

ROSEBORO DECLARES, WOLVES NIP 0-2 SOUTH POINT

Lincolnton senior headed to Michigan at semester's end

By Philip Gardner
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LINCOLNTON — The pep band, cheerleaders and virtually all of Darian Roseboro's Lincolnton High School classmates were on hand to see where the senior defensive end had chosen to play college football.

In a packed Lincolnton gymnasium Friday afternoon, a sizable media contingent set up its cameras in front of a table lined with hats of Roseboro's top six schools.

After all the hoopla and once it was time for Roseboro to speak, the announcement itself was rather simple: he's headed to Michigan.

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Wolves stop late conversion, win thriller in Belmont

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BELMONT — Having announced his commitment to Michigan hours earlier, Lincolnton's Darian Roseboro went out on the field wanting to validate himself Friday.

With 29 carries, 97 yards and two touchdowns suffice for the beastly 6-foot-5, 285-pounder? How about the game-winning tackle on a two-point conversion as Lincolnton held off South Point 14-13 on Friday?

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» See Wolves to the Guard by Lincolnton's Darian Roseboro breaks a tackle on a play during Friday's victory over South Point. Earlier in the day, Roseboro announced his decision to play college ball at Michigan.

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"I think I had something to prove to everybody why I'm going to Michigan," the senior defensive end/running back said. "I did that tonight, I believe."

Lincolnton (1-1) beat South Point (0-2) for the first time since 2010 and avoided an 0-2 start after losing to North Lincoln in last week's opener.

After a first half dominated by Lincolnton, South Point got back in the game and didn't go down until after a tense final stretch.

Tanner Muse scored for South Point on a 29-yard run with 1:18 remaining to pull the Red Raiders within a point at 14-13. South Point elected to go for the two-point conversion, but Roseboro clogged up the middle and tackled fullback Ryland Etherton well short of the goal line.

"When he said 'Set,' I slanted in. I shifted over and slanted in. Right place, right time," Roseboro said.

The Wolves unveiled a new offensive look, a straight T offense they call the "Big Bone." Roseboro was one of the featured backs in the offense, leading the team in carries and yardage as South Point had a nightmare trying to bring him down.

Roseboro scored on a pair of two-yard runs in the first half for a 14-0 Lincolnton lead. The

smashmouth brand of football dominated that first half, with the Wolves running 39 plays to South Point's nine. Lincolnton possessed the ball for 20 minutes, 17 seconds in the first half compared to 3:43 for South Point.

South Point, pushed around by Crest last week, finally got its offense going on the first possession of the second half and scored on a 1-yard run by Etherton. By the time Muse scored the Red Raiders' second touchdown, South Point coach Mickey Lineberger felt he needed to go for the win rather than send the game to overtime with an extra point kick.

"A hundred out of a hundred times I'm going to go for two because we sure haven't slowed them down from 10 yards," Lineberger said, referring to the yard line where each team would start in overtime. "And that was the right decision. We ran a great play and it just didn't work for us."

After the failed two-point conversion, Lincolnton's Alex Rhyne recovered the onside kick, capping a night on which Rhyne served as the team's calm quarterback for the full game. Rhyne again filled in for Jordon Easter, who missed a second straight game with a high ankle sprain. Freshman Cordel Littlejohn also saw time at quarterback last week

but not this week.

Willie Cobb added 78 rushing yards on 15 carries and Tarus Dameron rushed for 30 yards on eight carries as part of Lincolnton's 247-yard offensive night — all on the ground.

"It's just a huge win for us right now," Lincolnton coach Scott Cloninger said. "We couldn't go to Week 3 0-2."

South Point finished with 246 yards — also all on the ground — led by Etherton's 125 yards on 23 carries. Quarterback Jaquan Brooks had 51 yards on eight attempts.

South Point nearly scored early in the fourth quarter but Tyron Roberts stopped Etherton on the 1-yard line on fourth down. Lincolnton was called for pass interference on the previous play from the 6 but South Point was not awarded an automatic first down per a relatively new state rule. On the subsequent fourth down play from the 3, Etherton picked up two yards.

South Point dropped to 0-2 for only the second time since 1996 and the first time since 2010 when it finished 9-4 and won the Big South 3A Conference with a 6-0 record. It gets no easier for the Red Raiders next week as they visit Shelby. Lincolnton hosts North Gaston next Friday.

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"I have a great chance of coming in and playing early. And tradition," Roseboro said later when asked why he chose the Wolverines. "Me and my family felt comfortable when we were there. We love the coaching staff. We loved being around them. They accepted us. We got great feedback from the players."

The 6-5, 285-pound Roseboro, a four-star recruit according to a number of recruiting services, had also listed Alabama, Clemson, North Carolina, N.C. State and Tennessee in his top six. Roseboro said N.C. State was his next choice.

Roseboro has visited the Michigan campus

twice with his family and plans an official visit this season. Roseboro said he informed Michigan head coach Brady Hoke of his decision Friday morning prior to his public announcement. Roseboro said Hoke told him he would play rush end and not the defensive tackle position as some project him.

"I'm glad it's over," Roseboro said. "I don't have to worry about it. I know where I'm going. I don't have to worry about coaches blowing up my DMs (direct messages)."

Roseboro earned defensive player-of-the-year honors from *The Gaston Gazette* and the Southern District 7

Athletic 2A Conference last season after recording 125 tackles and 10 sacks.

Lincolnton coach and athletic director Scott Cloninger called Roseboro the most highly recruited player in school history.

"There was a lot of stress and pressure these last couple of weeks and hopefully now we can get back to good ol' high school football," Cloninger said.

Rivals.com rates Roseboro as the nation's No. 42 overall player and No. 6 at his position.

Roseboro plans to graduate from high school after the current semester and enroll at Michigan for the spring semester.



Lincolnton's Tyshique Prescod tries to block Red Raider defender Ryland Ethern during Friday's game.

Bill Ward/Special to The Gazette

Lincolnton 14, South Point 13
Lincolnton 7 7 0 0 — 14
South Point 0 0 7 6 — 13

First quarter

L—Darian Roseboro 2 run (Graham Willis kick), 5:55.

Second quarter

L—Roseboro 2 run (Willis kick), 1:24.

Third quarter

SP—Ryland Etherton 1 run (Nick Farmer kick), 7:34.

Fourth quarter

SP—Tanner Muse 29 run (run failed), 1:18.

	L	SP
First downs	15	11
Rushes-yards	59-247	35-246
Passing yards	0	0
Total yards	247	246
Comp-Att-Int	0-1-0	0-4-0
Fumbles-lost	3-1	1-1
Penalties-yards	2-8	4-34
Punts-avg.	3-36	2-36.5

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Lincolnton, Roseboro 20-97, Willie Cobb 15-78, Tarus Dameron 8-30, Jaliek Littlejohn 6-16, Alex Rhyne 3-14, Quinlyn Harris 2-7, Chavis Russell 3-4, Xavier McClain 1-3, Team 1-minus 2. South Point, Etherton 23-127, Jaquan Brooks

8-51, Tanner Muse 1-29, Jeffrey
Pearsall 1-22, Ben Washam 2-17.
PASSING—Lincolnton, Rhyne 0-1-0
0. South Point, Brooks 0-4-0 0.
RECEIVING—Lincolnton, none. South
Point, none.