

East Gaston's defense stands, 3-0

By Michael Nixon
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MOUNT HOLLY — Last week, it was East Gaston's offense which made the big plays to pull out a win.

Friday night, the Warrior defense played the hero in a 3-0 shut out of South Point.

The game's lone points came at the 10:05 mark of the fourth quar-

ter when Warrior senior Adam Cruise sent a 32-yard field goal through the uprights. From there, it was up to the East Gaston defense to nail down the win.

"We just played a heckuva game on defense," Warrior coach Earl Lingafeldt said. "But it was a total team effort. The guys are so proud of what they're doing, and it's been a long time since we've had pride here."

The numbers tell the story.

South Point gained as much through the air as they did on the ground (49 yards each) and tallied only 98 total yards on offense. But the Red Raider defense did a stellar job as well, limiting East Gaston to just 129 yards.

"Their kids played hard," Lingafeldt said. "They only gave up

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that one field goal."

Each team misfired on scoring chances in the first half. Cruise hit a 25-yard field goal in the second for East Gaston, only to see it nullified by a penalty. Then just before half-time, South Point (1-3), after a big punt return from senior Heath Cherry, drove to the Warrior 9.

But quarterback Clint McNabb's pass attempt on first and goal was picked off by

first-year player Nathan Cobb in the end zone.

After Cruise's field goal, the Warriors had to survive a tenuous fourth quarter. And they had no one to blame for the pressure but themselves. Twice in the final five minutes East Gaston lost fumbles to the Red Raiders. But each time the Warrior defense rose to the occasion.

Senior standout Neil Cope played a major role, blocking a punt and recording three sacks.

"It feels good to finally beat them," Cope said of his first

win over South Point. "We're starting to play more as a team."

Warrior defensive coordinator Tom Adams, who's been with Lingafeldt all seven years at East Gaston, says he's had little to do with the turnaround.

"They're the ones making all the plays," Adams said of his squad. "After the offense gave the ball up two times at the end there, they just went out there and got after it."

East Gaston improves to 3-1 with the win, and the team finds themselves looking over

their shoulders at the ghosts of the past. The shutout was the second of the year for the Warriors, a feat that hasn't been accomplished since 1982. And the 3-game winning streak is the first for the Warriors since 1992. That team went to the playoffs. Does Lingafeldt dare look that far?

"I'm not going to do anything but watch this game tape for the next week," he said with a laugh. "We're definitely gonna savor this one for a while."

South Point	0	0	0	0	-	0
East Gaston	0	0	0	3	-	3
EG — Adam Cruise 32 Field goal						