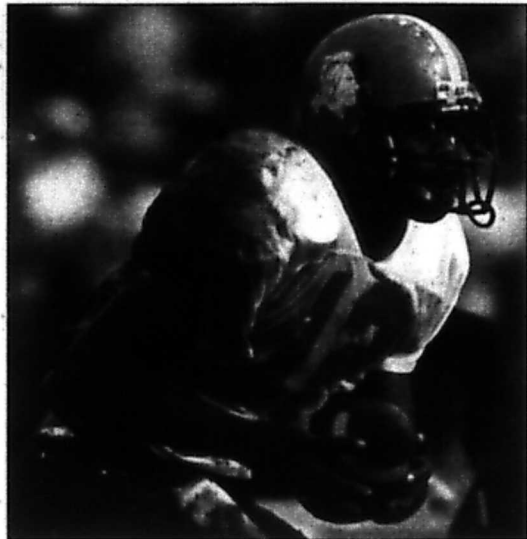


Red Raiders run out of steam

South Point quarterback Javar Williams looks to make a move downfield during the first quarter of Sunday's 3A state playoff game against Carver in Winston-Salem. The Red Raiders lost 26-7, falling one game short of playing for the state title.

Nikki Fox/
The Gazette



Big plays eliminate South Point from title chase

By PHILLIP GARDNER
Gazette Sports Reporter

WINSTON-SALEM — Jayvon Biddle might as well have been carrying away South Point's title hopes rather than the football. Biddle scored three touchdowns on runs of 40 and 78 yards and a 79-yard reception, leading Winston-Salem Carver to a 27-6 victory over the Red Raiders Sunday in the 3A state semifinals.

The Yellow Jackets' win in front of an overflow crowd of 5,000 at Carver's David Lash Stadium eliminated South Point

just one game shy of its first state championship appearance since winning the 3A title in 1979.

"Senior year, it crushes you," South Point senior linebacker Alex Lemons said of the loss. "It hurts, and we know it. But we're proud. We had a great season."

South Point ends its season at 12-2.

Carver (14-0-1) advances to Saturday's 11 a.m. 3A championship game, where it will face Wilson Fike at N.C. State's Carter-Finley Stadium.

Biddle, a senior, had 142 rushing yards on just 10 carries and had

the one reception for 79 yards.

"He's been great for us all year long," Carver coach Keith Wilkes said of Biddle. "He does whatever he needs to do to help this team win."

But the Carver defense was responsible for the backbreaking score.

After Biddle had scored his first two touchdowns to give the Yellow Jackets a 13-0 lead at the 10:37 mark of the second quarter, South Point began its next drive with two Joe Brown runs for a total of 30 yards.

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Brown took the Red Raiders to the Carver 46-yard line but then fumbled on the next play after a 5-yard pickup.

Carver's Shawn Pressley scooped up the loose ball and rumbled 59 yards for the touchdown.

The two-point conversion run attempt failed but the score still left the Yellow Jackets with what proved to be an insurmountable 19-0 lead.

The Red Raiders managed to get on the board two possessions later when quarterback Javar Williams capped an eight-play, 62-yard drive with a 1-yard touchdown run.

Andrew Rinehart's kick sailed wide right to leave the score at 19-6.

South Point looked to make a second-half rally but had to punt on its first possession and then turned the ball over on downs at the Carver 26 on its next series.

After the Yellow Jackets took over, they faced a third-and-11 play from their own 21-yard line.

That's when quarterback Jamar Pitts tossed a 79-yard touchdown pass to Biddle to end all South Point hopes.

The officials held a discussion on whether Pitts crossed the line of scrimmage before passing, but no flag was thrown and the touchdown stood.

Brown was the lone bright spot for South Point. The junior fullback rushed for 171 yards on 23 carries and had four carries of 20 or more yards.

He finished a remarkable season at 1,736 rushing yards and 30 touchdowns.

Williams, South Point's junior quarterback, was held to a season-low minus 1-yard rushing on 18 carries. The total included eight plays of negative yardage and five sacks — three by Carver's Antwon Mitchell and two by Gemel Smith.

The Red Raiders managed only 185 rushing yards, their second-lowest total on the season after last week's 168-yard rushing perform-



Nikki Fox/The Gazette

South Point running back Joe Brown tries to break free from the outstretched arms of Carver defenders Sunday. Brown finished with 171 yards on 23 carries in South Point's 27-6 loss.

ance in a 12-10 win over Mooresville. South Point had been averaging 302 yards on the ground.

"All year, we've been four yards and a cloud of dust," South Point coach John Devine said.

"The dust wasn't there tonight."

Lemons led South Point defensively with eight solo or first-hit tackles, including one for a 7-yard loss. Joe Costner and Phillip Stowe had four solo tackles, including two for loss for Costner.

The game was moved from Friday to Sunday because of icy conditions that caused power outages across the state beginning Wednesday. The inclement weather's effects were still evident Sunday on a muddy field that had been cleared of snow cover by tractors.

Contact Phillip Gardner at (704) 869-1843 or phillip_gardner@link.freedom.com.

W-S Carver 27, South Point 6

Red Raiders	0	6	0	0	— 6
Carver	7	12	8	0	— 27

C — Jayvon Biddle 40 run (Kevin Stewart kick)

C — Biddle 78 run (Stewart kick failed)

C — Shawn Pressley 59 fumble return (run failed)

SP — Javar Williams 1 run (Andrew Rinehart kick failed)

C — Biddle 79 pass from Jamar Pitts (Erick Eaton run)

	SP	C
First downs	16	11
Rushes-yards	46-185	37-219
Passing yards	81	114
Comp-att-int	5-11-0	3-10-0
Fumbles-lost	3-1	1-0
Penalties-yards	2-10	6-42

Individual statistics

Rushing — SP: Joe Brown 23-171, Brian Jennings 1-15, Tyler Gorton 2-2, Brian McWhirter 1-0, Javar Williams 18-(-1), Corey Brown 1-(-2). C: Jayvon Biddle 10-142, Monte Anthony 4-29, Erick Eaton 8-19, Tristan Mathews 2-14, Charles Russell 4-17, Jamar Pitts 4-8, Demario Smith 2-8, Hakeem Mohammed 1-(-7), Jason Jowers 2-(-11).

Passing — SP: Williams 5-11-0, 81. C: Pitts 2-9-0, 91; Juwon Crowell 1-10-23.

Receiving — SP: McWhirter 2-28, Gorton 2-38, Brooks Drennan 1-15. C: Biddle 1-79, Antonio Byrd 1-23, Juwon Crowell 1-12.

For seniors, it's all over

By RICHARD WALKER
Gazette Sports Reporter

WINSTON-SALEM — On a muddy field encircled by crunchy snow and ice, it was hard for South Point High players and coaches to reflect initially on the success of the Red Raiders' 2002 football season.

All that mattered, at least at the time, was the 27-6 loss to Carver in the Western N.C. 3A finals that ended their season two victories shy of their goal to win a state title.

John Alexander, one of 18 seniors who played their last games for South Point, represented that emotion.

"I've been here four years," said Alexander, a three-year starter at defensive back. "But I'm sick of the same thing."

That being a playoff loss.

Of course, the fact that South Point has had the good fortune of advancing at least two rounds in the playoffs for each of the past four seasons speaks well for the program while also raising expectations among players and in the community.

"I'm starting to feel a little happier now," said senior Jonathan Spargo, a three-year starter at offensive guard. "It's because we keep getting farther and farther in the playoffs every year and we played as a team. Even though we didn't make it to the state finals, we gave it our all and played as a team."

A team that, in spite of the heavy losses, has a bright future.

Alexander, Spargo, Joe Costner, Jeremiah Riddle and Phillip Stowe were three-year starters among the 18-player senior class that also included standouts like William Henkel, Nicholas Karvounis and Alex Lemons.

But while those players will be hard to replace, South Point coach John Devine will have 19 players with starting experience returning for next season — 10 on offense and nine on defense.

"You can't replace the leadership we've gotten from this senior class," Devine said. "And their best quality may have been in how they led with peer pressure. Because



South Point players gather to absorb Sunday's 27-6, season-ending loss to Carver in the 3A state semifinals in Winston-Salem.

Nikki Fox/
The Gazette

Junior sensations

South Point juniors Joe Brown and Javar Williams finished their seasons Sunday afternoon in the N.C. 3A playoffs with some of the highest-ranking figures in South Point High history.

Single-season rushing totals:
1,824 - Courtney Williams, 1993
1,736 - Joe Brown, 2002
1,617 - Akron Young, 1982
1,573 - Scott Crawford, 1971
1,550 - Koren Robinson, 1997
Single-season point totals:
200 - Scott Crawford, 1971
191 - Courtney Williams, 1993
182 - Joe Brown, 2002
132 - Jeremy Jackson, 1998
128 - Scott Crawford, 1970
Single-season total offense outputs:
1,867 - Jeff Williams, 1979
1,859 - Courtney Williams, 1993
1,824 - Devon Lowery, 2000
1,756 - Javar Williams, 2002
1,736 - Joe Brown, 2002

no matter what a coach says, you need to have kids who work on the others to get them in the weight room and work hard in practice.

"Their example should help show next year's seniors how to lead."

Both South Point's offense and defense appear well stocked for the future.

Quarterback Javar Williams, running back Joe Brown and wingback Tyler Gorton will be the marquee returnees, but of-

fensive linemen Jarrod Fraley, Adam Hodge, Jonathan Mims and Jesse Whitley also return to remain the foundation.

On defense, tackles Randy Robinson and Sammy Redden will be back to anchor a group that includes linebackers Brian Bradshaw, Chris Richards, Jamie Tuttle and Nicholas Williams, ends Andrew Rhinehardt and Jeremy Beaty and injured defensive back Brandon Reid (torn knee ligament).

"They should do well next year with all the guys that are returning and the JV players they'll be adding," Alexander said. "They definitely have a strong future."

Alexander felt a July team camp at Mars Hill bonded the Red Raiders and set the tone for what would become the fourth-winningest season in school history. Only the 14-0 state championship team of 1979, the 11-0-1 co-state title team of 1971 and the 12-1 team of 1999 had records better than this season's 12-2 mark.

"Our success starts every summer with preseason workouts," Devine said. "We have enough respect for our opponents to know that we're going to have to work hard to give us a chance to win."