

Untangled web

Spiders lead early, Raiders answer

By RICHARD WALKER
Gazette Sports Reporter

BELMONT — On paper, South Point's game against 16th-seeded Concord in the first round of the N.C. 3A playoffs Friday night appeared quite one-sided.

Of course, regardless of ranking, seeding or reputation, the playoffs of any sport offer a simple motto. As Red Raiders quarterback Devon Lowery put it, with apologies to the NBA's playoff theme: "It's go hard or go home."

South Point certainly had to go hard Friday night. But the big news is that the Red Raiders didn't go home after their 28-13 victory.

"My hat's off to Concord," said South Point coach John Devine, whose team hosts Kannapolis A.L. Brown next Friday in the second round. "If that's the 16th seed, I'd hate to see No. 2, 3 or 4."

To be sure, the Red Raiders struggled with an opponent most figured they'd handle easily.

But they also showed traits of a championship team by overcoming an early deficit, having arguably their best defensive game of the year and surviving with an uncharacteristically stagnant offensive attack.

Perhaps Lowery has the attitude that best describes how South Point is approaching the postseason:

"That No. 1 seed, all that means is home-field advantage. Because, you're going to have to play some good teams no matter what the numbers may say."

Lowery, as could be expected, was integral to the Red Raiders' victory.

He orchestrated an offense that controlled the clock and chewed up yardage in much shorter chunks than usual.

South Point finished with 240 yards total offense in a grueling 63 plays and five scoring drives.

"They did a good job against the Red Bone," Devine of his offense's nickname. "But there's other phases to the game. It was their size against our speed. Our speed gave them as much trouble as their size gave us trouble."

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South Point quarterback Devon Lowery tries to elude the grasp of Concord's Jeremy Norman Friday night in Belmont. Lowery scored the go-ahead touchdown late in the first half as the Red Raiders won 28-13.

Bynum picks up slack as Wave rolls

By BRYAN C. HANKS
Gazette Sports Reporter

GASTONIA — With his teammates falling like flies around him, Ashbrook quarterback Andre Bynum stepped up and delivered for the Green Wave in their first-round 4A state playoff opener against East Forsyth Friday night.

In the process, the Wave (11-0-1) rallied past the tough Eagles 28-7 at Ashbrook Stadium. East Forsyth ended the season at 4-8.

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Forestview falls to mighty Mooresville.
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Starting receiver Robbie Mason, kicker Britton Thomas and a couple of other players entered the game with injuries while running back Oreon Mayfield suffered an injury during the contest. But Bynum connected on two long touchdown passes in the second quarter to put the Green Wave ahead 14-7 at the half, then ran for a score in the third quarter to put the game out of reach.

The second touchdown pass wasn't even a designed play.



Ashbrook running back Oreon Mayfield suffering from a deep thigh bruise, played only limited minutes.

When the East Forsyth safety played too far up on a play, Darius James snuck behind the defense and hauled in 53-yard pass that put the Greenies ahead 14-7.

"It wasn't really planned or whatever, but (James) just found an opening and I found him," said Mayfield. "I just threw him the

ROUND ONE

South Point	28
Concord	13
Ashbrook	28
East Forsyth	7
Mooresville	30
Forestview	19
Asheville T.C. Roberson	30
North Gaston	0
Lincolnton	55
West Wilkes	23
Asheville Clyde Erwin	48
East Lincoln	6

ROUND TWO

All games Friday at 7:30 p.m.
Independence at Ashbrook
A.L. Brown at South Point
Lincolnton at Newton-Conover

ball. It was supposed to be a five-and-out but the safety came up and he ran deep and I found him."

The play was a flashback for Ashbrook coach Bill Eccles. The play was originally designed for

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"Size gives us problems. But, then again, our speed can wear you down if you have to chase us all night."

Lowery and Red Raiders half-back Rasharde Reid made sure Concord (8-4) chased them all over the field. Even if it took a little time for South Point to figure just how to attack the Spiders' mammoth front that includes 6-foot-3, 285-pound Penn State recruit E.Z. Smith IV.

Early on, Concord played Lowery's option pitches near-perfectly, limiting South Point to 21 yards and two first downs on 15 first-quarter plays.

But as the game wore on, Lowery found running room for Reid in between the tackles and to Reid, Tiger Williams or Brian McWhirter on the halfback sweep.

"We had to find a way to get outside because they were so aggressive," Lowery said.

By game's end, Reid had churned for 105 yards and one touchdown in 20 attempts, Lowery had a hard-earned 50 yards and one touchdown in 21 tries and Williams had 23 yards and a TD in nine carries.

Throw in B.J. Richmond's booming 47- and 28-yard field goals and the Red Raiders had enough offense to survive.

The rest was up to a hard-hitting defense that limited Concord to a mere 91 yards in 35 plays.

More impressively, South Point's defense stiffened at the appropriate times.

After the Spiders took advantage of a short punt to take the lead at 7-3 after a 50-yard drive in the middle of the second quarter, Concord had 58



Renee Sauer/The Gazette

South Point coach John Devine has led the Red Raiders to the playoffs for the second consecutive season.

yards total offense.

It means the Spiders were held to 33 yards the rest of the way.

"Our defense gets a lot of the credit for this one," Devine said. "They came up with big play after big play."

It was truly a team effort.

Ian Gibson led the gang-tackling group with seven solo or first-hit stops and a game-clinching pass interception. Phillip Stowe added four stops, including one for a 10-yard loss, a fumble recovery and a quarterback sack. Michael McWhirter also had four with two going for losses. Jordy Rice had four with a fumble-causing quarterback sack. And Drew

Devine made three stops and had a pass interception.

South Point 28, Concord 13

C	0	7	6	0	— 13
SP	3	15	3	7	— 28

- SP — FG B.J. Richmond 47
- C — Jared John 26 run (Drew Walters kick)
- SP — Devon Lowery 7 run (Rasharde Reid run)
- SP — Reid 5 run (Richmond kick)
- C — Nate Hurlocker 3 run (Pass failed)
- SP — FG Richmond 28
- SP — Tiger Williams 1 run (Richmond kick)