

Red Raiders win championship

By CHARLIE GRISSOM
Special to The Gazette

AHOSKIE — "Shout till the echoes ring" is a line in the South Point Red Raider school song, "Hail to the Varsity." The echoes of "We're No. 1" rang through the Ahoskie High School stadium here Friday night, as the Raiders defeated the Ahoskie Cougars, 34-13, to win the North Carolina High School Athletic Association 3-A football championship.

It was a fitting finale for one of the greatest football seasons in South Point history, as the Raiders finished the season with a perfect 14-0 record.

"It's like a dream come true," said Red Raider Coach Jim Biggerstaff following the game. "At the beginning of the season we dreamed of this. We talked all season long about winning the state championship. Now it is a reality."

The Raiders did win the state title with a potent offensive attack and hard-nosed defense. Perhaps the only mistake made on the field by South Point Friday night set up Ahoskie's first touchdown.

Jeff Williams was unable to grab a snap on a punt attempt late in the opening period of the game. Ahoskie downed Williams at the Raider five-yard line, and on the third play from scrimmage, Louis Britt swept around right end and into the end zone. Alvin Chamblee's point-after-touchdown kick was wide to the left, and with 3:38 remaining in the contest, Ahoskie led, 6-0.

But the Raiders always seem to play their best when they are behind. And play they did.

South Point took the ball on the next series of downs, marched 73 yards behind the pin-point passing of Williams and the sure-handed catches by Tim Rector and Boone Davis. With a first and one at the Cougar 12, South Point attempted to run the ball into the end zone, but Williams

slipped and fell after a one-yard gain. He then dropped back and fired a rocket to Davis for an 11-yard touchdown.

South Point attempted to go for two points, but was unable to get the ball into the end zone, and with 9:23 remaining in the first half, the score was knotted at 6-6.

The slippery field conditions tormented the Raider rushing attack, so Williams elected to use a roll-out passing scheme of plays to set up the next Raider score.

Three consecutive second-down completions to his favorite receiver Rector again moved the ball deep into Ahoskie territory. Rector snatched passes of 19, 19 and 15 yards, and Williams passed 16 more yards to Davis to get the ball to the Cougar four-yard line.

Williams then rolled right and spotted Davis wide open in the right-corner of the end zone where Davis made a beautiful diving catch for a 4-yard touchdown with 27 seconds remaining in the second quarter.

Tim Parrish booted the extra point, and the Raiders took a 13-6 halftime lead.

In the second half, the tenacious Red Raider defense came into its own and forced a Wayne Ellis fumble at the Cougar 48. South Point quickly went to work.

Chip Gibson rolled off-tackle for 16 yards, and Williams added 11 more to put the ball at the Ahoskie 24. Two plays later Williams passed 10 yards to Charles Allen James, moving the ball to the Cougar one. It took Perry Fewell one play from there to score another Raider TD, as he went over right tackle for a one-yard score.

Parrish's kick was blocked, but the Raiders were on top, 19-6, with 3:34 remaining in the third period.

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Gazette photo by Seny Norasingh

Raider quarterback Jeff Williams gets instructions from Coach Jim Biggerstaff

...South Point won state 3-A title with 34-13 win over Ahoskie

Raiders

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On Ahoskie's first play from scrimmage following the kickoff, Carl Sims picked off a Britt pass at the Cougar 42. On the third play of the Raiders' drive, Williams electrified the crowd as he swept 37 yards around left end into the end zone, and then capped it by running for a two-point conversion to put the Raiders up, 27-6, with 1:36 remaining in the third quarter.

For all intents and purposes, the game was over, but South Point was still ready to play.

Chip Gibson hopped on another Cougar fumble as the third quarter expired. The raiders were unable to score after that turnover, but rolled precious seconds off the scoreboard clock, which was quickly becoming an ally to the nearly 3,000 Raider fans on hand.

Ahoskie had its back to the wall, and on a fourth-and-10, Gibson broke through the line, sacking Britt and giving South Point the ball on the Cougar 38.

Wayne Ellis fumbled after South Point gave up the ball on downs, setting up a drive that was capped by a three-yard Fewell touchdown run. Parrish again split the uprights, and with 2:06 remaining in the game,

South Point sealed its first state football championship.

On the next kickoff, Biggerstaff cleared his bench, and Ahoskie completed a couple of "Hail Mary" passes against the reserves to set up the final TD of the game. As time expired in the contest, the echoing cheers of "We're No.1" from the South Point fans began to fill the Ahoskie stadium.

"These kids played their hearts out all year long," said Biggerstaff, whose 11-year record at South Point now stands at 95-21-5. "We were tight at the first of the ball game, but our kids came back. We felt all along that we could score on them. At the end, we were trying to get everybody in the game so that five, 10 or 15 years from now they will remember playing in a state championship game," concluded Biggerstaff.

"We've been behind before," said Williams, who had perhaps his best night passing in the first half on the slick field of Ahoskie. "We had to keep out cool, and we did. They had to respect our running game as well as our passing game. We knew it was going to be tough for them to contain both," concluded the *Gazette* Offensive Player of the Year.

High school

South Point	0	13	14	7	— 34
Ahoskie	6	0	0	7	— 13

Scoring Summary

- A Britt 1-run kick failed
 SP Davis 11-pass Williams, run failed
 SP Davis 4-pass Williams, Parrish kick
 SP Fewell 1-run, kick blocked
 SP Williams 17-run, Williams run
 SP Fewell 1-run, Parrish kick
 A Bond 10-pass Mitchell, Chamblee kick

	South Point	Ahoskie
First Downs	17	6
Rushing	47-121	20-41
Passing	10-13-0	5-11-1
Yards Passing	138	62
Fumbles Lost	0	2
Punting	4-26 2	4-30 1
Yards Penalized	4-32	6-40

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

SOUTH POINT RUSHING — Williams, 24-64; Fewell 12-32 Jones, 2-1. Gibson, 5-31. Armstrong 4 for minus-seven

AHOSKIE RUSHING — Britt 4-0, Mitchell, 1-4 Whitaker, 2-3, Ellis, 1-29. Watford, 1 for minus-two, Futrell, 3-7.

SOUTH POINT PASSING — Williams, 10-13-0, 138

AHOSKIE PASSING — Britt, 1-4-1, 19. Mitchell 1-1-0, 40; Watford, 1-2-0, 23

SOUTH POINT RECEIVING — Rector, 4-60;
Gibson, 1-17; Davis 4-51; James, 1-10.

AHOSKIE RECEIVING — Watford, 1-4;
Elms, 1-2; Bond, 1-13; Futrell, 1-40; Mitchell,
1-23.

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