

Embarrass Knights, 23-6

Gryphs Ice Play-Off Berth

By CLIFTON BARNES

The Gryphon football squad iced a berth in the state playoffs for the first time in four years Friday night by

trouncing the Northern Nash Knights 23-6.

The Gryphs jumped out on top on their first possession of the game. Mike Lewis returned a punt 15 yards to the 45.

Rodney Birth had runs of 8, 9, 5, 4 and 3 yards on the 10 play drive. Sylvester Cooper went for runs of 3, 6, and 2 yards before going over from the one yard line with 3:54 left in the

first quarter. Rocky Speight added the point after to give Rocky Mount all the points they needed at 7-0.

Another score came following a Steve Phillips interception of a Rossie Arrington pass at the Northern 47. The Gryphs ate up six minutes on 13 plays but the drive stalled at the six after an illegal procedure call.

Speight came on to up the lead to 10-0 with 8:19 before the half on a 23 yard field goal.

Again Northern could not move on the stiff defense and punted to the Rocky Mount 34. Quarterback Jess Eberdt mixed plays well on the 66 yard drive. On third and four at the 40, Birth went for seven yards off tackle for the first down. Eberdt hit Lewis on a post pattern for 25 yards down to the Northern 29. Birth, who was playing injured, sprinted around end for 15 yards to the 14.

Cooper scored his second touchdown from there as he busted up the middle for six points with 3:56 left in the half. The extra point failed and the score remained 16-0 at the half.

The Rocky Mount defense held Northern to just four yards on 12 plays in the first half while the Gryphon offense piled up 178 yards, 120 of which came on the ground.

The Gryphons picked up where they left off following the second half kickoff as Eberdt led the troops 64 yards on six plays. Whitley rambled the final 40 yards on a trap play

with 9:44 left on the third period. After Speight's extra point the lead upped to 23-0.

David Wells came on at quarterback for the Knights and moved them to their only score when Kelvin Sessoms went over on a fourth and one play at the 1 1/2 yard line. The Knights got the ball via a fumble between Eberdt and Birth.

"We let down a bit but it's tough to keep the kids going all the time." Head Coach Walt Wiggins said, "But I felt we played well in the second half except for a fumble which gave them the cheap touchdown."

Rocky Mount ended with 300 yards on offense while Northern had a mere 93. Birth got 92 yards on 14 carries. Whitley picked up 68 yards on the ground and 22 yards through the air. Cooper scored twice and racked up 49 yards.

"I didn't expect it to be this easy," said Coach Wiggins. "The kids came out ready to play and executed real well in the first half. Our offensive line really took it to them on the first half, they really manhandled their defensive line."

The Gryphon's go after the Division I championship Friday night at home against 3-1 Wilson. Should the Gryphons win, Goldsboro will be the play off foes at Municipal Stadium. But if Wilson wins, Rocky Mount would face Jacksonville, away. The team, however, is pointing their efforts to winning the Conference.



THORNE SCORES: Victor Thorne goes in for six points around end. (Photo by Clonts.)

Northern Thrashes Jayvee Hopes

Winning only their second game of this season, Northern Nash Jayvees took home a convincing 33-24 victory over the Rocky Mount Senior High Jayvees.

Northern Nash wasted little time getting on the scoreboard as Joseph Jeffries took the opening kickoff and dashed 80 yards for a Knight score. Taking advantage of their momentum, Northern crossed the goal line two more times in the first quarter. Rocky Mount was in trouble early, behind 21-0.

But Rocky Mount found just

the opportunity they were looking for as a Rocky Mount punt was downed at the 5 yard line. Northern was held strong and forced to punt. Rocky Mount sent in a heavy rush and it paid off as the punt was blocked out of the end zone for a safety.

At this point in the game, Rocky Mount took over the momentum and the scoring. The Baby Gryphs placed another safety on the board along with three touchdowns including a tackle breaking touchdown by Howard Joyner.

But Northern was not finished as they marched the length

of the football field for the winning margin and added another score just to make sure. Making the final score, Northern Nash 33-24 over Rocky Mount.

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