

Shelby upsets South Point



South Point's Nathan Hamilton brings down Shelby quarterback Malik Sarratt on Friday in the second round of the NCHSAA playoffs in Belmont. The Golden Lions defeated the Red Raiders 33-23, advancing to the third round next Friday at Mount Pleasant. [BRIAN MAYHEW / SPECIAL TO THE GASTON GAZETTE]

South Point's 22-game winning streak ends

By Richard Walker

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BELMONT — Shelby High's history of playing its best football in November continued on Friday night in an upset playoff win at South Point.

Facing the top-ranked 2A team in the state, the Golden Lions downed previously unbeaten South Point 33-23 at Lineberger Stadium.

The victory extended Shelby's school-record playoff winning streak to 22 games. And the Golden Lions (10-2), who have won N.C. 2A titles in 2013, 2014 and 2015 and the N.C. 2AA title in 2016, will visit Mount Pleasant in next week's Western N.C. 2AA semifinals.

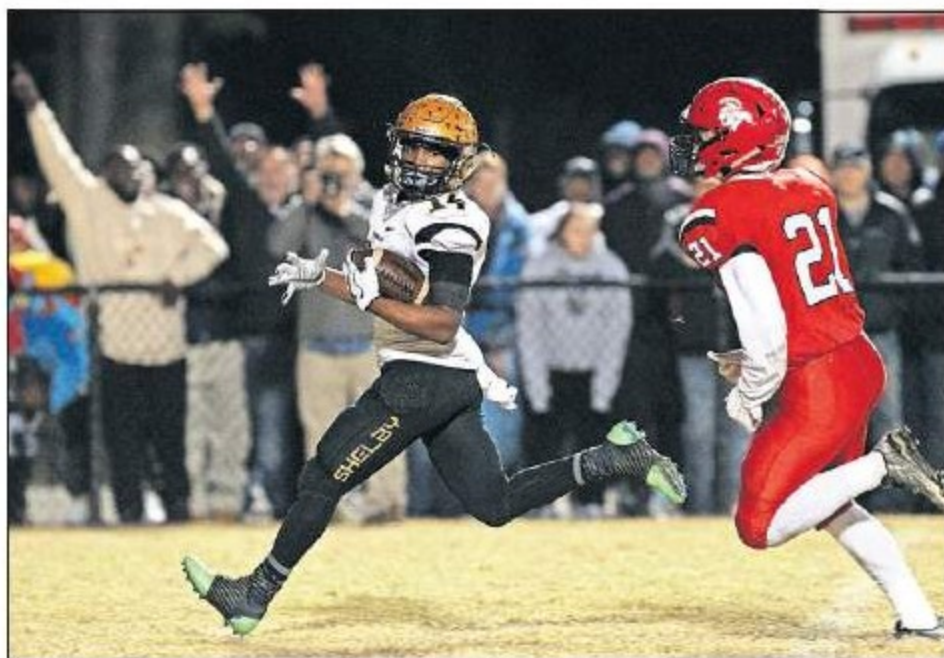
Mount Pleasant beat Foard 28-14 in its second round playoff game.

The result also extended Shelby's playoff hex over South Point as the Golden Lions have now beaten South Point all five times in their postseason matchups — and three times after South Point had won in the regular season.

The Red Raiders, who finished 12-1, had beaten Shelby 35-15 two weeks ago to close out the regular season and earn a No. 1 seed in the Western N.C. 2AA playoffs. The loss stopped their Gaston County-record winning streak at 22 games.

According to Shelby head coach Lance Ware, his team simply approached Friday differently in every way.

"I told these guys all day long that you can't do the same things and expect a different result," Ware said. "We did everything different — different uniforms, we came here a different way, we had a dif-



Shelby running back Xavier Brooks scores a touchdown in the third quarter against South Point on Friday night. (BRIAN MAYHEW / SPECIAL TO THE GASTON GAZETTE)



Shelby running back Xavier Brooks heads toward the end zone in the first half against South Point on Friday night in the second round of the NCHSAA playoffs in Belmont. (BRIAN MAYHEW / SPECIAL TO THE GASTON GAZETTE)

1-yarder with 2:16 to play — gave Shelby the lead for good.

A passing game that produced 188 yards last time went for 248 as Malik Sarratt completed 14 of 21 throws, including a 35-yard touch-

four Shelby state titles. "I've been a part of seven state championships and I don't know that I've ever had a more satisfying win."

For South Point, the loss marked a disappointing end

ferent pregame meal ... I can't be any prouder of these guys."

Shelby, which was outgained 337 to 267 in the first meeting, had the advantage in the rematch.

A running game that could only muster 79 yards two weeks ago churned for 119 yards and four touchdowns this time.

Senior Xavier Brooks led the way with 97 yards and all four scores on 21 carries. Brooks' third touchdown — a

down to Tucker Greene late in the second quarter that marked the first time South Point had trailed in a game the entire season.

And a defense that yielded 337 yards in the first meeting, yielded 310 yards this time but limited South Point's rushing game to a hard-earned 197 yards on 44 carries.

"Our kids just made plays," said Ware, who was an assistant coach for three Shelby state titles and head coach for

to a season in which repeating as state champion was the goal as far back as shortly after the Red Raiders beat Rocky Mount 16-7 at Wake Forest to win the 2016 N.C. 3A state title.

"You can always point to a lot of plays," South Point coach Adam Hodge said. "A play here and a play there and it's different. A penalty here and a penalty there and it's different. But I wouldn't trade

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our guys for any other team. We just didn't have the ending we wanted."

Jake Alexander had 87 yards rushing and two touchdowns and Scottie Lee had 113 yards that included a 72-yard TD pass to Keaton Hale to lead the South Point offense.

Both defenses shined in a matchup of teams that have taken turns as the top-ranked

2A team in the state throughout the season.

For Shelby, Dax Hollifield (12 tackles, 1 forced fumble), Dashaun Christopher (6 tackles, one fumble recovery), Will Stites (6 tackles) and defensive linemen Rajah Kirkland, Trey Darlington, Jack Hollifield and Tre Jolly led the way.

For South Point, Tanner Canterbury (5 tackles, 2 sack, 1 pass break-up), Sean Burns (4 tackles) and Mario Brandon (4 tackles) led the way.

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Shelby linebacker Dax Hollifield brings down South Point fullback Jake Alexander on Friday night in the second round of the NCHSAA playoffs in Belmont. [BRIAN MAYHEW / SPECIAL TO THE GASTON GAZETTE]

Score By Quarter					
	1	2	3	4	F
Shelby	0	13	0	20	33
South Point	7	3	7	6	23

Scoring Summary:			Team Stats:		
First quarter				Shelby	SP
SP - Jake Alexander 2 run (Cade Ratliff kick), 9:05			First downs	16	19
Second quarter			Rushes-yards	31-119	44-197
S - Xavier Brooks 4 run (Kick failed), 8:21			Passing yards	248	113
S - Tucker Greene 35 pass from Malik Sarratt (Chase Hendricks kick), 1:32			Total yards	367	310
SP - Ratliff 23 FG, 0:00.7			Comp-Att-Int	14-21-0	7-15-0
Third quarter			Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-1
SP - Keaton Hale 72 pass from Scottie Lee (Ratliff kick), 7:37			Penalties-yards	13-118	9-85
Fourth quarter					
S - Brooks 26 run (Hendricks kick), 11:30					
SP - Alexander 2 run (Kick failed), 5:22					
S - Brooks 1 run (Kick failed), 2:16					
S - Brooks 1 run (Hendricks kick), 1:19					

South Point individual stats					
Rushing					
Name	Att	Yards	TDs		
Jake Alexander	23	87	2		
Devon King	1	20	0		
Ty Tinker	3	1	0		
Ray Grier	2	8	0		
Scottie Lee	12	52	0		
Keaton Hale	3	29	0		
Passing					
Name	Comp	Att	Yards	TD	Int
Scottie Lee	7	14	113	1	0
Team	0	1	0	0	0
Receiving					
Name	Rec	Yards	TDs		
Ray Grier	4	27	0		
Jake Alexander	1	7	0		
Keaton hale	1	72	1		
Malik Sarratt	1	7	0		

Matthew Robinson	1	7	0		
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Shelby individual stats					
Rushing					
Name	Att	Yards	TDs		
Xavier Brooks	21	97	4		
Malik Sarratt	10	22	0		
Passing					
Name	Comp	Att	Yards	TD	Int
Malik Sarratt	14	21	248	1	0
Receiving					
Name	Rec	Yards	TDs		
Tucker Greene	2	37	1		
Zandre Cherry	3	76	0		
Maleek McMullens	4	77	0		
Santana Eaves	4	57	0		
Xavier Brooks	1	1	0		