

Wave, Raiders battle to 22-22 tie

By NEALE PATRICK
Gazette Sports Writer

Ashbrook and South Point, the Gaston County prep football teams with the best won-lost records in this decade, managed quite a feat at Linberger Stadium in Belmont Friday night.

Both escaped a loss, but neither managed to add another win to their totals, either, in a thrilling 22-22 tie which kept the full house of some 5,000 fans in a state of wild enthusiasm.

Twice, the 4-A Green Wave of Ashbrook battled from behind to gain the lead from the homesteading 3-A Red Raiders of South Point. Then it became South Point's turn to battle back to tie the game with less than three minutes to play and then turn back the Wave with a magnificent goal line stand in the final minute.

The game developed into the Green Wave explosiveness against the passing arm of quarterback Donnie James of the Raiders.

Cookie Gary scored two of the Ashbrook touchdowns and had two others nullified due to penalties. Ray

Rainey tallied the other TD and a two-point conversion by Randy Smith and two placements by Marty Peninger provided the Wave with its points.

Three different Raiders tallied TD's. James scoring one, passing to Ron Stowe for another and handing to fullback Carl Middleton for the third. John Lamkin kicked two points after and then James passed to Robert McCollough for the all important two point conversion on South Point's final score in the fading minutes.

Gary netted 142 yards in 20 scrimmage rushes and Rainey picked up 106 in 18

carries. It was the second game this season that both of the Wave running backs have gone over the century mark in gains.

Interceptions and fumbles played key roles in halting both teams. Twice Wave defenders picked off Raider passes in Ashbrook territory, but on both occasions, the Wave fumbled the ball right back to South Point a few plays later.

The most crucial fumble for the Wave

occurred late in the first half when quarterback Billy Stafford attempted to dive into the end zone on an option run from the seven yard line. He lost the handle on the ball during flight and Terry Boyles recovered for SP on the five.

One of the wildest plays of this or any season occurred on the final play of the first half when Stafford passed to Gary in the end zone for an apparent five-yard scoring pass. But the Wave was detected for illegal procedure as the clock ran out ending the half.

Both teams left the field and went to the dressing rooms. Coach Jerry Carpenter protested to officials that the half could not be stopped on a penalty and eventually won his case and both teams were recalled to allow the five yard step-off against Ashbrook and a re-run of the play. This time, Stafford's pass intended for Smith in the end zone was short.

That Gary TD which was nullified was his second such of the game. On the second series of downs, he circled his dash, but it was wiped out by a penalty.

Gary came up with another big one in the final minutes, dashing 42 yards to the Raider two yard line. There, South Point braced with their goal line stand. Three times they stopped Gary running to the right and finally halted Rainey on a run to the left.

South Point started the scoring for the game late in the first period, seven and a half minutes on the clock. James completed five passes on the drive and twice the

by sneaking over from the two and Lamkin kicked his first point after.

Two series later, the Wave made its push, going 47 yards in three plays, keyed by a 34 yard run by Rainey to the nine yard line from where Gary scored on a bolt over the right side. Smith went around left end for the two-point conversion, lifting Ashbrook in front 8-7.

After an interception, fumble exchange in Wave territory, South Point struck again when Stowe recovered an Ashbrook fumble at the 14 yard line and two plays later James hit Stowe for the TD and Lamkin boosted his team's lead to 14-8.

That score stood at halftime, despite Stafford's fumble as he appeared to be diving into the end zone and on the wifed half-ending play, Stafford's bobble occurred after Smith's 37 yard kickoff return put the ball in scoring position.

Ashbrook took the second half kickoff 63 yards in nine plays for another go-ahead score. Stafford passed 28 yards to Gary for the tally and Peninger kicked his club back in front, 15-14.

Moments later, the Wave regained possession and went 56 yards in 13 maneuvers, including a 20 yard gallop by Gary. Rainey went the final eight yards and Peninger made it 22-14 with 10:28 left in the game. South Point had run only three offensive plays in the third quarter as the Wave controlled the ball.

The Raiders returned the "favor" in their tying TD drive of 63 yards in 18 plays, whittling away seven and a half minutes on the clock. James completed five passes on the drive and twice the

Raiders converted a fourth down play into first down.

Middleton drove the middle for the final three yards and James passed to McCollough who made a leaping catch just before he stepped out of the end zone for the knotting two-point conversion.

There was only 2:57 left in the game. As the excitement was not over, Gary broke off the right side for a 42 yard scamper down to the two-yard line where he was pushed out by Boyles as he went for the corner.

The Raiders then braced and held for the four punches at the line, forcing the Wave to turn the ball over with 31 seconds remaining.

STATISTICS

	Ashbrook	South Point
First Downs	23	12
Net Yards Rushing	264	129
Passing	213	94
Passing Yardage	42	91
Passes Intercepted by	2	4
Fumbles Lost	2	4
Points	23	22
Yards Penalized	42	63

SCORE BY QUARTERS

TEAMS	1	2	3	4	Total
Ashbrook	0	7	7	8	22
South Point	7	0	8	7	22

SCORING SUMMARY

SP - James, 3 yd run (Lamkin kick)	
A - Rainey, 9 yd run (Peninger kick)	
SP - Stowe, 12 yd pass from James (Lamkin kick)	
A - Gary, 28 yd pass from Stafford (Peninger kick)	
SP - Rainey, 3 yd run (Peninger kick)	
SP - Middleton, 3 yd run (McCollough pass from James)	

ASHBROOK

RUSHING: Gary 20 rushes for 142 yards. Rainey 18-100. South 5-18. Stafford 30.

PASSING: Stafford 2 completions in 3 passes for 42 yards.

RECEIVING: Gary 2 receptions for 42 yards.

SOUTH POINT

RUSHING: Boyles 12-77. Middleton 7-26. Stowe 3-4. James 1-1.

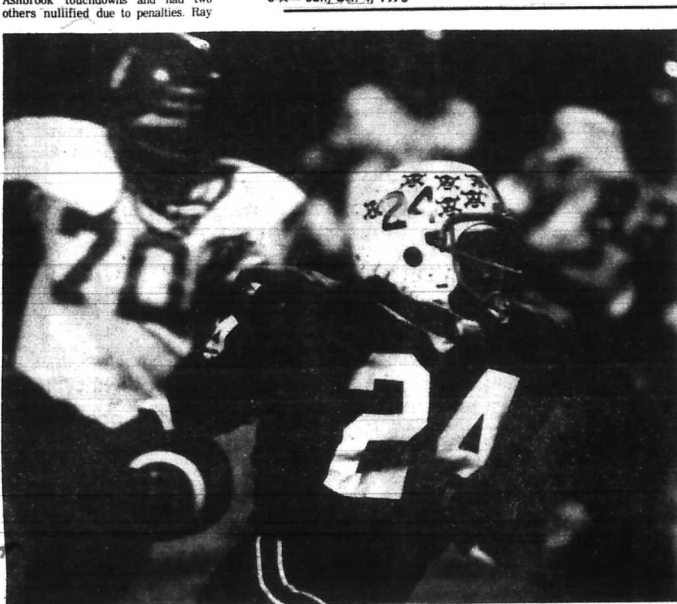
PASSING: James 3-18-42 yards.

McCollough 1-28 yards. Middleton 2-40 yards. Stowe 1-3 yards.

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GARY PICKS UP YARDAGE — Cookie Gary of the Ashbrook Green Wave charges around end for a gain during his club's 22-22 tie with South Point at Linberger Stadium last night. Gary scored two

touchdowns and picked up 124 yards rushing for the Wave. Rodney Phillips (70) of South Point gives chase to Gary. (Gazette photo by Larry Grayam)

Bulldogs defeat Cherryville, 20-12

By RONALD KISER
Special to The Gazette

The Burns Bulldogs dealt Cherryville its fifth straight setback in Cherryville Friday with a 20-12 Southwest 3-A Conference win.

quarter moments after the Bulldogs had intercepted a pass to turn back a Cherryville threat.

Burns fumbled it away on their own 44-yard line and on the first play, flanker back Roberts tossed a 44-yarder to Steve

Prep scores

Ashbrook 22, South Point 22
Burns 20, Cherryville 12
Lincolnton 49, Gastonville 8
Granite Falls 14, West Lincoln 13
Crest 21, Bessemer City 7
Shelby 34, East Gaston 7

High Point Central 30, N. Forsyth 20
W. Forsyth 27, Burlington Carmichael 6
Kingsbury 28, N. Wilkes 1
E. Surry 21, Surry Central 6
Ethan 20, Mount Airy 9
Randolph 27, Burlington Williams 10
Starmount 11, S. Stokes 6
Garner 14, S. Johnston 12

By RICHARD SOWERS
Gazette Sports Editor

Without using the word loosely, Friday night's 22-22 tie between Ashbrook and South Point can only be described as a classic.

Long-time Clemson coach Frank Howard used to say "A tie is like kissing your sister," but both Coach Jerry Carpenter of the defending state 4-A champion Ashbrook Green Wave and Coach Jim Biggerstaff of the perennial 3-A powerhouse South Point Red Raiders felt that his team was the loser in the first meeting between a Gastonia school and a Belmont school in 26 years.

"We lost," Carpenter said moments after the Green Wave failed to take the football across the South Point goal line in four attempts from two yards away, allowing the Raiders to preserve the tie with 40 seconds to play. "That score stinks."

"I don't know," said Green Wave quarterback Billy Stafford when asked why he couldn't direct Ashbrook into pay dirt on the last series. "If we couldn't take it in from one yard, we didn't deserve to win."

"That's like a loss as far as I'm concerned," said Carpenter, whose team is now 1-2-3. "When we tied in Richmond County, it was different. You don't deserve to win when you can't take it in."

"Lost," replied Biggerstaff when asked whether he considered the game a victory or defeat. "Obviously the South Point mentor did not seem nearly as

angry or as upset as Carpenter. "We're never satisfied with a tie."

Biggerstaff continued, pointing to his dressing room.

"Go in and check the jubilation in that dressing room. We should have won. That goal line stand was the one time we buckled up, but both with our goal line defense. They did the job when they had to."

The South Point offense also did the job on at least one occasion, driving 63 yards in the fourth quarter to pull within two when Carl Middleton crashed over from the three with 2:57 to play. Raider quarterback Donny James then found Cotton McCollough in the corner of the end zone for the final two-point conversion.

"Both offenses moved the ball," said Biggerstaff, whose team is now 3-1-1.

On one point, both coaches were in complete agreement, and few of the fans that packed into Linberger Stadium to cheer for either team would disagree — the finest player on the field was Ashbrook's Carl "Cookie" Gary.

All Gary did was romp for 142 yards on 20 carries, catch two passes for 42 yards, score touchdowns on runs of nine and 28 yards and intercept a pass. In addition, the Green Wave senior also had a scoring run of 60 yards and a five-yard TD pass reception nullified because of penalties, the latter coming on what appeared to be the final play of the first half.

Although Ashbrook scored on the play, it was penalized five yards for illegal

procedure. Both teams left the field, but after a lengthy argument, Carpenter convinced the officials that his team should have another play.

The referee didn't give them an option," Carpenter said. "He just took it from them."

On the next play, Stafford threw an incomplete to Gary who tripped the ball one of the few times all night when Gary was less than brilliant.

"Cookie played a helluva ballgame," Carpenter said. "I tell you he was the best back in North Carolina tonight."

"We won't face another one like Cookie Gary," praised Biggerstaff. "He's got moves like you've never seen. You just don't see players with that kind of talent. Those are gifts from God."

"I think I played better on defense," Gary said. "They just opened the holes on offense. This year when we played Asheville I probably played harder, but tonight's probably the best game I've ever played."

"I was tired, and I never saw him," Gary said of his 42-yard run in which he was stopped at the two, setting up the final unsuccessful Green Wave series. "I thought I was going in."

"I'm just glad that one's over," Biggerstaff summarized. "Those are tension games. I bet that was an exciting game to watch."

Indeed it was. In fact, the first matchup of Gaston County's perennial 4-A power and Gaston County's perennial 3-A power was everything it was supposed to be.