

Raiders' defense shines in romp

By Dean Lowman
Gazette Prep Editor

CANTON — South Point's offense has been stealing the show all season long.

Friday night, the Red Raider defense moved to center stage, stealing playoff optimism from host Pisgah by forcing six turnovers

to key a 49-21 3-A state football playoff

LINCOLNTON WINS IN ROUT, TOO. PAGE 5D

victory.

The Red Raiders, now 10-1, will host Southwestern 3-A rival Shelby next week. Shelby, which lost 28-27 to South Point in the final game of the regular season, downed Asheville 17-10 in its second-round game.

"I think they had some jitters. I don't know why," said South Point coach Phil

Tate. "I guessed we just cashed in on some of them."

South Point's offense didn't struggle by any means. Courtney Williams picked up 201 of the Raiders' 385 rushing yards to become the school's all-time single-season rushing leader. He also scored four touchdowns to play a big hand in the 49-point outburst.

Five of the Pisgah's turnovers — three fumbles and a pair of interceptions — were caused in the first half. The last two virtually wrapped up the victory for the Red Raiders.

First, Marrio Jeter pounced on a David Rogers fumble at the Pisgah 42. Four plays later, Williams flipped a wobbly halfback pass on fourth-and-2 to Brett Bigham for a 34-yard scoring pass, mak-

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RAIDERS

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ing it 14-0.

The killer came on the Bears' next play when Kevin Lynch picked off a pass, returning it 33 yards to the Pisgah 8. Williams cruised around right end for the score on first down, boosting the gap to margin with 54 seconds left in the first half.

"One of the biggest plays of the game was the interception by Lynch," said Tate. "A 14-point lead and a 21-point lead is a big difference."

If they're were any doubters in the crowd of more than 6,000, South Point's offense erased their question marks quicky in the third period.

Marching 79 yards on their opening drive of the half, the Red Raiders made it 28-0 when Shannon Armstrong fired a 20-yard scoring strike to Wes Gibson.

Williams took care of the rest moments later, reeling off an 88-yard TD gallop to widen the gap to 35-0.

"We just played an awful first half," said Pisgah coach Carroll Wright. "We knew coming into the game we could not make turnovers and expect to win."

The first of two William Hanon interceptions started the Red Raider romp. It led the the first of Williams' four touchdowns, a 19-yard TD run. Williams later capped the big night with a 53-yard gallop on a fake punt, boosting his school-record,

single-season rushing total to 1,694 yards. Akron Young held the old mark of 1,617.

"The defense played great. We didn't give them much to breathe with," said Tate. "They've got a fine ballclub, but it was our night."

Pisgah (10-3) dodged the shut-out after the outcome was long decided. Matt Valliere scored on runs of 46 and 73 yards, while David Rogers chipped in a 1-yard TD run in the closing seconds. Valliere, a second-stringer, led the Bears with 140 yards on seven carries.

Alberto Moore added a 23-yard touchdown run for the Red Raiders, who piled up 385 rushing yards. Fullback Don Stowe had 92 yards on nine carries.

South Point 7 14 14 14 - 49
 Pisgah 0 0 0 21 - 21
 SP - Courtney Williams 19 run (Williams kick)
 SP - Brett Bigham 34 pass from Williams (Williams kick)
 SP - Williams 9 run (Williams kick)
 SP - Wesley Gibson 20 pass from Shannon Armstrong (Williams kick)
 SP - Williams 88 run (Williams kick)
 P - Matt Valliere 46 run (Marty Inman kick)
 (SP - Alberto Moore 23 run (Williams kick)
 Pis - Valliere 73 run (Inman kick)
 SP - Williams 53 run (Williams kick)

	SP	Pis
First downs	15	11
Rushes-yards	46-385	29-268
Passing yds	68	47
Comp-Att-Int	3-6-0	2-8-4
Punts	1-46	3-30.7
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	4-2
Penalties-Yards	7-61	8-59

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING - South Point: Williams 17-201, Armstrong 8-50, Don Stowe 9-92, Moore 4-34, Jim Cagle 2-4, T.J. Hudson 3-3, Bobby Crawford 2-1. Pisgah: Valliere 7-140, Rogers 14-65, Frank Leatherwood 6-63, Nathan Messer 1-2, Brad Mashburn 1-(-2).
 PASSING - South Point: Armstrong 2-5-0-34, Williams 1-1-0-34. Pisgah: Leatherwood 2-8-4-47.
 RECEIVING - South Point: Bigham 2-48, Gibson 1-20. Pisgah: Mashburn 1-26, Rogers 1-21.