



A WARRIOR HANDOFF—East Gaston quarterback Grant Hoffman (5) gets set to hand off to fullback Ricky McDowell (32) during Friday night's game against the South Point Red Raiders at Lineberger Stadium in Belmont.

In the background for the Big Red is Randy Drennan (61). The Raiders ran the Southwestern 3-A Conference record to 3-1 with an 18-12 win over the Warriors. (Gazette photo by Kelly Campbell)

Shepherd to Davis pass keys SP over EG, 18-12

BY DWIGHT FRADY
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Faced with the possibility of losing to the East Gaston Warriors for the first time in five games, South Point's Red Raiders marched 85 yards in 11 plays for a touchdown late in the game at South Point's Lineberger Stadium Friday night to capture a key 18-12 Southwestern 3-A Conference football victory.

Quarterback Joe Shepherd, the man Coach Jim Biggerstaff is frequently quoted on as saying, "he'll find a way to beat you," teamed up with halfback Steve Davis on a second down and long yardage play which turned the game's tide, a game which was one of the most exciting ever played at South Point, and a game which drew close to 6,000 screaming fans.

East Gaston had used a scoring "bomb" in the third quarter on a 95-yard touchdown pass from halfback Richard Dill to end Vance Luckey which tied the game at 12-12.

The Warriors had a great shot at winning the game when linebacker James McDowell recovered a fourth quarter Davis fumble at the Big Red 21.

But on the next play, fullback Ricky McDowell coughed up the football, and sophomore tackle Troy Leeper of the Raiders recovered at the 17. That set up the last of three long sustained drives of the night for South Point.

After a 15-yard penalty for an illegal block set the Big Red back to its own 45. Shepherd, a junior basketball star, hit Davis on a second down and 25 play which carried to the East Gaston 22. The crucial play covered 33 yards.

Raider workhorse Dennis Isles, who gained 139 of South Point's 262 yards rushing on the night, gained 14 yards

to the one on a third and three play, and Shepherd took the ball across himself at the 31 mark. Isles' run for the two-point conversion failed. In fact, neither team converted an extra point or points all night.

Linebacker Mitch Painter's second pass interception of the game three plays later stymied East Gaston's last bid and the Raiders ran out the clock.

A fired-up East Gaston team scored first, driving 67 yards in just four plays, climaxed by a 25-yard scoring pass from quarterback Grant Hoffman to Tracey Black with 3:36 left in the first quarter. The first of Coyte Patterson's two placement attempts went wide right.

South Point came right back, driving 70 yards in 12 plays, with Davis driving over from the two with 10:15 remaining in the half. A big play in that drive was an 18-yard pass from Shepherd to end Jerry Clubb, while Isles, Davis and sophomore fullback Fernandez Grier ground out the yardage. Karl Witzke's conversion attempt was blocked.

South Point's go-ahead touchdown came at the 3:35 mark when it marched 67 yards in seven plays, with Isles going over from the five. A 26-yard run by Isles highlighted that drive.

Painter's first pass interception gave the Big Red an early third quarter scoring opportunity when he plucked off a Hoffman pass at the warrior 35 and returned it to the 27.

With second and goal to go at the Warrior eight three plays later, Ricky Lowe of the Warriors recovered an Isles fumble at the five.

That's when the Warriors pulled off a beauty. Hoffman pitched back to halfback Dill and the sophomore standout lofted a pass which Vance

Luckey caught behind the Raider defenders at the South Point 40 and the fleet Warrior was off to the races. Patterson's extra point attempt was blocked, and it was 12-12 at the 5:59 mark.

East Gaston moved from its 25 and the Warriors had apparently scored a touchdown on a 36 yard pass from Dill to Luckey again, but a 15-yard holding penalty called it back.

Then came the fumble by Davis, then the fumble by McDowell which set up the game-winner for South Point.

Isles picked up his 139 yards in 20 carries. Davis had 51 yards in 10 carries, and Grier, 47 yards in eight carries. For East Gaston, Dill gained 62 yards in eight carries, while McDowell had 61 in 16 totes.

The win was South Point's third in a row, and moved its SWC mark to 3-1. East Gaston is 2-1 in the SWC and 2-2 overall.

South Point entertains Ashbrook's Green Wave next week in what should be another sellout. The Wave knocked off touted Asheville Friday night, 21-14. The two teams tied 22-22 last year.

STATISTICS

	South Point	East Gaston
First Downs	13	11
Net Yards Rushing	262	143
Passes	37	31
Passing Yardage	56	121
Passes Intercepted by	2	0
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Punts	3:37	3:33
Yards Penalized	85	75

SCORE BY QUARTERS

TEAMS	1	2	3	4	T
South Point	0	12	0	6	18
East Gaston	6	0	6	0	12

SCORING SUMMARY

East Gaston — Black 25 yard pass from Hoffman, kick failed.
South Point — Davis 2 yard run, kick failed.
South Point — Isles 5 yard run, run failed.
East Gaston — V. Luckey 95 yard pass from Dill, kick failed.
South Point — Shepherd 1 yard run, run failed.