Riding Brad Ward's back to an opening-season win wasn't exactly the game plan for Brady coach Bob Frederickson's Eagles last week.

But as Ward racked up the yardage Thursday night against Maxwell, Frederickson figured if the workhorse was running, they might as well ride.

Brady soundly defeated the Wildcats 44-12 behind Ward's 304 yards rushing and six touchdowns.

"The game plan was to throw the ball a little more," Frederickson said, "but the wind really hampered that."

When Ward's explosive running game worked time and time again, Frederickson saw no reason to change anything.

"When I told (offensive coordinator T.J.) Nielsen to turn Brad loose, I sure didn't expect a 300-yard game," Frederickson said.

Ward scored Brady's first touchdown as time ran out in the first quarter on a 34-yard run up the

middle. A two-point conversion run by Christian Arterburn gave the Eagles a 8-0 lead in front of a capacity crowd.

Maxwell came back to score early in the second quarter when Drew Solie recovered a fumble by teammate Tanner Bellew in the endzone. The Wildcats' two-point conversion failed leaving the Eagles with an 8-6 advantage.

"This game was actually much closer than the score shows," Frederickson said. "We got a couple of breaks and they didn't."

It didn't take long for Brady to get rolling again as Arterburn returned the kickoff to mid-field and Ward ran 41 yards on the first play from scrimmage to score again. The conversion failed leaving the Eagles lead at 14-6 with nine minutes to play.

Ward scored again with a minute and a half to play before halftime on a 6-yard run. Arterburn added the two-point conversion run for a 22-6 halftime lead.

Frederickson said he felt the defense go flat in the third quarter but the kids never quit.

"They kept a positive attitude even when things weren't going well," he said.

Ward found the endzone once again in the third quarter with a 37-yard run up the middle. The conversion failed but the Eagles carried a comfortable 28-6 lead into the final period.

After Bellew carried in a 1-yard touchdown run with nine minutes to play, the Wildcats couldn't make anything happen.

Ward added two more rushing touchdowns in the fourth quarter with a two-point conversion run

by Sawyer Burke and another PAT pass from Burke to Tyler Egenberger.

“The kids looked amazing for week one,” Frederickson said. “But we can’t be satisfied with where we’re at. We are going to see teams better than Maxwell so we’ve got to get better.”

And the Eagles will no doubt be forced to look deeper into the offense than Ward’s running.

“I don’t know if Brad can duplicate that kind of game every week,” Frederickson said. “And I don’t know if our team can be as physical as we were with Maxwell game after game. But I do know these kids are very determined.”

The Eagles (1-0) will host Stapleton-McPherson County (0-1) Friday night in Brady’s homecoming game.

SMC lost last week to state-ranked Hayes Center 30-16.

“SMC will be a lot like Maxwell,” Frederickson said. “They’ve got some big kids and they’re going to come in here and play physical football.”

Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.