

Williams accounts for six touchdowns in rout

By **PHILLIP GARDNER**
Gazette Sports Reporter

BELMONT — Javar Williams came into Friday's third-round 3A state playoff game against Concord needing only 19 rushing yards to become Gaston County's first 1,000-yard rusher and passer.

He did so much more.

The South Point quarterback accounted for 342 total yards and six touchdowns as the Red Raiders steamrolled the Spiders, 69-21 here at Lineberger Stadium.

"What more can you say?" South Point coach John Devine said of his star senior. "There's a reason people picked him pre-season all-state. If a team ever wants to run an option at any level — it doesn't matter if the (Dallas) Cowboys want to run the option — he's the man to do it."

Williams ran the Raiders' triple-option offense to perfection, rushing for 177 yards on 18 carries and scoring on runs of 6, 12, 17 and 13 yards. He also completed all six of his passes for 165 yards and two touchdowns.

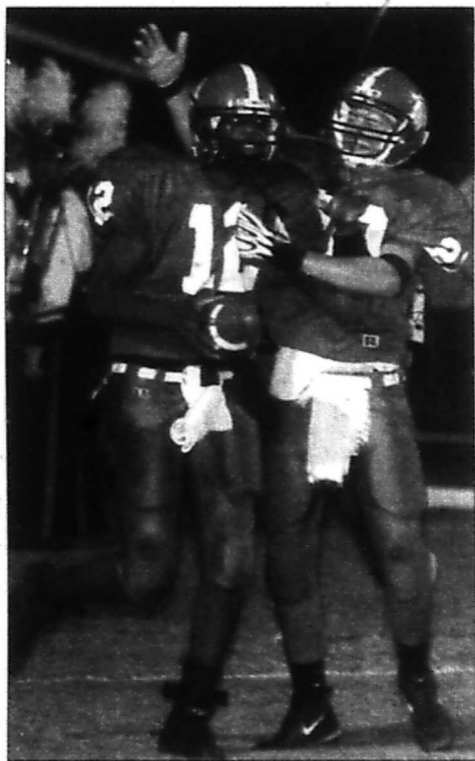
"I've never had four touchdowns (rushing). I wasn't expecting that," said Williams, who increased his season totals to 1,158 rushing and 1,318 passing. "I thought they'd key on me and Joe more. ... They were giving it to me. They were playing Joe tough like every team does and then they had the safety on the wingbacks. They just left me open."

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Nick Daggy/The Gazette

South Point quarterback Javar Williams is congratulated by teammate Wade Harris after scoring a touchdown in the first half of Friday night's game. Williams accounted for six touchdowns in a 69-21 win.

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Williams was one of many stars on a night South Point recorded the most lopsided playoff win ever for a Gaston County team. The Red Raiders beat their own record margin of 42 points, set last week in a 42-0 win over Franklin. It was the fifth time a Gaston County team won a playoff game by at least 40 points. South Point was the winner in four of them.

The impressive performance sets up a state semifinal matchup at Asheville, a 21-20 winner over A.L. Brown. The Cougars spent most of the season ranked No. 1 in two separate 3A state polls and won the draw over South Point for the top seed.

South Point rolled up a season-high 572 yards in total offense and scored on its first seven possessions for a 49-7 halftime lead. The Red Raiders scored 10 touchdowns on 14 possessions and punted twice.

While Williams and the offense were incredible, it was the South Point defense that got them jumpstarted.

Ivey Watson intercepted a Concord pass on third and 2 on the game's opening drive and returned it from the Concord 41 to the 25. Four Williams runs later, South Point was on top just 2:25 into the game.

Two Concord plays later, Brandon Reid picked off a tipped pass at the Concord 36 and took it to the 8. This time, Williams handed off to full-back Joe Brown both plays and Brown found the end zone on a 4-yard run up the middle. Andrew Rinehart hit his second of nine extra-point kicks to give the Red Raiders a 14-0 lead just 3:55 into the game.

Concord (11-3) showed some life on the ensuing possession with a 41-yard rush by Jeremiah Cauthen to the South Point 35, but the Spiders could move the ball only four more yards and turned it over on downs.

The Red Raiders (13-1) then needed just six plays to march 69 yards into the end zone again. Watson hauled in a 48-yard pass from Williams for a 21-0 lead at the 3:36 mark of the first quarter and the rout was on.



Nick Daggy/The Gazette

South Point's Jamari Crawford scampers down the field for a 64-yard touchdown reception.

With Concord's running game largely ineffective, the Spiders turned to its 2,000-yard passer, Tommy Beecher, who didn't disappoint. The junior finished with 391 yards and two touchdowns on 26 of 44 accuracy, but he admitted his two first-quarter interceptions had the most impact on the final outcome.

"They're by far the best defense we've played all year," the 6-foot-3, 200-pound Beecher said. "They showed me many different looks. For the first half, I couldn't figure them out, to be honest with you."

Brown scored twice on runs of 4 and 15 yards to become Gaston County's all-time leading career scorer. He has 388 points — 200 this season, which also matches the county record — 10 higher than Junior Hall's previous record. Brown finished with 130 yards on 12 carries.

Concord had won five games in a row and a share of the South Piedmont Conference title and hadn't given up more than 30 points in a game all year.

"I was impressed with their whole team," Concord coach E.Z. Smith said. "You can take it from the kicking game, offense and defense — their whole group. It was a team effort. They totally beat us."

Watson making impact in Raiders' secondary

Transfer disrupts Concord's passing game all night in win

By MIKE POWELL
Gazette Correspondent

BELMONT — South Point cornerback Ivey Watson made a game-defining play on the first series of Friday night's 69-21 win over Concord.

But that came as no surprise to coach John Devine. The 5-10, 150-pound senior has been a catalyst all season on both sides of the football.

"Ivey is not the biggest kid or the strongest kid, but he makes plays," Devine said of Watson, whose interception set up the Red Raiders' first touchdown less than three minutes into the third-round 3A playoff game.

"He makes a big play on defense, and then he turns around and makes a big play on offense. He set the tone for the whole game and really got us rolling," Devine said.

Watson's interception and 16-yard return came on the third play of the game. Four plays after the turnover, the Red Raiders scored on quarterback Javar Williams' 6-yard run. That set into motion a 49-point first-half explosion that buried the Spiders (11-3).

"I just saw the ball and broke on it," Watson said. "It was just good discipline. The coaches teach us that."

Later in the first quarter, Watson continued his big-play night with a 48-yard touchdown reception that put South Point up 20-0. Watson beat the Concord cornerback on a simple go-route and used his speed to easily outrun the defender.

"He was playing me close-up, so I just trusted my speed and hit him long," said Watson, who entered the game with 26 catches for 552 yards and seven touchdowns.

On offense, Watson finished with three catches for 80 yards. On defense, he had the key early interception along with two pass break-ups.

Most players would have been satisfied with those numbers. But not Watson, who transferred to South Point over the summer from North Gaston.

"I didn't do that well in the second half. I think I was playing too close up. I will have to come back and do better next week," Watson said.

Even Devine could forgive Watson for missing an interception that resulted in an 84-yard touchdown pass from Tommy Beecher to Darius Cauthen in the third quarter. South Point led 56-7 at the time.

"He (Watson) gambled a couple times and got burned, but at that point the score was pretty one-sided. He was trying to make another big play, but he made the big one that put us on a roll," Devine said.



Nick Daggy/The Gazette

South Point defensive back Ivey Watson breaks up a pass during the Red Raiders' win Friday night.

And even though Watson is a newcomer on a senior-dominated team that has played together for four years, he has fit in well.

"He has a great work ethic and has been a perfect role-model for our young kids," said Devine.

When Watson moved into the South Point district early last summer, Devine could not believe his good fortune.

"I wanted to make sure he was legitimate, so I took him home. His brother was sitting there with his North Gaston shorts on. But it all worked out," Devine said with a smile.

As for Watson, he could not be happier about his senior year.

"I came out here and practiced hard with them and they took me in. I want to thank everyone. I have never done anything like this before," Watson said.

South Point 69, Concord 21

Con 0 7 7 7 — 21

SP 21 28 14 6 — 69

Scoring summary

SP—Javar Williams 6 run (Andrew Rinehart kick)

SP—Joe Brown 4 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Ivey Watson 48 pass from Williams (Rinehart kick)

SP—Williams 12 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Brown 15 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Williams 17 run (Rinehart kick)

C—Jeremiah Cauthen 7 run (Frazier Culbreath kick)

SP—Jamari Crawford 64 pass from Williams (Rinehart kick)

SP—Williams 13 run (Rinehart kick)

C—Darius Cauthen 84 pass from Tommy Beecher (Culbreath kick)

SP—Brian Jennings 2 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Josh Robinson 50 run (Rinehart kick blocked)

C—Mike Mulligan 2 pass from Beecher (Culbreath kick)

	C	SP
First downs	15	20
Rushes-yards	21-59	47-407
Passing yards	391	165
Comp-Att-Int	26-44-2	6-6-0
Fumbles-lost	3-2	2-1
Penalties-yards	6-49	7-70

Individual statistics

RUSHING—C: J. Cauthen 15-73, Ardonius Gibson 1-4, Beecher 4-(-18), Mulligan 1-0. SP: Williams 18-177, Brown 12-130, Tyler Gorton 6-20, Jennings 5-12, Robinson 1-50, Wes Carroll 5-18.

PASSING—C: Beecher 26-44-2, 391. SP: Williams 6-6-0, 165.

RECEIVING—C: Baylen Monroe 6-45, Mulligan 4-18, J. Cauthen 3-49, D. Cauthen 4-145, Erik Laird 5-90, Dexter Hames 1-10, Donnell Colclough 2-25, Jake Watkins 1-9. SP: Ivey Watson 3-80, Wade Harris 1-12, Crawford 2-67, Gorton 0-6.