

Thomasville secures home field advantage

By KEVIN PRICE
T-8 Sports Editor

BAINBRIDGE — Thomasville coach Mike Hodges had a big smile on his face like the proverbial cat that ate the canary.

And why not? The third-year coach had gambled with a false field goal that resulted in the winning touchdown late in the fourth quarter as Thomasville slipped by Bainbridge 31-14 here at Centennial Field Friday night.

Facing a fourth-and-goal from the 13 with just over three minutes left in the game, Hodges called for the razzle dazle. Quarterback Shawn Jones was the hooker on the play, but took the snap and rolled to the right before turning around and throwing back to Eddie Coleman, who ran through six defenders to score the 31-point winning touchdown with 3:15 remaining.

"We hit them with it at a good time," Hodges said. "We had worked on it during the week. We feel like it is a pretty good play."

With the victory, the Bulldogs clinch the home field advantage for at least the first round of the Region I-AAA

playoffs. However, Thomasville will not find out the opponent until next week.

Bainbridge will face Thomasville in the first round if U beats Appling County next week.

"The home field advantage is what we were working for," Hodges said. "But if we face this bunch again, it could be the advantage for them that they get. But we shouldn't have any trouble getting ready because we know just how tough they are."

As has been the case in every game this year, the Bulldogs moved down the field with ease on their first possession. With Alphonso Ellis, who led all rushers with 117 yards on 23 carries, bulling his way for 34 yards and Jones keeping on two options for 28, Thomasville blew down the field 74 yards before bogging down at the Bainbridge 6-yard line.

But the Bulldogs were unable to put any points on the scoreboard as Danny Smith's 23-yard field goal attempt was wide left.

Bainbridge answered with an impressive drive of its own, going 59 yards in the Thomasville 21, where the

Bearcats tried their own fake field goal on fourth-and-5. But Manrice Williams came up inches shy of the first down.

After the two teams traded punts, Thomasville fumbled at its own 33. But a Willie Frederick sack forced the Bearcats to punt.

Bainbridge forced a Thomasville punt and took over 53 yards away from a score with less than two minutes left in the half.

After three running plays netted a first down, Trent Hatton found Sammy King just behind the Thomasville defense for a 32-yard scoring strike with 39 seconds remaining. Michael Brenton's PAT gave Bainbridge a 7-0 halftime lead.

Bainbridge's offense, which scored on drives of 49, 80 and 69 yards. The only time the Bulldogs didn't score in the second half was on the last drive as they killed the clock.

Anthony Green returned Bainbridge's first punt of the second half 10 yards to the Bearcat 49.

With good field position, Hodges decided to try and get the Bulldogs back

into the game with one play. And it almost worked as Jones hit a diving A. Jay Childs with a 44-yard pass to the 5.

Ellis scored two plays later from 2 yards out. With Smith's PAT, the Bulldogs had tied the game at 7-7 with 0:35 left in the third quarter. It was Ellis' 15th touchdown of the game and he now has 104 points this season.

The Thomasville defense, which held Bainbridge sophomore Larry Cosby under 100 yards for the first time this season, forced another punt.

Taking over 80 yards away from a go-ahead score, the Bulldogs drove the distance in 10 plays. The biggest play of the drive occurred on third-and-7 at the 34, when Jones appeared to cough back-to-back 11-yard runs.

But as the Bulldogs reached the Bainbridge 9, the Bearcats stiffened, holding Ellis to 1 yard, forcing an incomplete pass and sacking Jones for a 5-yard loss.

Smith trotted onto the field in try for an apparent 30-yard field goal, but Hodges had other ideas and ordered the fake, which resulted in Jones hitting Coleman with a 13-yard touchdown

of a 67-yard scoring drive of its own: On the first play, Hatton hit Dee Brock on the sidelines for a 44-yard gain.

The Bearcats seemed to bog down at the Thomasville 13. On fourth-and-7, Thomasville's Ronnie Gardner knocked the pass away from Brian Venizez, but Gardner was called for pass interference, giving Bainbridge a first down.

Hatton then ran in the score from 7 yards out. Brenton's kick tied the game at 14-14 with 10:43 left in the game.

But the Bulldogs would drive for the third straight time for a touchdown.

Smith's final PAT gave Thomasville a 21-14 lead with 3:15 left.

On his last series, Bainbridge moved out to near midfield, before Frederick ended the drive with a sack of Hatton on fourth-and-10 with 1:17 left.

THIS	THAT	THIS	THAT
First Downs	18	13	
Rushes yards	457	284	
Passing yards	110	103	
Points	31	14	
Punts	7	3	
Fumbles lost	1	0	
Penalties yards	37	19	

INDIVIDUAL STATS	
RUSHING THIS	— Jones 23, Hatton 13, Coleman 7, Cosby 9, Ellis 6
RUSHING THAT	— Hatton 13, Coleman 7, Cosby 9, Ellis 6
PASSING THIS	— Jones 6:14 — 110 YDS
PASSING THAT	— Hatton 1:17 — 110 YDS
PASS RECEIVING THIS	— Childs 44, Jones 13, Hatton 13, Coleman 13
PASS RECEIVING THAT	— King 6, Venizez 2, Brock 2

Central holds on to win regular season title

By RODNEY HOLT

It was not very pretty, but the Central Yellow Jackets have clinched the regular season Region I-AAA crown with a grueling 31-29 homecoming win over the Appling County Pirates Friday night at Thomas County Stadium.

It will not be known who the Jackets face in the opening round of the region playoffs until the next week, but the Jackets are assured of the home field advantage throughout.

After leading 31-13 with 6:03 remaining, the Jackets had to hold off a furious Appling rally for the victory. The outcome was not decided until the Jackets recovered an onside kick in the final minute. Earlier in the game, the Pirates had recovered an onside kick.

Mitchell Wilkerson pulled the Pirates within 10 points at 31-21 when he ran in from three yards out, and Chip Holmes galloped in for the two-point conversion.

The drive started on the Appling 36 and was aided by two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on the Jackets. The final one to set the Pirates up first-and-goal at the 3.

On the first play from scrimmage, following the kickoff, the Jackets' Chris Taylor fumbled and Appling County recovered at the Central 35.

Appling took advantage of the miscue and traveled the distance in seven plays, aided by another conduct penalty on Central. This one to the 8 where Appling had another first-and-goal.

It appeared as if the Jacket defense might hold, but on fourth down, Randy Simpson busted in from one yard for the touchdown.

Central quarterback Charlie Ward took things into his own hands from there.

Ward executed the option to perfection on the first play and after faking a pitchout, kept the ball and raced in for a 73-yard touchdown. Andy Baker booted the PAT, to give the Jackets a 7-0 lead with 44 seconds left in the opening quarter.

For the night, Ward led all rushers with 107 yards on seven attempts, and completed five of 11 passes for 81 yards with one interception, and one touchdown pass.

After swapping punts, Appling knotted the score on a 13-play-81 yard drive.

Wilkerson galloped in from one yard out for the score. Randy Simpson added the PAT to make it 7-7 with 2:22 left in the half.

On the next series, Ward was intercepted by Freddie Johnson at the Central 32.

But Freddie Guyton intercepted for Central to end the scoring threat.

After a lackluster first half, Central came out fired up to start the third quarter.

An impressive 65 yard, 10 play scoring drive was the result.

Keith Christopher was the workhorse during the drive, carrying five times for 44 yards.

Tommy Itain got the touchdown on a 17-yard strike from Ward. It was Ward's first completion of the game, after an 0-4 first half. Baker was true on the PAT to give Central a 14-7 lead with 8:08 left in the quarter.

After forcing a punt, Central took off on another scoring drive.

Starting at their own 22 it only took 10 plays for the Jackets to hit paydirt. Ward had begun to click and Central mixed the running of Steve Fleming with Ward's arm to keep Appling guessing and move the ball downfield.

Fleming got the touchdown on a one yard run and Baker kicked the PAT for a seemingly comfortable 21-7 lead, with 2:24 left in the third quarter.

But Appling began to show they weren't going down easy. Wilkerson hauled in the following kickoff at 26, cut

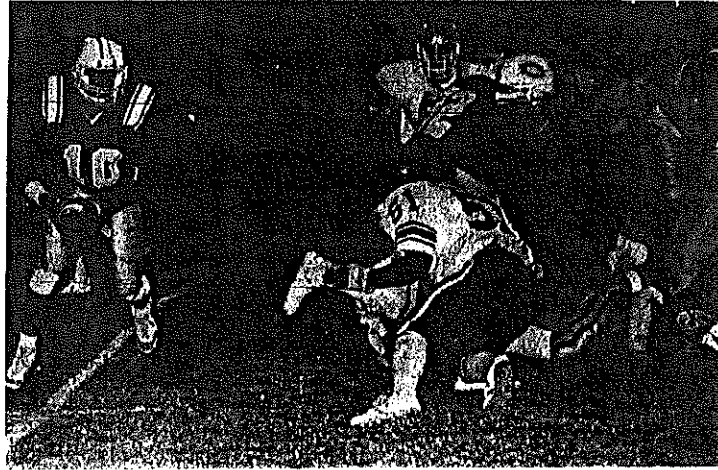


Photo by Greg Brown

Central quarterback looks over defense prior to breaking off 73-yard touchdown run

to the sidelines and outran everyone into the endzone for a 74 yard return, and it was 21-13 just that quick.

Appling recovered the onside kick, but four plays later, Richard Roddenberry pounced on an Appling fumble at midfield to set up the Jackets next score.

A pass completion, and five runs moved the ball to the 10 before the drive stalled. A motion penalty moved the ball back another five.

But that was no problem for Baker as he zeroed in on a 32 yard field-goal, which had plenty of room to spare, to

move the score to 24-13 with 9:12 remaining in the game.

Roddenberry recovered another fumble to give the Jackets excellent field position at the Appling 36.

Four plays later, Itain danced in from the 7 for the touchdown. Baker, who was perfect for the night, added the PAT to give Central a 31-13 lead with only 6:03 left.

But from there things began to get crazy for the Jackets as Appling called for the frenzy ending.

Next week, Central travels to Waycross to face Ware County in the final regular season game.

Cairo routs Ware Co.

The Cairo Syrupmakers won their homecoming game Friday night as the state championship victory of 1946 cheered them on to a 29-6 victory over Ware County.

Cairo is now 5-4 overall and 2-3 in Region I-AAA play. The Syrupmakers can make the playoffs if they beat Coffee and Appling County loses to Bainbridge next week.

Early in the first quarter, Cairo set up a touchdown with a 6-play, 51-yard drive. Cedric Smith ran 2 yards for a TD at 7:17. Ronnie Patten kicked the PAT.

Cairo scored next in the second quarter when it moved the ball 18 yards from the Ware goal in seven plays. Itick Amdahl took the 18-yard pass from Robert Donaldson for the touchdown. The kick failed.

A Ware fumble gave the Syrupmakers possession of the ball later in the second quarter at the Ware 20-yard line. Two plays later, Cairo had the ball within 1 yard of the goal line.

Jamie Dixon's run gave Cairo its third touchdown of the night. Donaldson threw to Tony Ray for the 2-point conversion and a 21-0 lead at halftime.

Neither team scored in the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter, the Gators put together an 80-yard drive in 13 plays.

John Cox made a 7-yard run at 7:57 for Ware's only six points of the night. A 2-point conversion run was attempted but failed.

The Syrupmaker's second team was in when Alfredo Addison made a touchdown with a 4-yard run. Darreo Moore passed to Kevin Walden for the 2



Atlanta coach Dan Henning watches quarterback Dave Archer during practice in Suwanee

Falcons looking to end winless streak

ATLANTA (AP) — The Atlanta Falcons may be struggling through a National Football League schedule that then play at San Francisco and Miami.

"We're continuing to play well on defense," said head coach Dan Riffe.

Brookwood warms up for playoffs with win over Crisp

CORDELE — The Brookwood Warriors warmed up for the first round of the GISA Class AA state playoffs with an easy 47-0 rout of Crisp Academy here Friday night.

The Warriors end the regular season 8-2 overall and 3-0 in Region I-AAA. Brookwood will host Piedmont at Warner Stadium next Friday night.

Hugo Izzo scored the first touchdown 5:21 of the first quarter with a 1-yard run. Vic Harrison's PAT gave the Warriors a 7-0 lead.

With 29 seconds left in the first quarter, Mattison Dunaway, who carried the ball only 11 times all night but gained 60 yards, scored the second touchdown with a 7-yard run.

Harrison's kick was good, extending the lead to 14-0.

Coleman Bennett's 7-yard run at 8:06 of the second quarter further increased the Warrior's lead. Harrison got the PAT for a 21-0 lead.

At 6:56 of the second quarter, Dunaway returned a Crisp punt 34 yards for a touchdown. The kick failed, leaving Brookwood ahead 27-0.

Mark Roland scored at 1:45 of the second quarter with a 23-yard run. The kick again failed and the half ended with Brookwood leading 35-0.

At the beginning of the third quarter, Brookwood head coach Ronnie Jones put some of the younger players in.

At 7:55 of the third quarter, Scott Haskins scored a TD on a 13-yard run. Harrison's kick was good for a 40-0 lead.

At 9:53 of the fourth quarter, Izzo ran in yards for the last touchdown of the game. Harrison's PAT made the score 47-0.

"The best thing about a game like this is that everybody got to play," said Jones. He added that the younger players did well.

He was especially impressed with the performance of Glen Palmer, a 190-

pound sophomore halfback.

"What worries me about this game and last week is that my older players didn't get to play," Jones said.

"Mattison only touched the ball four times."

THIS	THAT
Brookwood	47 0 0 0 0 0
Crisp	0 0 0 0 0 0

INDIVIDUAL STATS	
RUSHING	Dunaway 2:00, Roland 2:32, Palmer 9
PASSING	Johnson 2:40 — 28
PASS RECEIVING	Palmer 1:21, Stegheiler 1:7

Westbrook, Pelham score victories

DIXIE — The Westbrook Cougars had a field day Friday night, defeating Maranatha 57-0.

Westbrook is now 8-2 of the season and 4-1 in GISA Region I-A. Westbrook's first playoff game will be at Westbrook Stadium next Friday against John Hancock.

Westbrook scored 21 points in both quarters of the first half. Don Holley and Rick Butler both scored on running plays.

Mike Miller got his touchdown on a 45-yard pass from Stephen Burton.

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"The best thing about a game like this is that everybody got to play," said Jones. He added that the younger players did well.

He was especially impressed with the performance of Glen Palmer, a 190-

He was followed by Al Jones with 60 yards and Norris Crumley with 61 yards.

The Hornets stand 3-6 overall and 2-3 in Region I-A. If they beat Stewart-Quilman next week, they will make the playoffs.

Area Roundup

THIS	THAT
Westbrook	57 0 0 0 0 0
Pelham	0 0 0 0 0 0