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Wildcats Grind Out 40-0 Win

The Valdosta Daily Times
SPORTS

By MIKE CHASON

Thomas County's interim school superintendent didn't fire his head football coach Friday night. But he might have felt like it.

The only problem was that the same guy holds both positions. But Will Roy Cooley probably would have gladly traded his coaching

YARDSTICK

	Valdosta	Central
First Downs	17	7
Yards Rushing	264	71
Yards Passing	77	43
Passes	3-8	3-15
Passes Inct. By	1	1
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Punting	4-46.5	9-31.2
Penalties	8-100	9-87

shoes for a spot behind a desk after Valdosta's number-one rated Wildcats trampled Cooley's Central of Thomasville Yellow Jackets 40-0 in a high school football game at Cleveland Field here.

While a crowd of 9,500 and a newly painted drawing of the Wildcat looked on, Valdosta relied on a gutty ground game to cop a win in its season opener.

Central, rated one of the teams to beat in the south subregion of 1-AAAA before the season began, fell prey to a 26-point Wildcat blitz in the second quarter and never made any move to narrow the margin.

Ironically, it might have the enormously successful Cooley's last game as the head coach this season. After Superintendent E.R. Cone resigned Friday, Cooley was named to replace him on an interim basis. He was to find out today what his coaching status is for the rest of the season.

Cooley didn't think the new that their coach might not be their coach anymore had an adverse effect on the Yellow Jackets.

"None whatsoever," he said. "I'm not going to say it did anyway. We had a good game plan but Valdosta just beat us. They completely dominated us at both lines of scrimmage.

"We made a lot of mistakes. Against Valdosta, you have to play a perfect game. We didn't do that. They beat us good. They mauled us."

Even in the wake of one of the worst defeats in his coaching career, Cooley could poke fun at himself.

"After tonight, folks might be willing to make a (coaching) change anyway," he said with a slight grin.

Valdosta Coach Nick Hyder wasn't grinning at the other end of the field but he didn't carry a long face either. He was worried before the game that Cooley would turn the interim superintendent situation in his favor.

"His effort was to try to fire up his boys because of that," Hyder said. "It added to my misery. It seems like every time somebody plays us they always have a death or somebody's house burns down or something...something they can dedicate the game to."

Hyder's team might have had revenge on its mind.

In 1976, Central trimmed the 'Cats 21-6 in a playoff game for the region title. It was the only meeting ever between the two schools.

"We had the experience on them," Hyder said. "But I thought they might sustain something a little more than they did."

Central never even got a good whiff of the green turf over the goal line. Veteran cornerback Troy Thomas and defensive end Kenny Evans made sure of that with five individual tackles apiece to their credit.

Thomas, voted the overall team captain last week, also ran back two punts for touchdowns but had both called back because of clipping penalties.

"Nah, it didn't bother me," Thomas said. "You just have to get up and go again."

As it was, Valdosta put plenty enough points on the board. But it took the foot of punter Rodney Gordon to get things started.

With just over three minutes left in a scoreless opening quarter, Gordon boomed a 51-yard punt which rolled dead at the Central 4-yard-line.

Three plays later, defensive end James Harris sacked Central quarterback Ben Carter at the 1-yard-line on a play which looked like a sure safety.

Coley Voyles punted from the rear of the end zone out to the 23-yard-line.

With the highly partisan hometowners chanting "go, go, go," VHS quarterback John Lastinger jumped in from 1 yard out with 10:55 to go in the second quarter for the Wildcats' first points of the season.

Dale Parker booted the extra point.

The mood was set. Gordon, who punted four times for a 46.5 yard average, kept bottling the Jackets back up in their own territory, and his teammates kept punching in sixes.

Lastinger, who was admittedly nervous during the opening minutes, put a beautiful spin move on a Central player to pick up his second score on a dazzling 29-yard scamper.

David Reaves hit on the PAT kick.

After a fumble recovery by Lynn Roberts, it was Ernest King's turn to cash in his TD chips. He ran from one side of the field to the other on a 3-yard touchdown with 2:51 left in the half.

Parker missed the extra point kick.

After Nathaniel Caesar intercepted a Carter pass, Hyder inserted John Bond at quarterback. He responded by teaming with Fredrick Blair on a great, juggling catch for a 25-yard pass play.

Bond then fell back into the shotgun formation to find Robert Smith on a 44-yard completion. Bond rolled in for the last four yards himself.

Reaves missed the extra point kick.

Irvin Roe added a 5-yard touchdown run, and Tim Dame caught an 8-yard pass from Bond for two second half scores. Parker and Reaves had an extra point kick apiece.

"I think Gordon's punting really put them in a hole," Hyder said. "Our kickoff coverage and punt coverage teams were a major factor. At one point, it got to where some folks may not have wanted the ball."

Hyder didn't seem too concerned about the 0-0 first period.

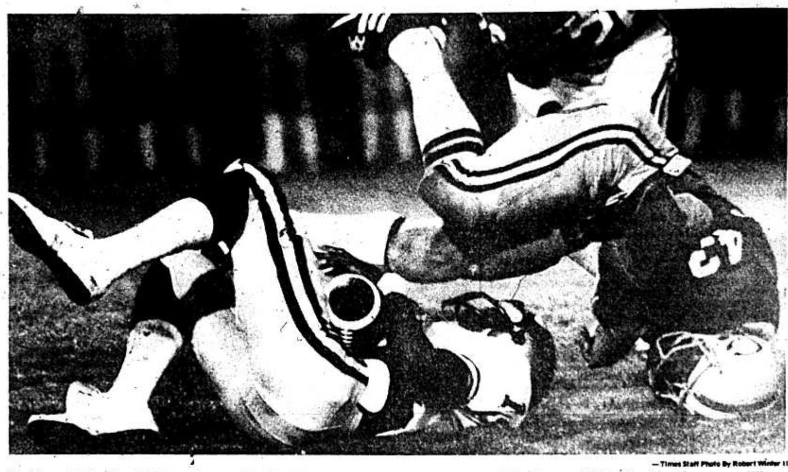
"That's why you've got 48 minutes out there," he said. "That gives you time to solve your problems.

"And, it's just like on your wedding night. You're awfully nervous the first game."

Valdosta gained 268 yards rushing and 77 yards passing. The Wildcats threw only eight passes.

"We were going to run it," Hyder said. "We wanted to try to use a little more of a ground game."

Valdosta travels to Cordele Friday to meet Crisp County, and Central is on the road to Bainbridge.



—Times Staff Photo By Robert Winter III

Valdosta's Fredrick Blair Hangs On To The Ball After Being Dumped By Central Linebacker Dewayne West

Score by Quarters

Valdosta	0	26	7	7—40
Central	0	0	0	0—0

Scoring

Val.—Lastinger 1 run (Parker kick)
Val.—Lastinger 29 run (Reaves kick)
Val.—King 3 run (Kick failed)
Val.—Bond 4 run (Kick failed)
Val.—Roe 5 run (Parker kick)
Val.—Dame 8 pass from Bond (Reaves kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing: Valdosta—Lastinger 9-55, King 8-49, Roe 7-36, Johnson 4-29, Gaskins 3-22, Frazier 3-25, Patterson 4-16, Wilcox 2-18, Bond 2-9, Ruff 2-5; Central—Armster 15-49, Robinson 5-12, Hayes 2-7, Hopkins 1-9, Davis 2-4, Sherrod 1 minus 2, Carter 2 minus 8.

Passing: Valdosta—Bond 3-3-0-77, Lastinger 0-3-0-0, Ruff 0-2-1-0; Central—Carter 2-10-1-40, Sherrod 1-4-0-3, Hayes 0-1-0-0.

Pass Receiving: Valdosta—Smith 1-44, Blair 1-25, Dame 1-8; Central—Hopkins 1-21, Anderson 1-19, Owens 1-3.

Punt Returns: Valdosta—Thomas 3-55; Central—Eason.

Kickoff Returns: Valdosta—none; Central—Anderson 2-15, Eason 2-21, Robinson 3-61.

Defense (Number of Tackles): Valdosta—Thomas 5, Evans 5, C. Roe 3, Gordon 3, Carroll Johnson 3, Hancock 3, Hunter 2, Clifford Johnson 2, Harris 2, Roberts 2, B. Johnson 2; Central—Eason 8, Revels 7, M. Wright 4, E. Wright 3, West 4, Hurst 3, Choice 3, Lott 3, R.C. Eason 3, Moore 2.

Lastinger Just Plays His Game

By Times Staff Writer

The number was changed but the result was the same. For the first time in four years and 47 games, Buck Belue didn't start at quarterback for Valdosta High School's Wildcats Friday night.

Nobody was more aware of that fact than his replacement.

"I was nervous," John Lastinger, number 11 to Belue's famous number 7, said. "I fumbled it the first time I touched it. I think my teammates gave me a lot of support. Rodney's punting really helped."

Lastinger was the leading Valdosta rusher with 55 yards in nine carries. He had touchdown runs of one and 28 yards. He threw only three passes, all of them incomplete.

And he's not trying to be Belue, who's now trying out for the quarterback slot at the University of Georgia.

"I'm just me," Lastinger said. "I'll never be Buck Belue, no matter what some people say. I know that. I'm just trying to be me."

Lastinger was surprised at the 40-0 whitewashing the Wildcats handed usually tough Central of Thomasville.

"Not in a hundred years did I think we'd do that," he said. "That first quarter, they were sticking us. We broke it open in the second quarter, and that kind of took the wind out of them."

Two more quarterbacks followed Lastinger into the game. Junior John Bond ran for one touchdown and threw for another. Bond accounted for all 77 of the yards Valdosta had in the air on three of three tosses.

Ruff, a junior, saw action in the final minutes of the fourth quarter.

—Times Staff Photo

VHS Quarterback John Lastinger Gets Crunched By Yellow Jackets' Rick Lott

Prep Roundup

Jonesboro Pulls LaGrange Upset

By The Associated Press

Kicker Steve Clark put his foot into it twice to hand upstart Jonesboro a 14-12 upset victory over ihighly rated LaGrange in Georgia Class 6AAAA high school football Friday night.

LaGrange, ranked No. 7 in Class AAAA in this week's Associated Press poll, continued what is becoming traditional for the west Georgia school as they dropped their season opener for the seventh consecutive year.

In other big games Friday night, Class AAAA No. 1-ranked Valdosta stormed over Central-Thomasville 40-0, Cedar Shoals beat Gainesville-Johnson 32-6, Class AAA No.1 Waycross beat Appling Co. 14-12, Claxton bested Irwin County 14-7, Savannah Country Day defeated Reidsville 35-22, Statesboro whipped Swainsboro 16-14, Bowdon ripped Bremen 29-0, and Rockmart upended Cartersville 14-7.

LaGrange went ahead 12-0 with long runs in the first quarter against Jonesboro, which has been considered a dark horse contender in 6AAAA. Hugh Rutledge ran 74 yards for one TD and Randal Reid ran 82 yards, but the extra-point attempts failed.

The Cardinals came back in the first quarter with their own touchdowns, one in a six-yard run by Gordon Dorsey and the other from a 33-yard pass from quarterback Terry Burns to Mike Bell. Clark's extra-point kicks made the winning difference.

"We have a young team, and our kids were probably a little scared of LaGrange at first," Jonesboro Coach Wayman Sellars said. "But after getting behind 12-0, they showed a lot of poise and came back to get in the game. This is a terrific win for our kids, beating a favored opponent."

Cedar Shoals quarterback Homer Jordan threw three touchdown passes to lead the Jaguars, now 2-0, to their 32-6 trampling of Northeast-Macon. Jordan hit wingback Mike Walker for 28 yards and one touchdown, split end Stafford McKinney for 32 yards and another and 30 yards to Jeff Sapp for a third.

Jaguar fullback Mitch Mullis plunged one yard and tailback Stanley Nash scampered 66 yards for Cedar Shoals' other two touchdowns.

Tailback Joe Ware ran six yards in the second quarter to give Johnson their lone TD.

Waycross jumped to a 14-0 lead in the second quarter of its AAA game against Appling County. The first touchdown capped a 68-yard drive climaxed when Carl Butts ran the ball in from the 10-yard line.

Then quarterback Barry Taylor passed 10 yards to wide receiver Charles Junior for the second touchdown. Taylor passed for a two-point conversion.

Appling bounced back in the third quarter when Wayne Hazzard scored with a one-yard quarterback sneak. The kick failed. Hazzard ran five yards in the fourth quarter for another TD, but the two-point conversion pass attempt failed.

"It seems like we just fell apart in the second half," said Waycross Coach Dale Williams. "We forgot what we were doing right in the first half. This is one we're very glad to get behind us."

Waycross and Appling County face off again on Nov. 3 in a regional game.

Claxton came back from a late-game, 7-0 deficit to beat Irwin County. Irwin scored just minutes into the game when David Wilcox ran in from the two and Mike Williamson added a kicked PAT.

The scoring died until the fourth quarter, when Claxton moved 47 yards through Indian country and quarterback Harold Mercer scored from the one. Mercer passed to James Kennedy for a two-point conversion. Tony McNeal ran 44 yards for the Tigers' second TD.

Russ Saunders, Savannah Country Day quarterback and son of SCD's Coach Bill Saunders, passed for more than 200 yards and scored a touchdown to lead the Hornets to their 35-22 victory over Reidsville.

Bobby Ennis and Greg Amick both scored twice for SCD. Reidsville drove 77 yards to score on quarterback Dan Glisson's 24-yard pass to Lonnie Morgan, then added a two-point conversion.

In other games Friday, Clarke Central beat Northeast-Macon 46-20, Northside-Warner Robins beat Jordan 27-7, Dalton downed Campbell-Smyrna 21-20, Cedartown bested Lithia Springs 27-7, Lakeside edged Henderson 14-13, Southwest DeKalb beat Gordon 37-3;

Gainesville blanked Habersham Central 28-0, Hogansville beat Harris County 21-6, Mary Persons upset Perry 23-19, R.E. Lee beat Woodward Academy 10-3, Commerce beat Hart Co. 24-7, Marietta beat Wheeler 21-0 and Americus beat Douglas County 14-0.

Coay In JOI Lead, Oliver Hangs Close

By Times Staff Writer

Ray Coay fired a two-under-par 70 to take the first round lead in the 38th annual Jack Oliver Invitational golf tournament here Friday.

Coay, from Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., had a 35 on the front side and matched that score on the back nine of Valdosta Country Club's 6,739-yard layout.

Just behind Coay is Jack Oliver, a seven-time runner-up in the tournament named for his grandfather. Oliver shot a 34 on the first nine holes and a 37 on the back side for a 71 score.

Oliver has never won the tournament, which is one of the most prestigious in the state.

Jeff Austin and Freddie Steedley both had rounds of 72 to remain two shots off the pace in the 72-hole tournament, which annually winds up on Labor Day.

Defending champion Ansel Clark hung close with a 74, the same score as Tom Allen III. Steve Weeks, Tim McFall and Al Armstrong all had rounds of 75.

In the 76 bracket were Terry Hiers, Jack Rountree of Lake City, Fla., Jim Dowling Jr., Pete Cox of Albany and Jim Arnold III of Green Cove Springs, Fla.

Frank Eldridge, a seven-time winner of the tournament had a 77 as did Ty Edwards, Bruce Dixon of Sparks, Gregg Martin of Atlanta and Bryan Almand.

Valdosta State College golf coach Billy Grant followed with a 78 to tie Don Schutt, Robert Steele of Atlanta, Leo Wells and Joe Griffin.

Archie Griffin, who won the tournament in 1976, had his problems with a first round 79 to finish along side of Jerry McCranie.

The top 40 scores after today's round are to be sent into a championship flight to compete for tournament honors.

The championship flight is to tee off at 2 p.m. each day.

The top scores follow:

FIRST ROUND

Ray Coay	70		
Jack Oliver	71	Robert Steele	78
Jeff Austin	72	Leo Wells	78
Freddie Steedley	72	Joe Griffin	78
Ansel Clark	74	Archie Griffin	79
Tom Allen III	74	Jerry McCranie	79
Steve Weeks	75	Steve Rea	80
Tim McFall	75	Rock Fraleigh	80
Al Armstrong	75	Fred Leopold	80
Terry Hiers	76	Charles Layton	80
Jack Rountree	76	David Waldron	81
Jim Dowling Jr	76	Rusty Clark	81
Pete Cox	76	Rusty Trancygier	81
Jim Arnold III	76	Billy Sullivan	81
Frank Eldridge	77	Larry Colson	81
Ty Edwards	77	Gene Killgo	81
Bruce Dixon	77	Bill Eager III	83
Gregg Martin	77		
Bryan Almand	77	J. A. Moritz	83
Billy Grant	78	Dick Coley	83
Don Schutt	78	Buster Parrish	83

Crimson Tide Has A Revenge Motive

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne says he doesn't really know what to do to offset Alabama's quest for revenge tonight, but he doesn't really think it's that important.

When ABC-TV kicks off its 1978 college football coverage (9 p.m., EDT), the top-rated Crimson Tide of Alabama will be out to prove that it should have been No. 1 in the final ratings a year ago, too, rather than a controversial runner-up to Notre Dame.

And Bama's opening-game opponent happens to be none other than 10th-ranked Nebraska. The Cornhuskers won last year's meeting 31-24, the only blemish on Alabama's record.

That defeat only cost Alabama the national championship, and even though Coach Bear Bryant has been trying to keep things cool this week, the bulletin boards in the Tide's dressing quarters don't let the players forget the outcome of last year's game for a second.

"I don't really know what I can do to counteract that," Osborne said Friday as the Cornhuskers went through a light workout at 76,000-seat Legion Field. "We focus on one year at a time and one game at a time.

"The revenge motive doesn't always necessarily work to your advantage. And when the whistle blows and you kick the ball off, you don't really concentrate on that."

In 10-7 Thriller

Penn State Nips Feisty Owls

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Penn State coach Joe Paterno has learned that bringing a football team to this town is likely to be full of surprises.

State was rated a cinch to crush Coach Wayne Hardin and his Temple Owls in 1975 and 1976. But each time the Lions escaped with a one point triumph. And when State came back a third time Friday night, it took a 23-yard field goal with 10 seconds left to gain a 10-7 triumph.

"That was the best coaching job anybody has ever done against us," said Paterno. "Temple played a great football game."

As for Hardin, the Temple coach said, "I'm very proud of our kids, offensively, defensively and the kicking game. I thought our kids gave one helluva effort."

Hardin added, "I told Joe after the game that his kids are too good. I'm afraid we're just a little short (on talent)."

Hardin's Owls were a four touchdown underdog, with Penn State ranked third nationally in the pre-season poll.

But that apparently had no effect on Temple, whose players performed like equals before a crowd of 43,103 at Veterans Stadium.

It was 0-0 for a half, with a missed Temple field goal the only scoring threat. Penn State never got out of its own territory.

Temple's biggest offensive threat was a 170 pound junior punter, Casey Murphy, who averaged 48.2 yards on 11 kicks, burying Penn State inside their 20 most of the night.

Murphy was Hardin's strategy. Kick, kick, kick and hope the Lions would make a mistake that would allow Temple to score.

It worked until the late minutes of the third period. Murphy got off one of his few short punts of the night, a 36 yarder that gave Penn State the ball at its 43. Five plays later the Lions scored on sophomore Booker Moore's 26 yard slash off tackle. Matt Bahr kicked the point and it was 7-0 with 56 seconds left in the period.

The Owls came back to tie 7-7 in the final period on a 21-yard pass from quarterback Brian Broomell to running back Zach Dixon. They moved 52 yards on seven plays against State's heralded defense.

Then there was 10:48 left, and Temple reached the Penn State 30 when Mark McCants intercepted a pass and returned 13 yards.

Broomell was sacked for 14 yards with 5:44 to play, then Anthony Anderson fumbled and State's Lance Mehl recovered at the Penn State 42 with 4:49 to go.

Quarterback Chuck Fusina led a drive that picked up four first downs, the last at the Temple 11. Three running plays netted five yards. It was fourth and five and 12 seconds on the clock.

Paterno rushed in Bahr, the pro soccer star with one year of college football eligibility remaining, and the kicker calmly put a 23-yarder right between the uprights.

Sylvester Monroe rushed for 70 yards and two touchdowns on 14 carries Friday night to lead Dayton to a 35-0 victory over Liberty Baptist of Virginia. Fullback Brian Dorenkott added two other six-pointers as the Flyers recovered five Liberty Baptist fumbles and intercepted three passes.

Top-ranked Alabama meets No. 10 Nebraska to highlight today's games. The Crimson Tide will be out to avenge last year's opening-game loss to the cornhuskers, the only blemish on Alabama's 11-1 record last season. The Tide finished second in the final Associated Press balloting behind Notre Dame.

In another game, Mississippi State is out to snap a forfeit-aided 27-game losing streak when they take on West Texas State.