

Knights control ball, end year for South Point

By Mike Cearley

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WELCOME — Run the ball, beat the clock — that's North Davidson's game and that's how the black Knights beat the South Point Red Raiders 13-7 in the first round of the state 3-A playoffs Friday night.

"That's our style," North Davidson coach Dick Cline said, "ball control and defense. We've been doing it all year."

The Knights, ranked third in the state, will take their 11-0 record to Concord next week for a second-round game.

For South Point, the season is done. While the Red Raiders were frustrated and disappointed, coach Phil Tate reminded his team of its miraculous turnaround it made after going 2-8 a year ago.

"It's a tough loss, but at least we played another week," Tate said. "That's sure a lot better than last year."

Trailing 13-0 late in the game, South Point nearly pulled another miracle finish. The Red Raiders recovered a North Davidson fumble at the Knights' 43-yard line, but it took nearly four minutes before quarterback Gerard Hardy scored from 5 yards out with 1:27 left in the game. Ryan Werner hit the point after, making it 13-7.

South Point attempted and recovered an onside kick at midfield, but the Raiders' chances were snatched away

when Hardy went deep and was intercepted at the 5 by North Davidson's Dishane Tuttle with 57 seconds remaining.

All the Knights needed to do was snap the ball twice for the victory.

"The kids kept battling," Tate said. "They won't quit on you. We just played a very tough ball team tonight, and they whipped us."

After both teams fought through a scoreless first quarter, North Davidson got on the board early in the second period when Smyle Wagner burst through for a 35-yard touchdown run. David Dunn's extra point put the Knight's ahead 7-0.

South Point was unable to move the ball, giving the ball back to North Davidson with 7:42 left in the half and the Knights ate nearly every remaining second.

Wagner added another touchdown with 5:50 left in the third, but Dunn missed the kick, causing concern for North Davidson.

"Suddenly it was shades of last week," said Cline, whose team won the Central Piedmont Conference with a 14-13 victory over Thomasville. "That's how we got here, because of a missed extra point."

South Point	0 0 0 7 - 7
North Davidson	0 7 6 0 - 13
ND — Smyle Wagner 35 run (David Dunn kick)	
ND — Wagner 23 run (kick failed)	
SP — Gerard Hardy 5 run (Ryan Werner kick)	