



Benjamin Patton/The Gazette

South Point quarterback Desmond Lowery is brought down by Roberson's Josh Gossett on Friday. The Red Raiders were held to 242 yards of total offense on Friday night, nearly 200 yards below their season average.

'Red Bone' stalls, state title talk falls

By RICHARD WALKER
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BELMONT — After eliminating the state's highest-scoring playoff team through two rounds, Roberson High football coach Mike Beatty said his defensive strategy wasn't complicated in the Rams' 37-13 victory over South Point in Friday's third round.

"We knew we had to play assignment football," Beatty said of defending South Point's vaunted Red Bone offense that had scored 125 points in its opening two playoff

T.C. ROBERSON 37
SOUTH POINT 13

wins. "The people they had played were undisciplined on defense. We knew we had to be disciplined. People had to play the dive. People had to play the quarterback. People had to play the pitch. And they had to do it all night long."

Roberson did just that Friday, holding the Red Raiders to 242 yards of total offense — or 185 yards below their season average — and forcing South Point into a

season-high five turnovers. The combination advanced the Rams (13-1) into next week's Western N.C. Class 3AA finals against Charlotte Catholic (12-2).

"Let's give credit to T.C. Roberson," said South Point coach John Devine, whose team finished its Big South 3A/4A Conference championship season with a 12-2 record. "They had a great plan and they executed it well. A lot of the mistakes we made were because of their gameplan."

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Photos by Benjamin Pattery/The Gazette

South Point's Chris Lane (24) fumbles while being tackled by T.C. Roberson's Josh Gossett (7) and Dennis Moore (25). Roberson would recover the fumble. South Point turned the ball over five times in the game.

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The game started like many South Point games this season, as the Red Raiders clicked off one first down after another, racking up seven first downs by the time they scored the game's first touchdown with 9:24 to play in the opening half.

But a blocked extra point following the score seemed to set the tone for the rest of the night for the Red Raiders. Later, turnovers and other mistakes followed.

Even when South Point seemed to have a chance to create positive momentum for itself, fate dealt South Point a cruel blow. For instance, early in the second half, a Red Raiders defender had a clear shot at a fumble and potential touchdown return. Yet, when the defender reached to pick up the football, one of his feet kicked the ball out of bounds, allowing Roberson to maintain possession.

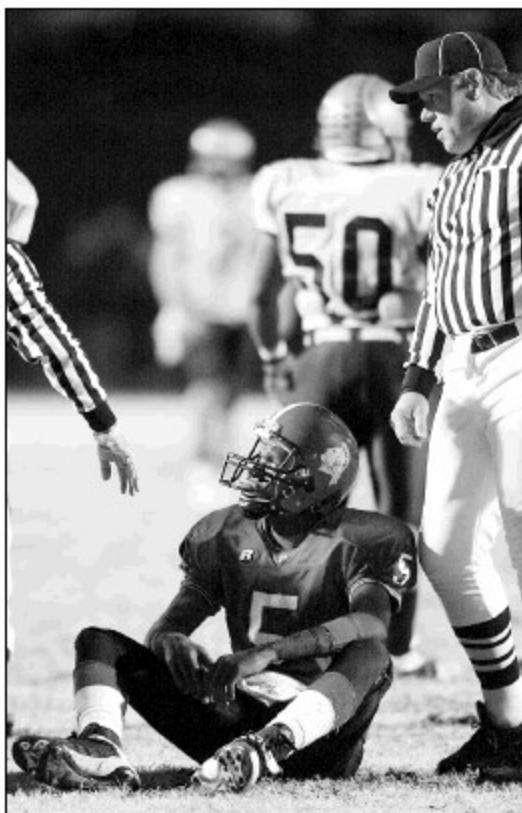
"It just didn't go our way tonight," Devine said.

In the end, Roberson quarterback Tripp Weaver and running back Justin Wynn converted when they had to and the Rams' ballhawking defense simply frustrated the Red Raiders.

Weaver completed 10 of 14 passes for 155 yards and four touchdowns and directed an efficient 268-yard offensive effort. Wynn had 104 yards and one touchdown on 28 carries.

Weaver's biggest throw came as the first half was winding down and Roberson resorted to a trick play that helped Asheville beat Western Alamance to win a state title in 2005.

After taking possession with 51.5 seconds left, the Rams appeared ready to let the clock run out after a full-back dive play picked up a single yard. But then Roberson receiver Artis Gilmore broke the Rams' huddle ear-



South Point's Desmond Lowery reacts after getting sacked on Friday night. Roberson had two in the game.

sideline and was uncovered down the sideline. Then Gilmore, who had four catches for 77 yards and two touchdowns, caught a pass from Weaver inside the South Point 20, broke away from a tackle by the face-mask inside the 10 and scored to complete a 52-yard scoring play.

South Point coaches later complained vehemently that the play was illegal, but to no avail.

"We took it from Asheville and it broke a big play there for us," Beatty said.

Roberson's defensive effort was led by senior defensive back Josh Gossett, who had nine solo or first-hit tackles and two fumble re-

South Point was led by Brandon Spencer's 11 tackles and Desmond Lowery's 46 yards rushing and 61 yards passing. Chris Lane and Aaron Crumbley scored the Red Raiders' touchdowns.

TCR	0	14	14	9	- 37
SP	0	6	7	0	- 13

Second quarter

SP — Chris Lane 7 run (kick blocked),

9:24

TCR — Artis Gilmore 24 pass from Tripp

Weaver (Walker Smith kick), 7:09

TCR — Gilmore 52 pass from Weaver

(Smith kick), :06

Third quarter

TCR — Chris Morgan 31 pass from Weaver

(Smith kick), 7:43

TCR — Justin Wynn 13 run (Smith kick),

5:15

SP — Aaron Crumbley 1 run (James Jus-

tie kick), 3:18

Fourth quarter

TCR — Smith 28 FG, 9:27

TCR — Chandler Wightman 7 pass

ly, lined up on the far right coveries.

from Wiesner (Nick Talled), 2:50