



Andrew Shurtleff/The Gazette

North Gaston's Tyson Graham can't keep up with Red Raider Jeremy Jackson as he runs a punt return back for a touch-down with seconds to go in the first half.

Raiders too much for 'Cats

■ Strong second-half gives South Point 34-7 win over North Gaston

By BART BLASENGAME
Gazette Sports Reporter

BELMONT — All week long South Point players and coaches insisted that Friday's game with North Gaston was just another game — a blip on the radar screen of an eventual title run.

Now we know why.

The Red Raiders, throwing all flash and pretense out the window, got medieval on the Wildcats, mashing, bashing and pounding their upstart opponents into the Lineberger Stadium turf with a resounding 34-7 victory.

"This was old-fashioned football," said a beaming John Devine, the grin still plastered to his face 20 minutes after the

game. "We beat a good team in every phase of the game."

But mainly they beat them between the hash marks.

South Point (7-0) ran the ball 55 times, completed just one pass and rolled North Gaston (5-1) for 301 yards. Chris Stowe acted as team battering ram with 180 yards on 31 carries, doing most of his work between the tackles and daring the Wildcats to stop him.

"I knew we could blow them off the line," said Stowe, who went over the 1,000-yard mark for the season. "I've got one of the best offensive lines in the state, and we just showed them that it was time to play."

SCOREBOARD

FRIDAY'S PREP ACTION

NORTH MECK	21
HUNTER HUSS	7
FREEDOM	38
ASHBROOK	21
EAST GASTON	28
WEST MECK	12
SHELBY	41
BESSEMER CITY	7

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Jeremy Jackson of South Point celebrates his punt return for a touchdown.

▼ Raiders

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Stowe ran left. Stowe ran right. Stowe ran right up the gut. And North Gaston never had an answer, something that was particularly frustrating to coach Mike Briggs.

"Stowe's a good back," said Briggs, shaking his head. "We knew coming in that we had to stop him to win and obviously that didn't happen."

Devine insists that all South Point was doing was trying to keep things as simple as possible.

"We just took what they gave us," Devine said. "We run the triple-option so you never really know where the ball is going — you just try to turn it in the right direction."

After sputtering for most of the first half, the Raiders finally found the right direction in the second half. They scored on their first two possessions of the third quarter, running 19 plays — all runs — to go up 21-7 to blow open what had been a 7-7 tie.

With the offense sliding into gear, South Point's offense started teeing off on North Gaston. The Raiders allowed 38 yards in the second half and allowed Wildcat quarterback Adrian Grier to complete just one pass while forcing him into two interceptions.

Briggs admitted to being surprised by the ferocity of South Point's defense.

"They were a lot quicker than we thought," Briggs said. "They knocked us off the ball in the third and fourth quarters. They're tough. They controlled us in the second half and just whipped us. They brought a lot of people at us and shut us down."

And with North Gaston



Andrew Shurtleff/The Gazette

Tony Smith escapes South Point for a 66-yard gain in the second quarter.

struggling for production, South Point went for the kill, scoring two more touchdowns in the fourth quarter — a 29-yard run by Jarlen Jackson and a 7-yard run from Williams — to make sure the final score got the attention of everybody in the Southwestern Conference.

"I'm not saying we're the best but we're one of the best," Stowe said. "But you know, we don't really have to talk anymore — we just show what we can do on the field."

North Gaston 0 7 0 0 — 7

South Point 0 7 14 13 — 34

Second quarter

NG — Josh Butler 2 run (Aaron Dyke kick)

SP — Jeremy Jackson 56 punt return (Michael Wilkinson kick)

Third quarter

SP — Tiger Williams 14 run (Wilkinson kick)

SP — Chris Stowe 1 run (Wilkinson kick)

Fourth quarter

SP — Jarlen Jackson 29 run (kick failed) *

SP — Williams 7 run (Wilkinson kick)