

RED RAIDED

South Point slips past Lincolnton

By Darin Gantt
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BELMONT — Much of Lincolnton's mystique slipped away Friday night, as did the ball.

The Wolves, trying to return to the state 2A championship game for the third straight year, turned the ball over six times in a 17-14 loss to South Point in the season opener for both teams.

South Point sophomore Brian Ashe nailed a 25-yard field goal with 11 seconds remaining to secure the win.

The key try was the first action of the night for Ashe. Junior Pepper Martin had kicked the two previous extra points.

"We thought it was just the time for him," South Point coach Phil Tate said. "It was just like an extra point for him."

"He's a pretty true kicker."

After a tough first half, the Red Raider defense stepped up in the second half.

Lincolnton ran well early, when it held on to the ball. The Wolves used a multitude of backs to gain 155 yards on the ground, while passing for 80 more.

In the second half South Point allowed only 33 yards, 26 on the ground.

"We could've folded up but we didn't," Tate said. "We told them at halftime that the offense would have to do something, because the defense was on the field the whole first half."

"They both picked it up late."

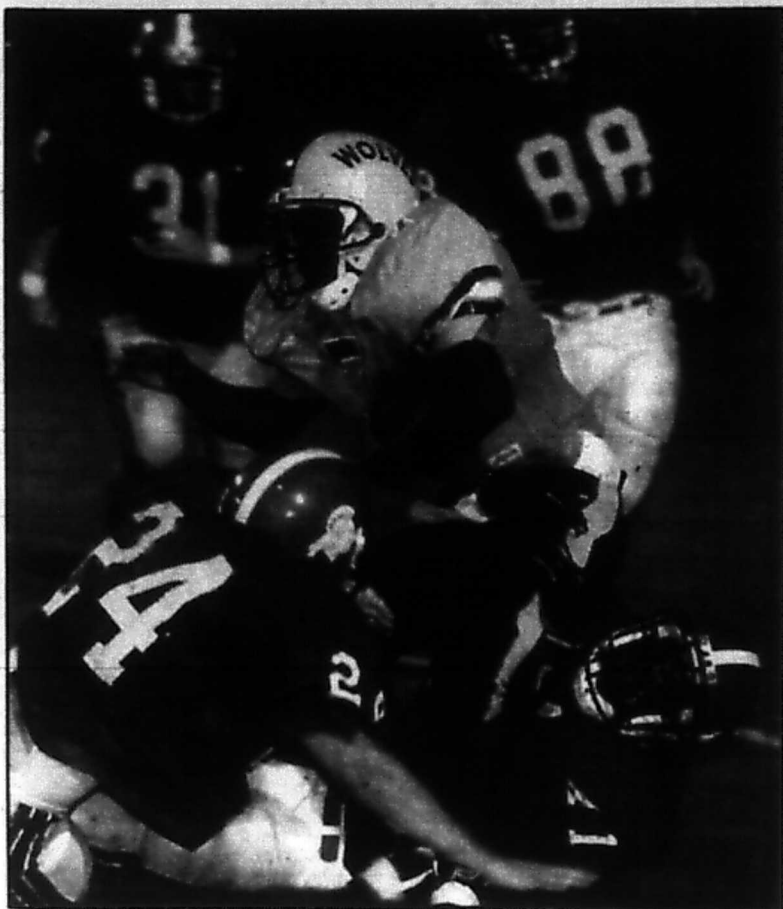
Lincolnton drove 66 yards in 2:21 on its first possession, with Stanchun Brooks' 22-yard run setting up a six-yard plunge by Shannon Ramseur for



Craig Bell/The Gazette

South Point's Marcus McCullough hangs onto the ball as Lincolnton's Damien Luce tries to strip it.

Please see RAIDERS/7C



Craig Bell/The Gazette

South Point's Richard Dyer (24) and Marcus McCollough put the clamps on Lincolnton's Pedro Horne (7).

RAIDERS

FROM 1C

a 7-0 lead.

South Point's offense was stagnant in the first half, gaining only 33 yards. Senior DB Heath Cherry intercepted two passes, including one which went for a 54-yard touchdown, to keep the Red Raiders close.

Lincolnton took a 14-7 lead just before halftime by driving 73 yards in just under three minutes. Stanchun Brooks did most of the damage, running for 40 yards on a third down in his own end of the field, and catching a 20-yard pass from Daran Bynum to move the ball to the South Point 5-yard line.

Pedro Horne then charged in from the three to put the Wolves up a touchdown.

Faced with a third-and-seven situation, South Point tied the game at the 6:29 mark when Clint McNabb hit Kyle Rich-

ardson from 24 yards out.

From that point, the two teams traded field position, with South Point getting the ball back with 27 seconds left.

Lincolnton QB Stephen Adams dumped a short pass to Derrick Brooks, who was tagged ferociously by Red Raider DB Mica Tribble. Thurston Johnson scooped up the fumble, setting up Ashe's game-winner.

Despite the losses of many of last year's stars, Lincolnton coach Richard Smith refused to attribute the loss to the players who were not there.

"That had nothing to do with it," he said. "We had guys out there carrying the ball loosely. That's just bad coaching and it's my fault."

Lincolnton	7	7	0	0	- 14
South Point	0	7	7	3	- 17
Li - Shannon Ramsey 6 run (James Jimenez kick)					
SP - Heath Cherry 54 yard interception return (Pepper Martin kick good)					
Li - Pedro Horne 3 run (Jimenez kick)					
SP - Kyle Richardson 24 pass from Clint McNabb (Martin kick)					
SP - Brian Ashe 25 field goal					