



Keith Boothe (19) and Al Hilyer hit Valdosta's Robert Smith from the top and bottom to bring him down after he gained 12 yards on a pass play during Friday night's battle at Tift Stadium between the

Blue Devils and Wildcats. Smith hauled in five passes for the night, good for 65 yards, in the Wildcats' 35-7 triumph over Tift. (Gazette Photo by Herb Pilcher)

Hurricanes Beat Cook, Now 4-1-1

ADEL -- Fitzgerald High's Steve Prince set up two Hurricane scores while hauling in five passes for 140 yards as the Hurricanes marched to a 1-13 region 1-AAA victory over the Cook County High Hornets here Friday night.

The Purple Hurricanes struck paydirt first, capitalizing on a Wade Tucker fumble recovery at the Hornets' 24-yard line. It took Fitzgerald even plays to cover the 24 yards, with James Graham going the final 10 at the 32 mark in the first period. An attempted pass for the two-point conversion was intercepted and Fitzgerald led 6-0.

Fitzgerald got on the scoreboard again with 4:04 remaining in the first quarter on Walter Moss' three-yard core. Steve Prince's 51-yard pass reception from Hurricane quarterback Larry Foster set up the 62-yard, our-play drive. Tony Dopson ran the w-point conversion and the Hurricanes had a 14-0 lead.

The Hornets got on the scoreboard in the second period with 10:42 remaining when Gerald Covington punted Ron Lasseter in the end zone for his score. The touchdown capped a 8-yard, 13-play drive. Scott Storey's kick was good and Cook narrowed the margin to 14-7.

Fitzgerald hit paydirt again the second period with 8:50 remaining on a our-yard plunge by Moss, ending a 12-play, 64-yard drive. The big play of the drive came on a 52-yard pass to Foster to Prince. Clay Alexander's kick was good and the Hurricanes led 21-7 at the intermission, 21-7.

After a 29-yard Hurricane punt to their own 35-yard line, Cook's Covington connected with Lasseter for a 5-yard score. The kick was blocked and Fitzgerald went on to win its fourth game of the season 21-13.

The Hurricanes are now 4-1-1 on the season and Cook's record drops to 3-3. Fitzgerald hosts Berrien County next Friday night in a region contest. Tule Cook travels to Appling County.



Mark Hand, fullback for the Tift Blue Devils, scampers through an opening in the line for a 16-yard gain during the first quarter of Friday night's game between the Devils and Valdosta's Wildcats. Throwing a block for Hand in the

background is tackle Tim Case, while Antonio Terry (32) is ready to block as Hand heads downfield. Hand ended up with 81 yards on 12 carries for the night. (Gazette Photo by Herb Pilcher)

Valdosta's Hyder Says Score No Indication

'Tift Stronger Than That'

The final score of a game isn't always the best way to judge a team, and according to Valdosta coach Nick Hyder, that holds true in his 35-7 victory over Tift County Friday night. "We aren't that much better than Tift," stated Hyder. "The score tonight is no indication at all as to how good Tift is. They are a much stronger team than that."

"I think our two teams are rated closely enough together that either team could win by one TD," Hyder said of Tift County.

"The two touchdowns we scored early in the game forced them (Tift) to

change their strategy and that caused their mistakes.

"The touchdown that Tift scored was typical of how explosive they can be. That is what bothered us the most -- their ability to score at any time."

"We have been telling our boys all week that if we let up they would be able to score and that is what happened. "We knew before the game that the

winner of this game would be in the driver's seat of the region. That's why the game was so important.

"I think our coaching staff did an excellent job. They have been working hard all week and it really showed."

"Our chances of meeting up with Tift again in the playoffs are pretty good, and I think they will be a different ball club. We will have to be ready for them then."

'The Long Bomb Broke Our Backs'

Brodie Laments After Loss to Valdosta

By JIM RATHGEBER
Gazette Sports Editor

"That long bomb broke our backs...I got us," Tift coach Gene Brodie lamented Friday night after his fourth-rated Blue Devils suffered a 35-7 loss at the hands of the No. 1-ranked Valdosta Wildcats before some 12,000 fans at Tift Stadium.

The defeat was the first in six outings for the Blue Devils, while Valdosta is now 6-0.

Brodie was referring to a 48-yard pass play which sent the Wildcats into a 21-7 lead late in the third quarter.

The Devils had realized with a quick score on their first series of plays in the second half, closing the gap 10-14-7, but the bomb with 2:53 to go in the period "just did us in," Brodie said.

"That was the turning point right there. That was the ball game."

Not taking anything away from the Wildcats, Brodie added "that's the best team we've played. It's a very good, well-coached team. We got beat by a better team...tonight."

He stuck in that "tonight" because there is a possibility that the Devils

and the 'Cats could meet again in the post-season playoffs.

"It sure would be nice to play 'em again," he added.

The Wildcats got cranked up early, putting their first seven points on the scoreboard on their first series of plays after forcing the Devils into a punting situation.

Starting from their own 34-yard line, the 'Cats reached paydirt in 10 plays, with Ernest King going in from the one with 6:16 to go in the quarter. David Reaves split the uprights with his point-after kick.

Included in the drive were two pass completions -- for 12 yards each -- from John Lastinger to Robert Smith and a 32-yarder to Frederick Blair which put the ball on the nine.

The 'Cats forced the Devils into another punting situation after the kickoff, this time getting the ball at the Tift 42-yard line.

From there, after two running plays, Lastinger connected with Smith for 11 yards on a fourth-and-one situation, then two plays later hit John Bond for another 21 to move the ball to the Tift one.

Lastinger scored this time -- with 2:10 left in the first period -- on a dive over the middle and Reaves booted the PAT to leave the Wildcats ahead by a 14-0 margin.

The second stanza was a defensive struggle, being highlighted by three field goal attempts -- two by Tift's Carlos Tenorio and one by Valdosta's Reaves.

Tenorio's first, from 44 yards out, was wide to the left, and his second, a 53-yarder, fell short. Reaves' boot was a 30-yarder and went far to the left.

The Blue Devils looked like a completely different team on their first series of plays in the second half, pulling with in seven points of the 'Cats on just four plays.

Starting from their own 28-yard line, Morris scampered for 10 yards and Mark Hand followed with a 16-yard gallop before Morris gained another seven and finally went the final 39 on a beautiful, run off left tackle. Rusty Smith's PAT kick with 10:24 showing on the clock split the goal posts.

The quick touchdown really brought the Tift fans to life, but it was



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the last they would have to cheer about in the game.

The bomb which Brodie said broke the Devils' backs was another of Lastinger's beautiful passes. He laid it right into the arms of Bond, who out-ran Antonio to the end zone. Reaves' extra-point kick was again perfect.

The scoring pass came on a third-and-nine situation following five runs which netted the 'Cats 13 yards.

A fumble recovery in the end zone by defensive end James Harris gave Valdosta its fourth score with 3:42 to go in the encounter.

The ball got loose from the Devils on a busted play and Harris was the first of three to pounce on it.

An interception by defensive back Rodney Gordon at the Tift 34-yard line led to the Wildcats' final TD.

Following two running plays and an incomplete pass which netted seven yards, Bond found an opening in the Tift line and went the final 27 yards to paydirt.

Morris led all runners with 83 yards on 16 carries, while Hand finished with 81 yards on 12 carries.

Leading the way for Valdosta was Irvin Rowe, who had 40 yards on seven carries.

Lastinger wound up completing eight of 21 passes for 153 yards, while Tift's Hobby hit on three of 11 for 50 yards.

Yardstick

Tift Co.	Valdosta
12	First Downs 13
162	Yds. Rushing 156
50	Yds. Passing 179
212	Total Yds. 335
3-11	Passes 9-23
0	Int. By 2
1	Fumbles Lost 0
5 (35.8)	Punts 5 (29.0)
6-40	Penalties 7-75

Score by Quarters:	0	6	7	0	7
Tift Co.					
Valdosta	14	0	7	14	35

Scoring Plays:
Val: King, 1 run (Reaves kick)
Val: Lastinger, 1 run, (Reaves kick)
Tift: Morris, 39 run (Smith kick)
Val: Bond, 48 pass from Lastinger (Reaves kick)
Val: Harris, fumble recovery in end zone (Reaves kick)
Val: Bond, 27 run (Reaves kick)

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS
RUSHING -- Tift Co., Morris (16-83), Hand (12-81), Valdosta, Rowe (7-40), Bond (3-33), King (11-29), Lastinger (9-28).

PASSING -- Tift Co., Hobby (3-11-2-50), Valdosta, Lastinger (8-21-4-153).

RECEIVING -- Tift Co., Tillman (2-44), Valdosta, Bond (2-40), Smith (5-45).