

South Point 21, East Gaston 16

A frantic finish

Defensive stop helps South Point hold off East Gaston

By Richard Walker
walker@gastongazette.com

BELMONT — How important was East Gaston's offensive play with 1½ minutes left in Friday's game at South Point?

Both teams called timeout to set their formations.

South Point got the better of the next play — and the game.

But not by much as the Red Raiders survived the Warriors as much as they beat them in a 21-16 victory at Lineberger Stadium.

South Point's key play came with East Gaston facing fourth-and-two at the Red Raiders 25 with 1:27 to play. East Gaston used a spread offense with a shotgun snap to quarterback Justin Clark.

Clark pitched left to speedy wingback Markeith Redd, who was met about a yard shy of his desired destination near the sidelines by South Point defenders Jalen Porter and Jordan Fomey.

"We felt like we made them pitch it out early, then we were like the cavalry to the ball," said Red Raiders coach John Devine, whose team improved to 2-1 after its third straight dramatic finish. "We needed to be or they would still have the football."



Benjamin Patton/The Gazette

South Point's Scott McWhirter runs around a block during his team's game with East Gaston on Friday.

Inside the game

By the numbers, total offense: East Gaston — 355, South Point — 378.

Getting defensive — East Gaston — Joshua Doster 13 tackles (forced fumble), Stephen Skyles 12 tackles

(pass deflection), Michael Borntrager 10 tackles, Vidal Crawford (interception, fumble recovery), South Point — Maurice Falls 11 tackles (fumble caused), Tydre Crawford eight tackles.

Quoting — "Troy (Leeper)

stepped up. But everybody had to step up" — South Point coach John Devine on the sophomore who replaced three-year starter Aaron Crumbley at fullback.

Next week — East Gaston — hosts East Lincoln, South Point — at T.C. Roberson.

>> See SP/Page 3B

Continued from Page 1B

East Gaston coach Eric Tippet, whose team had rallied from a 14-3 halftime deficit to threaten the Red Raiders, felt confident his team's play-call would be successful enough to keep a potential game-winning drive alive.

"I thought we had it," said Tippet, whose team fell to 1-2. "We just came up a little short."

It was clearly an exciting end to a thrilling contest between longtime league rivals who were playing a non-conference game for the first time in eight seasons.

In essence, the Red Raiders outlasted the Warriors quick-striking offense with long, methodical scoring drives. South Point was stopped by East Gaston only three times — twice by turnovers and once when the Raiders punted to set up East Gaston's final drive with 4:41 to play.

The Red Raiders got 170 yards rushing and two touchdowns from quarterback Josh Justice and 123 yards and one touchdown from Troy Leeper. Leeper was filling in for the injured Aaron Crumbley, who missed the contest after spraining an ankle earlier in the week in practice.

South Point's scoring drives



Benjamin Patton/The Gazette

East Gaston's Thadus Benton carries the ball during his team's game against South Point on Friday.

were of 15, nine and 17 plays.

Meanwhile, East Gaston struck quickly, particularly in the second half.

Clark's 46-yard scoring pass to John Floyd capped a six-play, 98-yard drive. And Thadus Benton's 1-yard plunge capped a three-play, 93-yard drive that featured an 83-yard run by Clark.

Benton finished with 146 yards rushing and Clark 114.

"It was a great high school atmosphere, a great crowd and a great game," Devine

said. "I'm just happy we came out on top."

East Gaston 0 3 7 6 — 16

South Point 7 7 0 7 — 21

First quarter

SP — Josh Justice 1 run (Justice kick), 3:45

Second quarter

EG — Richard Sigmon 33 FG

SP — Troy Leeper 9 run (Justice kick), 6:39

Third quarter

EG — John Floyd 46 pass from Clark (Sigmon kick), 5:44

Fourth quarter

SP — Justice 1 run (Justice kick), 10:15

EG — Thadus Benton 1 run (Run failed), 9:21