DOUBTERS BEWARE

Rebuilding Green Wave undefeated

By Richard Walker

Gazette Sports Reporter

BELMONT - When Ashbrook High football coach Bill Eccles finalized his 1995 schedule last spring, it looked like he had a death wish.

The Green Wave, who faced arguably the biggest re-

Ashbrook 20 South Point 6

building job in Gaston County. were to open their season with four

straight playoff teams from 1994, including the previous two Western N.C. 4A champions.

Apparently, Ashbrook's players didn't believe the doomsayers predictions of a slow start.

Following a methodical, hard-hitting 20-6 victory at South Point Friday night, the Green Wave sits at 2-0 as it prepares to open its home schedule next week

"Others doubted us because of all the players we lost," said quarterback Aaron Hayes, one of 11 new offensive starters. "But we believed we could do it. And we believe we can keep on

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|-----------------|-------------------------|
| South Point 6 | Bess. City 8 |
| Hunter Huss 31* | Bandys 33 |
| Burns 3 | West Lincoln 16 |
| | Mark and South Server 1 |

Clover 33 Kings Min. 0 Lewisville 20

Cherryville..... 21 Lincolnton..... 28 West Iredell 0 East Lincoln 9

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Craig Bell/The Gazette

Ashbrook RB Randy Shaw (12) runs into South Point's Thurston Johnson (33), Mica Tribble (21).

WAVE

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doing it the rest of the season."

Ashbrook's second victory eerily mimicked its first - a 20-7 road victory over South Mecklenburg. In each game, the Green Wave has scored early and then taken advantage of its opponents turnovers to cruise to victory

South Point (1-1) probably battled Ashbrook tougher than South Meck. but the Red Raiders made six turnovers and had critical mistakes of execution that led to each Green Wave touchdown.

The game, played little more than an hour after a torrential downpour, was plagued by slippery footing and miscues

Ashbrook fumbled five times, being three, and had one pass intercepted. South Point fumbled four times, losing each one, and had two passes intercepted.

But while the quagmire could take the credit for of the mistakes, Eccles considered the contest "one of the hardest-hitting I've ever seen this early in a season. There were some licks out there."

Ashbrook may not have gotten the better of that. But they did get the better of taking advantage of South Point's errors.

A fumbled punt by the Red Raiders early in the first quarter didn t immediately result in an Ashbrook score but it did give the Green Wave the field position advantage.

Taking over at the South Point 49 one possession later, Ashbrook scored the game's first touchdown. Sam Dunlap's 17-yard run and Hayes' 20-yard scramble helped set up Hayes' 6-yard scoring strike to Stuart Albright.

After South Point used an Ashbrook fumble to score its touchdown on Wes Holder's twisting, turning 12-yard run, Ashbrook took charge for good.

It came with South Point bearing down on the Green Wave following an unsportsmanlike penalty on the kickoff after the Red Raiders' TD.

Facing 1st-and-25 at its own 17, Ashbrook's Hayes threw an incomplete pass that was nearly intercepted. But on the next play, Randy Shaw took the handoff from Hayes on an off tackle play to the left side.

Eighty-three yards later, Shaw was untouched and in the end zone.



Craig Bell/The Gazette

Ashbrook's Aaron Hayes (14) scrambles around Richie Williams of South Point during first-half action.

there the series before," Eccles said. "They didn't cover our tailback on one - play, so when were backed up like that we figured we might as well try it."

The run helped Shaw finish with 128 yards rushing and give Ashbrook a 220-155 offensive yardage advantage.

Early in the second half, Ashbrook "We did feel like we saw something virtually sealed the victory with a

blocked punt.

After the Green Wave had snuffed out a third-and-two play on the Red Raiders' opening possession of the half, Harris Lineberger blocked Marcus McCollough's boot, then Hayes scooped up the ball and went untouched the remaining 26 yards for the touchdown.

"I thought that was the biggest play of the ballgame," South Point coach Phil Tate said. "That swung the momentum their way."

South Point

A — Stuart Albright 6 pass from Aaron Hayes (George Lamphéar kick) SP - Wes Holder 12 run (Pass failed)

A - Randy Shaw 83 run (Michael Berbert kick)

A - Hayes 26 blocked punt return (Kick blocked)