

Sports



Jeff McChesney/Special to The Gazette

South Point defenders take down Ashbrook running back Kristen Bell in Friday's game. The Red Raider defense stuck it to Ashbrook with pressure on Glenn and a late interception in the victory.

RED ZONE DEFENSE

TWO FOURTH-QUARTER STOPS HELP SOUTH POINT HOLD OFF GREEN WAVE

By Phil Gardner
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GASTONIA — Having held Ashbrook's big play offense in check for three quarters, South Point's defense faced a couple of high-pressure situations with the game still on the line late.

The Red Raiders pulled through on both occasions, making a pair of fourth-quarter stops in the red zone to preserve a 27-16 win Friday at Fries Field.

Toby Stapel completed the first of the late defensive stands when he tackled

quarterback Jeff Glenn for a 1-yard loss on fourth and goal from the 3, keeping South Point ahead 23-10 with 7:07 remaining.

"We knew he was going to run to the outside. We had a feeling," said Stapel, a junior who substituted for injured defensive end Evan Proskopsky earlier in the fourth quarter. "The coaches told us, 'They're going to go outside, quarterback sweep.' So I kept my nose low to the ground, busted right through it and did my responsibility just like everyone else."

After South Point failed to advance beyond its own 19, Ashbrook again drove

to Red Raider territory, only to come up short when Tyler Hall intercepted Glenn at the 8 with 2:53 remaining.

"I just did my job, got in the curl flat," said Hall, a junior linebacker. "I knew when I caught it, it was a game changer."

Two plays later, South Point effectively put away the game with a 63-yard touchdown run by Clemson-bound Tanner Muse as South Point (4-3, 3-0 Big South 2A/3A Conference) remained undefeated in the league ahead of next week's first-place contest at home against Forestview.

Ashbrook tacked on another

touchdown four plays after Muse's TD with a 71-yard pass playing from Glenn to Z'Andre Glens, but with 1:38 on the clock it was too little too late. South Point recovered the onside kick and was able to run out the rest of the clock.

"I think it was a total team win," South Point coach Mickey Lineberger said. "We had a great week of practice, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. We earned the win tonight in practice this week."

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Photo by Jeff McQuay/Spencer to The Gazette

South Point's Jaquan Brooks carries the ball during Friday's game at Ashbrook.

<< Defense

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South Point finished with 351 yards of offense — 342 on the ground. Muse finished with 133 yards on five carries. Quarterback Jaquan Brooks gained 73 yards on 14 carries and scored on a pair of runs. Fullback Ryland Ebertson added 66 yards and a touchdown. South Point also got a boost from kicker Max Neider in his first game of the season as Neider made three extra point kicks and had one blocked.

The Red Raiders held Ashbrook to 44 rushing yards, but the Green Wave was effective through the air with 290 passing yards. Austin Mitchell (6-for-11, 51 yards) started at quarterback before giving way to Glenn in the second half.

Glenn completed 10 of 18 passes for 239 yards with one touchdown and one interception. The 5-foot-9, 175-pound junior also rushed for a team-high 21 yards for Ashbrook (3-4, 2-1), which visits East Gaston next Friday.

"I'm very disappointed that we didn't run the ball any better than we did tonight," Ashbrook coach Greg Hill said. "We thought we'd be able to run the ball. When you're not able to run the ball, it does not open the quick passing game because the backer can



Ashbrook's Jeff Glenn tries to break through the Red Raider defense in Friday's game. South Point held Ashbrook to 44 yards rushing, but the Green Wave ended with 290 passing yards.

just sit. We've just got to do a better job."

Dominique Spencer's three-yard TD run closed Ashbrook's gap to 21-10 at the 10:31 mark of the fourth quarter, setting the stage for a frantic finish.

The start of the game was much different from the end

as both offenses took a while to get going, combining for six punts, one fumble and five first downs on the first seven possessions.

South Point got on the board first with a seven-play, 46-yard drive capped by Brooks' eight-yard option keeper at the 5:53 mark of the second quarter.

Ashbrook answered with a nine-play, 68-yard drive that culminated with Matt Cloyd's 36-yard field goal, the senior's second field goal of the season. The kick came with 1:25 before halftime and the score remained 7-3 at the half.

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South Point 27,

Ashbrook 16

South Point 0 7 14 6 — 27

Ashbrook 0 3 0 13 — 16

Second quarter

SP—Jaquan Brooks 8 run (Max Neisler kick), 5:53.

A—FG Matt Cloyd 36, 1:25.

Third quarter

SP—Brooks 6 run (Neisler kick), 7:07.

SP—Ryland Etherton 1 run (Neisler kick), 1:35.

Fourth quarter

A—Dominique Spencer 3 run (Cloyd kick), 10:31.

SP—Tanner Muse 63 run (kick blocked), 2:11.

A—Z'Andre Givens 71 pass from Jeff Glenn (run failed), 1:38.

	SP	Ash
First downs	17	12
Rushes-yards	53-342	27-44
Passing yards	9	290
Total yards	351	334
Comp-Att-Int	1-2-0	16-29-1
Fumbles-lost	2-1	0-0
Penalties-yards	3-25	6-41
Punts-avg.	4-36.0	5-38.4

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—South Point, Muse

5-133, Brooks 14-73, Etherton

20-66, Jeffrey Pearsall 4-29, Ben

Washam 4-24, Donovan Stowe 3-16,

Nolan Wilson 2-2, Team 1-minus 1.

Ashbrook, Glenn 11-21, Spencer 5-9,

Austin Mitchell 4-8, Kristien Bell 7-6.

PASSING—South Point, Brooks

1-2-0 9. Ashbrook, Mitchell 6-11-0

51; Glenn 10-18-1 239.

RECEIVING—South Point, Etherton

1-9. Ashbrook, Givens 4-103, Isaiah

Burris 3-80, Malik Patterson 2-44,

Jerrod Hill 3-27, Glenn 2-25, Bell

1-14, Dallas Danner 1-minus 3.