

No Looking Ahead, 'Cats Rip Tift, 35-7

By MIKE CHASON
TIFTON—Some folks still play them "one at a time."

The Valdosta Daily Times SPORTS

YARDSTOCK	
First Downs	Valdosta 18, Tift 12
Yards Gained	Valdosta 307, Tift 130
Yards Passing	Valdosta 10, Tift 0
Yards Rushing	Valdosta 297, Tift 130
Passing TD's	Valdosta 0, Tift 0
Rushing TD's	Valdosta 2, Tift 0
Points	Valdosta 35, Tift 7
Penalties	Valdosta 7, Tift 12

Only 1 Defense Survived Test

TIFTON—Before the game, they were called the best defenses in Region I-AAAA. Afterwards, only one had survived the test.

Heading into Friday night's high school football game here, Valdosta's Wildcats and Tift County's Blue Devils had given up only 14 points apiece in their first five games.

That all changed when Valdosta slapped a 35-7 score in the books for sixth straight win this season.

"We were a good team," Valdosta linebacker Lynn Roberts, who was credited with being in on 14 tackles, said. "Our quarterback just didn't have time to get his passes off."

"We can't get overconfident. We'll probably have to play them again. We've just got to get ready for next week now. If we can keep our heads straight, we'll have a pretty good team."

Senior cornerback and overall team captain Troy Thomas had nine stops, and sophomore safety Nathaniel Caesar had five.

Cornerback Rodney Gordon stopped two Tift drives with interceptions.

"They did about what we thought they would," Gordon said. "We just tried to hold on tight and play our game."

Properly, that meant putting points on the scoreboard and John Bond did that twice, once from his tight end position and again in the back-up quarterback's role.

"Bond is some kind of an athlete," VHS Coach Nick Hyder said. "Bond, a junior, handed up a 48-yard touchdown pass from John Lastinger after bringing the play in from the sidelines and then scrambled 26 yards for a touchdown in the final two minutes."

"I was going to the end zone," Bond said. "All I could see were white lines and gold pants."

Hyder revealed after the game that linebacker John Branan had played with two broken bones in his hand.

Tift County Stadium home with only thoughts of what might have been on the cool, windy October night.

VHS Coach Nick Hyder had vowed before the Region I-AAAA Friday night contest that his team had showed all thoughts of Lowndes back into the inner recesses of its mind for perhaps the first time all season.

"For this game with the fourth ball game," Hyder said, "there was to be no looking ahead to Oct. 13."

"No sir," Hyder, in his best

post-game mood of the season, said, "We thought only about Tift County, and that football game, for at least 24 hours."

"But you think this is something... an extra week is going to be like the D-Day explosion. Every person who can get into that stadium will get in. A back robber could choose a better time to get everybody in Valdosta will be at that football game."

Riding an emotional high which probably lasted well into the night, Hyder rested at the notepin his team had a playoff spot wrapped up.

"No, we've all got to win our last two (subregion) games," the 21-year veteran of Friday night fever said. "There's still the possibility of a three-way tie."

"If Tift wins the rest of its games and we lose to Dougherty, we've easily could have a three-way tie."

Valdosta is now 5-0 in north sub-region play while Tift fell to 2-1. Dougherty (Albany) is also 3-0 after 2-6 victory over Albany Friday night.

Dougherty meets Tift here in two weeks and then takes on Valdosta in Albany on Nov. 4, the last night of the regular season. If the three teams do wind up in a tie, their overall records would be used to determine which two advance to the playoffs.

Tift Coach Gene Brodie believes Valdosta a shot at the postseason spot.

"Even if Dougherty beats them, they would probably still get in," Brodie said. "But that's not an opinion on my part. That's a fact. Dougherty (4-2 overall) has already lost two games."

The loss set the Blue Devils (4-1 overall) and left Valdosta with only untested players in the 12-school league, often called the toughest football region in the state.

Brodie would like another chance to put the first den in Valdosta's record.

"Naturally, we'd like to play them again in the

playoffs," he said. "They're the best team we've played. It was a good ballgame. They were very well-coached."

Hyder echoed those sentiments.

"Our coaches just did a great job of preparation," Hyder said, naming off Jack Rudolph, Charles Tarpley, Fredrick Lewis, Mitchell Brooks, Jerry Baker and Bob Bolton but leaving out himself.

"They had them fired up and ready to play. Tift is a good football team. Thirty-five to seven is not the difference in these two football teams. They're tougher than that."

Some fans might have questioned that opinion when Valdosta blasted downfield like a herd of bull elephants on the loose on its first two possessions.

On the Wildcats' third offensive play of the game, speedy halfback Ernest King broke a 60-yard touchdown run only to have it called back because of a motion penalty.

But King still got his shot at glory six plays later when he bulled over from the 1-yard line with 8:16 to play in the opening period.

Senior quarterback John Lastinger pumped blood to the drive with three consecutive first down passes to Robert Smith and Fredrick Blair. Blair caught a 33-yard beauty. Lastinger summed up perfectly down the visitors' sideline.

"What more can you say about Lastinger?" Hyder questioned.

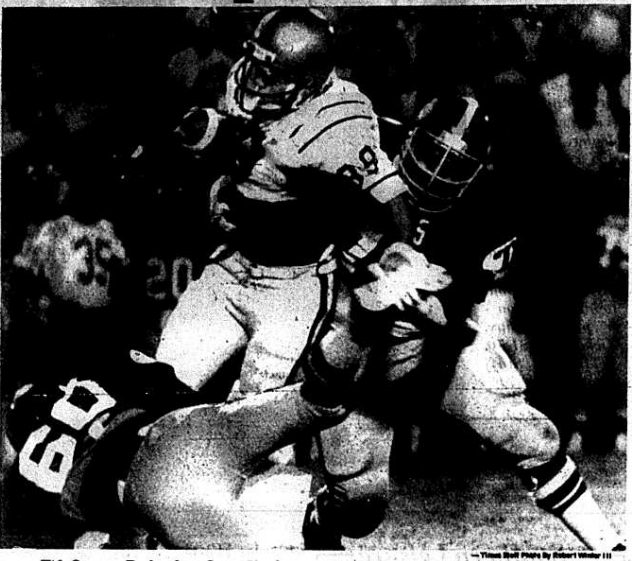
"He's tough," Brodie said. "He's the senior signal-caller who was eight out of 21 on the night for 154 yards."

A four-play pass to Smith, who had five catches for 66 yards, and a 21-yard bullet to John Bond set up Valdosta's second score. This time Lastinger jumped up and over the rockers of the defensive line from one yard out with 2:10 left in the period.

David Reaves kicked the second of five extra points.

Tift quarterback Ken Hobby, who was rumored to be injured, didn't look good. Tift in a position for a 44-yard field goal try by Carlos Tenorio in the second quarter but it missed wide to the left.

Tenorio also tried a 33-yarder with three minutes remaining in the half but it



Tift County Defenders Gang Up On Valdosta Fullback Bobby Johnson

Morris outran Nathaniel Caesar to the flag on a 30-yard sprint for six with 10:24 left in the third period.

"Jack Rudolph, defensive coordinator) did have to make some adjustments here," Hyder said.

Tift never moved beyond the Valdosta 45-yard line again. The adjustments were made.

Lastinger hit the first lick toward driving the final stake into the Blue Devils' hearts with a 48-yard touchdown loss to Bond with 5:53 to play in the third quarter.

"It was still a ballgame when I was 14:7," Brodie said. "When they started that long pass, that broke it." Brodie had said before the

game he hoped his team didn't make any mistakes. He said Valdosta had a tendency to take advantage of mistakes.

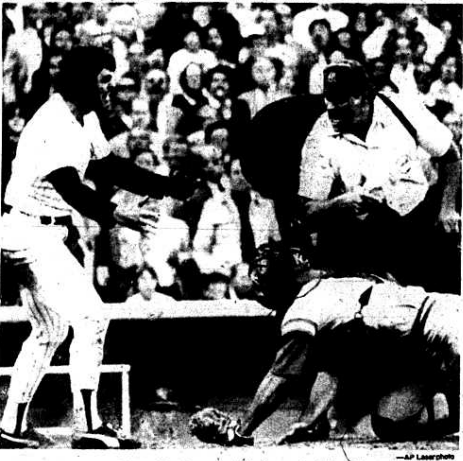
After Hobby fumbled on his own 18-yard line in the fourth quarter and VHS defensive end James Harris recovered it in the end zone for a touchdown, Brodie's words seemed prophetic indeed.

Gordon intercepted his second Hobby pass on Tift's next series to trigger a 28-yard touchdown run by Bond, who took over for Lastinger at quarterback.

But then, the rush was on for the extra, and the Valdosta players were waving one finger in the air.

Source: Staff Writer

Valdosta	Tift
Points	35
Yards	307
Passing	10
Rushing	297
TD's	2
Penalties	7



Yankees' Lou Piniella Argues His Case At The Plate In Yain

Beat Dodgers, 9-4

Phillies Play 'Staying Alive' In Game 3

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Shortstop Larry Bowa and outfielder Greg Luzinski tried to put the Philadelphia Phillies' position in the best-of-five National League playoffs in proper perspective.

"I feel better than I did yesterday (Thursday)," said Bowa after the Phillies beat the Los Angeles 9-4 Friday night. The Yankees Philadelphia alive after the Dodgers won the first two games.

"Our backs are still against the wall," said Bowa, one of the key figures in the Phillies' third consecutive Eastern Division championship. "But the advantage still is to the Los Angeles Dodgers."

"They still have two tomorrow, but we have to win another must game. If we win the fourth game, then the tide changes."

And Luzinski, who had a pair of singles and a home run in the Phillies' first triumph of the series, took some of the same outlook.

"I don't think we can afford the luxury of thinking of Sunday (a possible fifth game)," said Luzinski. "We have to win tomorrow (Saturday) first. The Dodgers are tough. They're not going to lay down and die."

As for Los Angeles, the Dodgers were as graceful but confident. Los Angeles' catcher Davey Lopes set the tone.

"It just wasn't our day, that's all," Lopes

Royals Tumble, 6-5

NEW YORK (AP)—Gruff Thurman Munson was grinning. George Brett was frowning. This was one time you certainly could tell the winning and losing players without a scoreboard.

Munson scored a titanic two-run homer off loser Doug Bird in the eighth inning to rally the New York Yankees to a 6-5 decision over the Kansas City Royals, despite Brett's record-breaking comeback in the seventh.

The victory gave the Yankees a 2-1 lead in the best-of-5 American League Championship series, moving New York to within one game of its third straight World Series. The Yankees' triumph also moved the bridesmaid Royals one step away from their third straight post-season elimination by the World Champion Yankees.

With the amazing Ron Guiley, 25-3, set pitch tonight, Yankee Manager Bob Lemon had every reason to smile... and he didn't sing a song.

"I've got a beat pitcher in baseball going," said Lemon. "Who'd ask for anything more? Hey, that would make a hell of a song."

Dennis Leonard, 21-17, the first game loser, takes the blame for his hands tonight.

"I'm not afraid of Guiley's double," said Leonard. "We're not dead until they beat us for the third time. We'll give it a battle."

Friday's game was a full-scale war, with Brett firing most of the shots for Kansas City and Munson and Reggie Jackson counter-attacking for the Yankees.

Wunson's Homer Saves Yanks

Brett became the first player to hit three straight homers in league championship series competition, connecting off Catfish Hunter in the first, third and fifth innings.

"In the boxscore, this game is going to show up the most," said Brett. "It's something I'll never forget. I'd just realized we'd have won."

Brett knows something about home runs, having slammed three straight in the final game of the 1977 World Series. He felt deeply for Brett.

"The man can't do more than he did," said Jackson. "Losing a ballgame like that really wears on you."

As for Kansas City relief specialist Al Hrabosky put it: "I understand how he must feel. He had one of the best games in baseball history, but it just went for nothing."

Jackson matched Brett's first homer with a solo shot off starter Paul Splittorff in the second. Jackson knocked in Munson, who had doubled, with an RBI single in the fourth. Jackson bestated on Lou Piniella's ensuing single and Piniella was unable to stretch his hit into a double, was trapped off first. Only shortstop Fred Pate's throw sailed into the stands, allowing Jackson to score for a 3-2 lead.

Brett's third homer tied the game, but Jackson countered with a sacrifice fly in the sixth for his 30th career RBI in the playoffs, a championship series record.

Darrell Porter's run-scoring single and Al Cowens' RBI grounder in the eighth gave Kansas

City a 5-4 lead until Munson, homerless in his previous 54 games stung Bird for a 450-foot blast over the left-field fence. Relief ace Rich Erickson, who relieved Hunter at the start of the seventh, got the win, retiring the Royals in order in the ninth.

"I never hit one that felt as good," said Munson.

"That was the longest ball I ever saw a right-handed batter hit in Yankee Stadium," said Jackson. "When Munson trotted home Jackson was there to greet him. Munson slapped Jackson's outstretched hands with both palms and Reggie then gave him an exaggerated waltz on the rump."

Never the best of friends, these two Yankee leaders had made contact.

"I admire a good performance and the homer 'Thurman' hit was a great performance," said Jackson. "We have a good relationship. There's respect on both sides. You can't play with a man like that and not like him. I like him and I respect him."

"We're a more close-knit group this year," said Munson, alluding to the squabbles of 1977 that matched Jackson vs. Munson, Jackson vs. management and Munson vs. management.

"Those things just are not prevalent anymore. We just sat back and played baseball the last half of the year. Now baseball's fun again. If we weren't so tired, it would be a lot of fun."

VHS-LHS Tickets To Be Available

A limited number of tickets to the Valdosta-Lowndes high school football game Friday are to be available here Monday.

Valdosta City School System Finance Director Jack Kent said 208 reserved seats would be on sale at 7 p.m. Monday at Valdosta High School for Valdosta Touchdown Club members who reserve their season ticket-holders.

The reserved seats are \$3.

Kent said an unspecified number of general admission tickets could be available for sale to the public immediately after the reserved seats have been sold Monday night.

These 30 general admission tickets are seats which may not be sold. Tickets are Junior High School seniors. Kent said these seats are located in the east end zone.

Reserved seats tickets for Valdosta High School students and faculty are to be on sale at VHS Principal Lloyd Mims' office Monday morning. A limit of two per person is to be imposed.

Kent said 3,414 tickets had been sent to Lowndes High School. He said 1,114 of the tickets are reserved seats and another 700 are student tickets and the other 1,600 are general admission seats.

Lowndes Coach Joe Wilson said VHS' Valdosta VHS Club members, LHS season ticket-holders and Lowndes High students would have first priority to the tickets.