

Lock up state berth

Gazette Prep Editor

BELMONT — A little conversation made a lot of difference Friday night, helping South Point lock up a state football playoff berth.

Red Raider coach Phil Tate convinced the officials they had made a mistake, forcing them to give the ball to South Point on downs. The Red Raiders took the break and marched 96 yards for the winning score, edging Burns 20-13 to grab a share of the Southwestern 3-A lead.

"We had to dig real deep tonight, but our kids dug deep," said Tate, whose team (4-1, 8-1) can win the league title with a win at Shelby next week. "We just happened to come out on top."

Tied 13-13 early in the final period, the Red Raiders apparently stopped a Burns drive when they knocked quarterback Brad Hoyle out of bounds for a 6-yard gain on fourth-and-7 from the 16.

But a South Point defender hit Hoyle after he went out of bounds, bringing a flag. Officials then marked off the penalty, preparing to give the Bulldogs (5-1, 9-2) the ball at the Red Raider 5 when Tate questioned the call.

"It was a fourth-down play and I told them we did hit the kid late, but since it was a dead ball foul, we should have gotten the ball and then been penalized," said Tate. "The official said, yes, we were right."

Given new life, the Red Raiders turned to workhorse Courtney Williams, who finished the night with 236 yards on 26 carries. Williams carried on seven of the next eight plays, finally taking the ball on for a 13-yard TD run with 7:04 to play, making it 20-13.

"It was one of those nights that was a test of manhood," said Tate. "I thought he ran very well tonight."

Williams added a 47-yard scoring dash and quarterback Shannon Armstrong a 5-yard touchdown burst to give the Red Raiders an early 13-0 lead.

But Burns rallied on the passing arm of Brad Hoyle, who connected on 10 of 26 passes for 193 yards. Hoyle hooked up with Tellas Phillips on an 87-yard score and found Marlin Vinson on fourth down for a 20-yard TD pass, tying the game at the half.

Burns	0	13	0	0	-	13
South Point	7	6	0	7	-	20

SP — Shannon Armstrong 5 run (Kirk Crawford kick)
SP — Courtney Williams 47 run (kick failed)
Bur — Tallas Phillips 87 pass from Brad Hoyle (Toby Bird kick)
Bur — Marlon Vinson 20 pass from Hoyle (kick failed)
SP — Williams 13 run (Crawford kick)