



Andrew Russell/The Gazette

Ashbrook's Oron Mayfield attempts to break the tackle by South Point's Drew Devine and Michael McWhirter. The Green Wave and Red Raiders played to a 10-10 tie in a weather-shortened game on Friday night in Gastonia.

# Unusual night settles little

■ Lightning leads to tie; Eccles resting comfortably after feeling chest pains

By RICHARD WALKER  
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GASTONIA — It was an unusual ending to an unusual Friday night at the Ashbrook High stadium, where the most intriguing action was off the field.

On a night in which Ashbrook High coach Bill Eccles left for Gaston Memorial Hospital in the first half with chest pains, his Green Wave and rival South Point left a rainy Ashbrook High having determined nothing after a little more than three quarters of play.

After failing to mutually agree on when they could re-

sume the much-anticipated county rivalry, the 10-10 score the teams had played to when referees suspended play with 11:48 remaining in the final quarter will stand as this year's result.

Possibly in reaction to recent college and prep games that have been cancelled or postponed due to lightning, referees showed extreme caution and pulled both teams off the field when lightning was spotted in the area.

Approximately 30 minutes after the teams left the field, rain began to fall at Ashbrook and lightning continued.

## PREP SCORES

Here's last night's scores from local matchups.

Ashbrook .....	10
South Point .....	10
North Gaston .....	39
East Gaston .....	0
Forestview .....	40
Cherryville .....	0
York (S.C.) .....	33
Hunter Huss .....	0
Gaffney (S.C.) .....	42
Kings Mountain .....	0
East Lincoln .....	34
Lincolnton .....	14

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Thirty minutes after that, Green Wave assistant head coach Ron Bray and South Point head coach John Devine chose to let the tie

stand after they couldn't agree on a time to resume the contest.

However, the biggest news of the night was Eccles' situation.

The 30-year coaching veteran at Ashbrook, who's in his final season at his alma mater, felt discomfort in his chest in the middle of the second quarter, before finding his wife Sharon in the stands and heading for the hospital.

While Bill Eccles will be held overnight for observation, Sharon Eccles wanted to make sure everyone knows her husband was fine.

"I would like to reassure everyone that he's fine," said Eccles' wife Sharon late Friday evening at Gaston

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# Unusual

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Memorial Hospital. "He just had some discomfort and he decided to come check it out."

Sharon Eccles then made a point to thank all the Ashbrook High and area fans that called to inquire about her husband's condition.

"He's resting comfortably," she added.

Devine said Eccles' situation made the game seem less important.

"The game is secondary to what he's going through," Devine said. "I was aware of what was going on with him and our thoughts will be with him and his family."

Bill Eccles was feeling well enough to consult with his coaching staff by telephone about a decision on whether to resume Friday's game.

"It was good to talk to him about the decision," Bray said. "Heck, it was good to talk to him, period."

Eccles' staff proposed resuming the tied game Monday at 11 a.m.

"We figured no way could we

finish tonight since it was raining and the lightning was still around," Bray said. "We felt like, with both of us being so sore and beat up, that tomorrow wasn't an option. Then, we thought maybe Monday morning would give us a chance to play the game and beat the storms if they were still around."

South Point's Devine and his staff disagreed.

"To come back tomorrow wouldn't be fair to the kids," Devine said. "And to play two games in a week isn't something we as a coaching staff wanted to do, especially not for a quarter in a nonconference game."

South Point hosts Hunter Huss Friday night.

The decision not to resume the contest means both teams will spend at least the next few days wondering what might have been.

The Red Raiders dominated early play, but were stopped five times in Ashbrook territory — three times on lost fumbles and

twice on downs.

South Point lost fumbles at the Ashbrook 48 twice and saw drives stopped at the Green Wave 4 and Green Wave 36 on downs in the game's first 18 minutes.

That's not counting another drive that stalled out at the Ashbrook 16 to set up B.J. Richmond's 33-yard field goal.

"We had a chance to put this game away early," Devine said. "But we just didn't do it because of our mistakes. We let one get away that we could have had."

Ashbrook seemingly gained momentum from dodging the early bullets and had the game's momentum and lead for virtually the entire way before setting up South Point's tying score with a fumble deep in Green Wave territory.

Oreon Mayfield scored on a 31-yard run after South Point's first fumble to give Ashbrook a lead it wouldn't relinquish.

The Green Wave increased their advantage to 10-3 with a somewhat

controversial field goal on the final play of the opening half.

Taking possession at its own 49 with seven seconds left, Ashbrook quarterback Andre Bynum found Robbie Mason open at the South Point 12. While Mason appeared to run out of bounds with two seconds left on the scoreboard clock, game officials didn't stop the clock and time ran out.

Ashbrook coaches protested to game officials while South Point coaches led their team to the opposite end zone for intermission.

After some discussion, game officials granted Ashbrook one final play and asked the Red Raiders to return to the field. Predictably, the action drew protest from Devine.

Britton Thomas' 29-yard boot was true on the restart and Ashbrook went to the half ahead 10-3.

The teams played a scoreless hard-fought third quarter that ended with South Point in prime scoring position after an Ash-

brook mistake.

Facing second-and-12 and its own 20, a deep reverse play turned into disaster for the Green Wave when Aaron McKinney's handoff attempt never made its intended destination and the Red Raiders' Chase Ensley recovered at the Ashbrook 16.

Two plays later — on the first play of the fourth quarter — Tiger Williams' scored on a 10-yard run and Richmond knotted the score with the subsequent extra point kick.

Following the ensuing kickoff, game officials pulled the teams off the field.

Some may have thought the action was a little too cautious.

Not Bray.

"You can't be too cautious with lightning," Bray said.

The statistics told the evenness of the contest.

South Point ran 37 plays for 190 yards and had 10 first downs. Ashbrook ran 36 plays for 185

yards and nine first downs.

South Point's Rasharde Reid had the biggest individual night, rushing 17 times for 149 yards. Bynum led Ashbrook with 92 yards passing.

Both teams had defensive standouts, as Robbie Mason had a game-high eight solo or first-hit tackles and South Point's Ian Gibson and Michael McWhirter had seven and five stops, respectively.

"That's the shame in all of this," Bray said. "All of this other stuff took away from a great, hard-fitting high school football game."

*Gazette Sports Reporter Bryan Hanks contributed to this story.*

South Point	3	0	0	7	—	10
Ashbrook	7	3	0	0	—	10

A — Oreon Mayfield 31 run

(Britton Thomas kick)

SP — FG B.J. Richmond 33

A — FG Thomas 29

SP — Tiger Williams 10 run  
(Richmond kick)