

Shelby ousts

Raiders

South Point loss means no playoffs

By Sam Bundy

Gazette Sports Reporter

SHELBY — The Shelby Golden Lions are heading for the state 3-A football playoffs.

The South Point Red Raiders are taking a long bus trip home.

The Golden Lions came to life in the fourth quarter Friday night, roaring to a 21-7 must-win over South Point.

But it was the Red Raiders who were their own worst enemy.

South Point had forged a 7-7 tie at halftime and had ample second-half scoring opportunities.

But the Shelby defense came up with two big plays, blocking two field goal attempts by Willie Strain.

That allowed the Golden Lion offense to gather steam over the final 12 minutes, claiming the Southwestern 3-A's top playoff berth.

"I didn't have to tell the kids anything at halftime," said Shelby head coach Jim Taylor. "The boys motivated themselves."

"We struggled during the first half, but the defense kept South Point out of the end zone in the third quarter."

South Point took the second-half kickoff, marching 83 yards to the Golden Lion 10 before being turned away.

On fourth-and-nine, the Raiders elected to try a field goal in an effort to break the 7-7 deadlock.

The snap from center was slow in reaching the holder Mike Young, allowing the Shelby defense to block Strain's 27-yard attempt.

Following a shanked punt by Shelby's Kenny Pauley, South Point got another chance to break the tie.

But the Golden Lion defense held again, this time partially blocking a 37-yard attempt by Strain 15 seconds into the fourth quarter.

"Willie Strain — he's pretty good," said Taylor of the South Point senior, who rushed for 155 yards on 37 carries.

"He's a great running back. I'm

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really proud of our defense for holding them to just seven points."

Shelby senior Darrill Davis then came off the bench, rushing three times for two first downs during the Golden Lions first possession of the fourth quarter.

That set up an 18-yard run by Eric Littlejohn, giving the Golden Lions a 13-7 lead.

Brent Pasco's point after made it 14-7 with 9:09 remaining.

"Normally, I had been a starter," Davis said. "I hurt my knee three weeks ago, and I'm just starting to come back.

"Me being a senior and everything, I just wanted to play my hardest."

"We're working Darrill back into the offense," Taylor said. "He did a good job for us tonight."

The Golden Lions upped the lead to 21-7 after Naveth Gidney came up with an interception of Strain on an attempted halfback pass midway through the fourth quarter.

That led to Littlejohn's second score from five yards out with 3:28 remaining.

Pasco added the PAT and the Golden Lions were on their way to postseason play.

"The South Point/Shelby game is always a hard fought struggle. We're just pleased we won," said Taylor, whose team finishes 5-1 in league play and is 8-3 overall.

"Anytime you win, you gain confidence."

Shelby earlier took a 6-0 lead when quarterback Paul Jeffords hit Pauley with a pass that covered 27 yards at the 2:59 mark of the opening quarter.

Pauley's PAT made it 7-0.

South Point, which ends the year 3-3 and 4-6, bounced back with Strain capping a 60-yard drive, going over from a yard out with 10:55 left in the second quarter.

Strain's PAT tied the game 7-7.

South Point 7

Shelby 21

South Point	0	7	-	-	-	7
Shelby	7	0	0	14	-	21

Sh — Kenny Pauley 27 pass from Paul Jeffords
(Pauley kick)

SP — Willie Strain 1 run (Strain kick)

Sh — Eric Littlejohn 18 run (Brent Paco kick)

Sh — Littlejohn 5 run (Paco kick)