8 carries
Leigner 3 in 1 carry

Starting Lineups

Valdosta	Pos.	W. Sp'field
Walker	LE	Mattoon
Warren	LT	Schweizer
Moore	LG	Kindig
Parramore	C	Laboranti
Rogers	RG	Murdiza
McNeal	RT	F. Blanchard
Wetherington	RE	Harlow
Hardin	QB	Plumb
George	LH	LaBranche
Renfroe	RH	Harrington
Fleming	FB	Rolandini

Sub: Valdosta—Backs: O'Neal, Webb, Massey, Gober, Greer, Taylor, Hughes. Tackles: Shroyer. Guards: F. Hardin, B. Hardin, Warlick, Harris.

W. Springfield—Backs: Klein,

Valdosta Slight Choice Over West Springfield

Wildcats After 18th In Row As Plumb-George Duel Is Seen

BY CECIL DARBY

Valdosta's Wildcats, winners of 17 consecutive games, four straight Region 1-A championships, three consecutive South Georgia titles and two state Class A crowns in a row, carried one of the most impressive records in history into the seventh annual Peanut Bowl game against West Springfield, Mass., at Memorial Stadium at 2:30 p.m. today.

Many local experts were favoring the South Georgians by margins of from six to 12 points but these were the very same ones who picked Richmond Academy to run Agawam, Mass. off the field a year ago today and picked Glynn Academy to rout Westfield three years ago.

Terrier Record

The Terriers, coached by Ed Mason, former Springfield College star who has won 13 and lost three in two years at the West Springfield helm, also brought an impressive record into today's contest, rolling over eight foes and scoring 204 points against 60 for the opposition.

The Wildcats carried a record of 13 victories this season into the contest, a lot of football for one season for any team, and today's fracas is No. 14 whereas the Ter-

riers will only be playing their ninth game. Some might point out that boys lose their desire to play after such a heavy schedule but the Wildcats have only one idea today—bringing the Peanut Bowl championship back to the state.

Last Georgia Winner

The last time a host team won a Peanut Bowl game, a Class A team did it. Rockmart defeated Holyoke, Mass., 19-14, Jan. 1, 1951, for one of only two Georgia victories here. Tech high of Atlanta won the other one back on New Year's Day, 1947, in the inaugural, beating Benton of St. Joseph, Mo., 34-0, in the most one-sided game ever staged.

In other Peanut Bowls, North Charleston, S. C., defeated Lanier of Macon, 34-7, in 1948, Westfield, Mass., downed Fitzgerald, Ga., 25-7, in 1949 and returned Dec. 31 of that year to whip Glynn Academy, 26-20, and Agawam, Mass., stopped Richmond last year, 20-12.

Les (Porky) Plumb, the key man in West Springfield's split-T attack, is hailed as the quarterback who never calls a wrong play. He's a good runner and passer and combines with powerful fullback George Rolandini, 195-pounder, to make the Terrier offense click. The latter also is an outstanding blocker and linebacker.

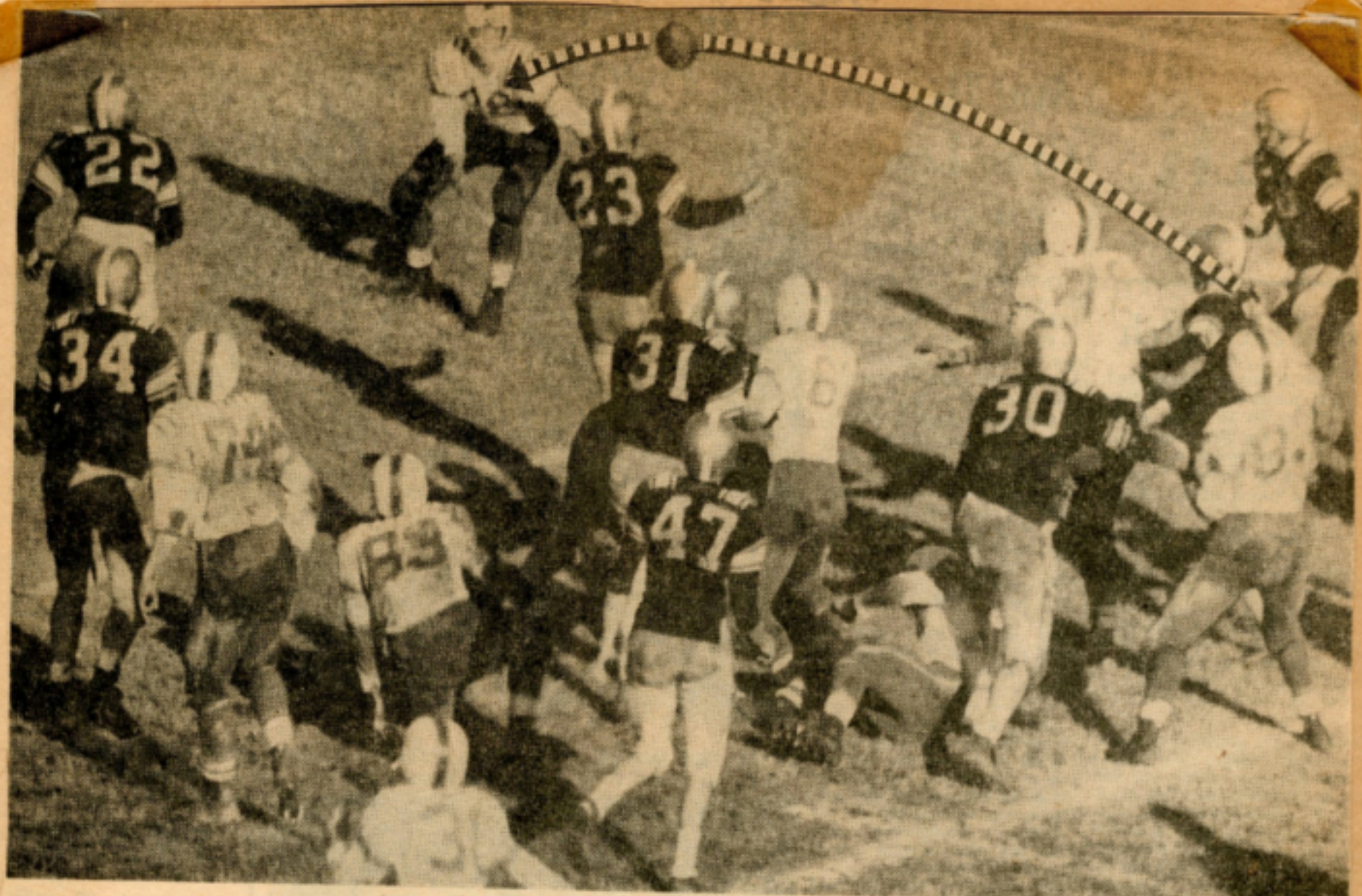
Valdosta's big ground - gainers are all-Southern halfback Noel George, Bobby Renfroe and Leonard (Red) Flemming. If the big West Springfield line is able to

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Probable Lineups

W. SPRINGFIELD	Pos.	VALDOSTA
Blanchard (185)	LE	Walker (155)
Harlow (200)	LT	Warren (206)
Pernice (170)	LG	Moore (175)
Laboranti (182)	C	Parramore (170)
Kindig (160)	RG	Rogers (165)
Chandler (230)	RT	McNeal (215)
Mattoon (175)	RE	W'rng'ton (170)
Plumb (165)	QB	Hardin, S. (170)
Harrington (185)	LH	George (170)
Klein (207)	RH	Renfroe (170)
Rolandini (195)	FB	Flemming (170)

(Cont. on next page.)



LES PLUMB (33) HURLS FIVE-YARD PASS TO END NEWT BLANCHARD FOR WEST SPRINGFIELD'S FIRST SCORE IN PEANUT BOWL. Other Identified West Springfield Players: Howard Chandler (78), Ken Kindig (62), Ken Mattoon (83), Lowell Harlow (74). Valdosta: James Warren (30), Herman Parramore (31), Jim Walker (47), Ray Moore (34), Sammy Hardin (22). Staff Photo—Floyd Jilson

Valdosta's Psychological Factor Almost Backfired in Peanut Bowl

Bazemore Says Wildcats Got 'Overconfident' After Early
21-0 Lead Over West Springfield in Annual Prep Classic

By BILL McGROTHA

Valdosta High Coach Wright Bazemore took a hard look Friday at his Wildcats' 28-26 victory over West Springfield, Mass., in Columbus' annual Peanut Bowl and allowed that the psychological factor he had counted on to advantage had fired the wrong way.

The factor: Overconfidence.

Bazemore admitted Valdosta had figured on the opponent being cocksure and he had spurred his team with statement credited to Springfield coach Ed Mason that teams up Massachusetts way just played a better brand of ball than Georgia boys.

And the Peanut Bowl record bore Mason out, for Massachusetts squads held a 3-1 margin over Georgians before this year's contest.

The way it turned out, in Bazemore's book, it was Valdosta which was damaged by overconfidence.

"After our boys ran up that 21-0 lead in the first half," he related, "they felt it was in the bag, that they could handle this crew pretty well. Well, the score was 21-19 before they woke up and realized they had to go back to work."

The coach declared Springfield fielded a much larger ball club than the program weights showed.

"Why," he rumbled, "Springfield had a bigger club than I know of anywhere south of the Mason-Dixon line—high school or college. Their boys were much larger than the ones publicized."

Valdosta had shown a sterling pass defense in its two final playoff games against College Park and LaGrange. But Springfield, with Porky Plumb throwing from the split-T, got three of its touchdowns

directly by passing and the fourth was set up on a long throw.

"The damp field hurt our pass defense," said Bazemore. "Our boys, trying to cut out to stop those passes, slipped several times."

He lauded Plumb, however, for a splendid second-half job of quarterbacking.

Fans commented on the vicious tackling of both teams throughout the game but the Valdosta players thought the hardest tackling they faced during the recent season came from Jesup.

Many observers were surprised by the terrific ball handling of Valdosta quarterback Sammy Hardin.

Bazemore chuckled and winked over that: "Why, I've been trying to tell you dumb bunnies all season Hardin is the finest high school ball handler I have ever

seen. Ask the teams that have played against him. A lot of time in practice I couldn't keep up with the ball myself."

He lauded his 155-pound end Jimmy Walker, "the finest end, for his size, I've ever had;" guard Ray Moore, center Herman Parramore and tackle James Warren for fine defensive duty against Springfield. And he singled out linebacker Larry Massey, who literally knocked himself out with his smashing tackles and had to come out of the game in the third quarter, for special praise.

Then, of course, there was Noel George, the stocky halfback, who underscored his all-Southern rating with two touchdowns and four extra points against Springfield, running his point total for the season to a whopping 202.

"I'll Stay Here," Says Wright Bazemore, When Asked About Coaching Elsewhere

"We've got a fair team but we'll be lucky to stay on the field with them." Such words, familiar to every loyal Valdosta Wildcat fan, have often been uttered by Wright Bazemore, head coach of V. H. S. and just as often, his teams have gone on the field to win decisive victories over highly touted and often favored foes.

At the beginning of the '52 season, Coach Bazemore even went so far as to say we had a pretty good team, but even at that, he still managed to live up to his reputation of understatement. Time and time again the Wildcats went on the field to score crushing defeats over opposing teams and to earn the reputation of being the best high school team ever produced in the state or, for that matter, the whole nation. They went undefeated through a season of 10 regular games and 3 playoffs to roll up a total point score of 505 to 32 for opponents.—A great record in anybody's book.

But great teams are products of Bazemore, through coaching skill and an abundance of good south Georgia material, he has had at least his share of in the past. Let's look back at his past teams for a few minutes.

Bazemore came to Valdosta in 1940 after two years in Waycross. Since then, he has up the amazing record of 115 wins, 8 losses, and 1 tied. His '40, '47, '51, and '52 teams were state champs, and his '50 team was beaten only in the finals. Year in and year out the regional and state teams have honored Valdosta players.

But football is not the extent of Bazemore's coaching skill. Valdosta basketball teams have gone to state finals 5 years in a row and won one. V. H. S. has also had one state tennis champion team and one to the finals.

But win, lose, or draw, Bazemore's teams are voted for scrap and fair play. It is no wonder that over the years Bazemore has earned the respect and admiration of every one who knows him, from Valdosta fan and players down through coaches, players, and fans of opposing teams.

Perhaps one of the greatest tributes of all was paid him this year when he was chosen Coach of the Year by the Atlanta Journal and Valdosta was invited to the Peanut Bowl, meeting West Springfield, Mass., in a game about which all who saw it agree that it was one of the best games ever witnessed. West Springfield and the people of Columbus will long remember the Valdosta Wildcats of '53 and January 1st, '53, as not only a great playing team but also one into which fair play and good sportsmanship have been drilled.

However, all of Coach Bazemore's abilities are not in the athletic field. Two years ago he won Miss Betty Fowler, girls' physical education teacher, as his wife in a very decisive victory.

It would be hard to pay honor to a man who is already so honored. Coach Bazemore has paid perhaps the greatest tribute of all to Valdosta High School. When asked if he was considering another coaching job, perhaps at a college, he said "Well, I've gotten several offers, but I'm going to stay here."