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 Thomasville (Ga.) Times-Enterprise

Bulldogs 'sprint' past Jackets, 42-21

By MARK LASHINGER
 Times-Enterprise Sports Editor

The Thomas County Central Yellow Jackets were victims of a hit-and-run Friday night, but by no means was it an accident.

The No. 10 Thomasville Bulldogs, who are noted for their passing attack, rolled up 342 rushing yards in a 42-21 Region I-AAA playoff victory at Veterans Memorial Stadium. The decisive win enabled Thomasville to win the I-AAA championship and a state playoff berth.

"It's great to be region champs," Thomasville coach George Bobo said. "We've come a long way since the season started. Regardless of what happens from this point, the coaching staff is very proud of this team, and what it has accomplished."

The Bulldogs used a play from the back pages of their playbook to shred Central's defense for 14 runs of 10 yards or more.

"The sprint draw is a play we had run only two times in games," Bobo said. "We knew going in it would be a good play for us. They rushed the passer on every play, and that opened up a lot of seams."

Vic Williams and Mathis Curry each rushed for more than 100 yards, the bulk of which came on sprint draws.

"I knew all along they were going to run the ball," Central coach Ed Pilcher said. "Our defense knew it, too, but we just couldn't stop it."

"They just whipped us up front. Their offensive line (Richard Ramsey, Stacy Murry, Mark Sanders, Aaron Duke, Chad Thompson and Reggie Gardland) did an excellent job."

Thomasville, which amassed 486 total yards, twice held 21-point leads only to have the Jackets close the gap. Central scored a pair of third-quarter touchdowns that trimmed the Bulldogs' lead to 28-21 and caused fans on both sides to flinch in their seats.

"I have a lot of respect for Central and their coach," Bobo said. "They did not get down when they fell behind. They just kept coming back. This was not a breeze of a game for us like the score might indicate."

Trailing 28-7, the Jackets marched 80 yards in eight plays for their second TD. Tirrell Andrews caught three Julius



Staff Photo — Greg Bryant

Thomasville's Mathis Curry (26) cuts behind blocks of Stacy Murry (88) and Mark Sanders (76) en route to big gain in first quarter.

Bobo to Brian Barnes, gave the Bulldogs a 42-21 edge with 7:30 remaining.

"I thought in the second half we might get back into the game, but we failed to score when we had to," Pilcher, whose team netted 387 yards, said. "Julius did a good job of throwing the ball, and we moved the ball well at times."

Smith completed 16 of 29 passes for 205 yards and two touchdowns.

"My congratulations go out to our boys," Pilcher said. "They never gave up, even when they were down 21-0. They still kept fighting. They have fought all year long."

Thomasville jumped out to a 21-0 lead by scoring on its first three possessions.

The Bulldogs, who racked up 161 yards in the first quarter alone, needed only four plays and 52 seconds to log their initial touchdowns. The scoring play, a

State Playoffs	
Nov. 22	Camden Co. Wildcats (9-2) versus Thomasville Bulldogs (9-2) at Veterans Memorial
	Worth Co. Rams (10-1) versus Dublin Irish (9-2) in Dublin

one-yard sneak by Mike Bobo, was set up by a 39-yard run by Williams.

Thomasville used a bit of trickery to post its second score with 4:04 left in the opening quarter. On fourth down and eight from the Central 40, Wilson lobbed a 10-yard pass from punt formation to Terry Frederick, who raced down the left sideline for an easy TD.

"The fake punt was a play we put in on Wednesday," Coach Bobo said. "The coaches thought I was crazy for calling it, but Central had 10-men on the line of scrimmage."

That play was there for the taking.

Thomasville's other first-half score came after a 64-yard jaunt straight up the middle by Williams.

Central scored its first TD on a five-yard pass from Smith to tight end Timmy Williams with 17 seconds left before intermission. The 75-yard surge included a 17-yard throwback pass from Turrel Horne to Smith at the Thomasville 5.

Although the Jackets, who finished with a 7-4 mark, owned the momentum at the start of the second half, the Bulldogs forced them to punt after three plays to retake control.

"Our kids bowed their necks," Coach Bobo said. "They didn't quit. They knew what they had to do."

The 9-2 Bulldogs are slated to host Region 2-AAA runner-up Camden County in the opening round of the state playoffs. Camden drilled Ware County 35-0 in a region playoff Friday.

"This win is history," Coach Bobo said. "We have a chance to continue. We're one of only 16 teams in AAA left. That's a special thing."

'Canes hand 'Noles another painful loss

TALLAHASSEE (AP) — After 59 minutes and 35 seconds of sweat, struggle and fierce fighting, the battle between No. 2 Miami and No. 1 Florida State came down to this — one foot.

Gerry Thomas' 34-yard field goal attempt wide right by the length of a football with 28 seconds left Saturday, giving Miami a heart-pounding 17-16 victory and a solid shot at its fourth national championship in nine years.

It was the fourth time in the last five years that Miami (9-0) probably spoiled the Seminoles' (10-1) bid for their first national title. But this may have been the most painful loss of all for Florida State.

Thomas, a walk-on sophomore who had made all three of his previous field goal tries in the game, walked onto the field with Florida State facing a third-and-nine from the Miami 17. When he kicked the ball, the outcome was in doubt for a few agonizing seconds until the official under the goalposts made the no-good signal.

That triggered a wild celebration by Miami players, who threw helmets in the air, ran onto the field, and hugged each other for several minutes. The Hurricanes were penalized for the display, but it didn't matter.

Quarterback Gino Torretta knelt down to kiss off the field, kneed down and threw the ball skyward as Florida State fans in the record crowd of 65,442 at Doak Campbell Stadium sat in

stunned silence and Miami supporters chanted "We're No. 1."

The victory which snapped Florida State's 16-game winning streak and extended Miami's to 15 sends Miami to the Orange Bowl to play the Big Eight champion and Florida State to the Cotton Bowl to meet the Southwest Conference winner.

Although No. 3 Washington is also undefeated, Miami should take over the top spot.

It was the 26th meeting between the nation's two top-ranked teams, with No. 1 now holding a 17-2 edge. It was also Miami's eighth consecutive win over No. 1 teams dating back to 1981.

Florida State took a 16-7 lead on Thomas' 20-yard field goal with 14:22 remaining. But Miami rallied to move ahead 17-10 on a 45-yard field goal by Carlos Huerta with 9:48 left and a 1-yard TD run by Larry Jones with 3:01 remaining.

Aided by a pass interference penalty on Miami's Ryan McNeil, Florida State then drove 53 yards to the Hurricanes' 17 in the closing seconds. Rather than risk a mistake on the third-and-nine, Florida State coach Bobby Bowden sent Thomas in right away to attempt his fourth field goal.

"The kick would have been good last year, before the goalposts were narrowed by almost five feet. But with the new rule, it was a few inches wide."

The final score reflected the closeness of the game, which

matched a Florida State team averaging 41 points a game against a Miami defense that had allowed only 58 points all season.

Both teams had 21 first downs, both ran 40 times, both passed 27 times and both ran 87 offensive plays. Florida State outgained Miami 385-314, but the Seminoles had one more sack than the Hurricanes.

Miami's offensive star was full-back Stephen McGuire, who rushed for 142 yards and one touchdown. Torretta, intercepted four times in a 24-10 loss here in 1989, completed 14 of 27 passes for 145 yards and was picked off twice.

Florida State quarterback Casey Weldon, who was briefly knocked out of the game early in the second half, completed 17 of 28 passes for 209 yards and was intercepted once.

Miami scored on the opening drive of the game, marching 74 yards in seven plays and taking a 7-0 lead on McGuire's 2-yard plunge. McGuire also caught a 14-yard pass and rushed twice for 31 yards to set up the score.

Florida State made it 7-3 on Thomas' 25-yard field goal with 5:16 left in the first quarter. The key plays in the drive were a pass interference call on Hurlie Brown on third-and-14 and a 81-yard pass to Amp Lee. The Seminoles had a first-and-goal at the Miami 3, but Lee was stopped for a 5-yard loss and Weldon threw two incompletions to force the field goal attempt.



FSU linebacker Kirk Carruthers (45) sacks Miami quarterback Gino Torretta in first-half action.