

Wildcats Erase Trojan Hopes

By GARY ROBINSON
Herald Sports Writer

The Valdosta Wildcats, like an aggressor nation with a nuclear weapons arsenal, used their quick-strike capabilities with frightening effectiveness Saturday night at Hugh Mills Stadium and dropped bombs on Dougherty's fleeting playoff hopes.

THE VALDOSTA		Dougherty
21	FIRST DOWNS	20
28	YARDS GAINED	80
28	YARDS PER PLAY	4.0
4:07	TIME OF POSSESSION	24:53
2	INTERCEPTED BY	1
1	FUMBLES LOST	1
4:42	PUNTS	3:42
3-10	PENALTIES	3-4

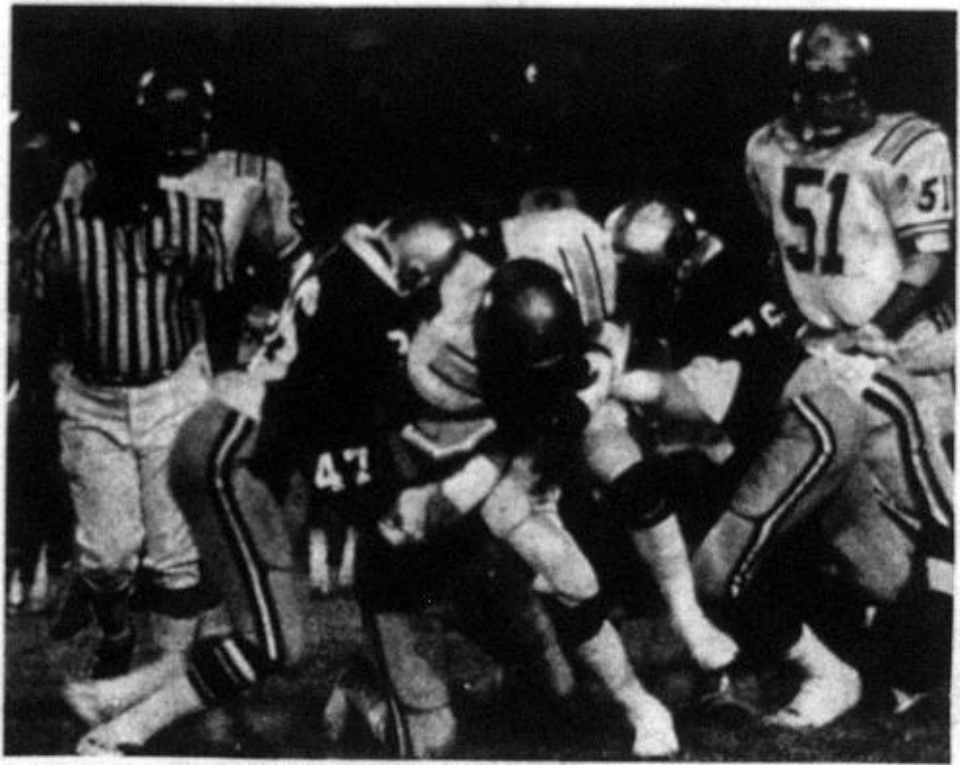
When the attack finally ended, late in the third quarter, the scoreboard showed the top-ranked, undefeated Wildcats on the long end of a 33-0 score. The Trojans, who went into the game with playoff and subregion title hopes following Crisp County's 21-17 upset of Tift, finally scored with eight seconds left on the clock to cut the final margin to 33-7.

"I thought both teams played awfully well," winning coach Nick Hyder said. "Dougherty played with a lot of intensity. They kept attacking and I think that is typical of Region 1-AAAA."

The win wrapped up the Northern Division title for the Wildcats for the second straight year and marked the first year a team had finished unbeaten in the region since 1973's Thomasville Bulldogs.

"They are a fine football team," Dougherty defensive coordinator Rex Lynch said. "They are better than we are, there's no question about that. If we had played a real good game, we might have been able to beat them. If we had gotten that one touchdown in the second quarter, it would have been closer."

The play to which Lynch referred was the game's most controversial, and came midway through the second period. Valdosta, after a scoreless first period, had marched 85 yards in 19 plays, consuming 8:06 of time bet-



DOUGHERTY'S DAVID HOMER AND HENRY HILL CONVERGE ON VALDOSTA RUNNER ERNEST KING
Wildcats' Quick-Scoring Ability Sent Trojans To 33-7 Defeat, Ending Playoff Hopes

(Herald Staff Photo, Jeff Meyer)

ween the first and second quarter. Ernest King scored the first of his three touchdowns on a six-yard run with 9:34 left in the half.

The Trojans were unable to move past their own 43 and punted, but Valdosta's Bobby Johnson fumbled on the second play from scrimmage and Glenn Walker recovered for Dougherty.

Quarterback Chris Norman moved the team to the 10, but the Trojans spent too long in the huddle on first down and were penalized back to the 15. From there, Alonzo Hall broke through a big hole and got the Wildcat 3, but fumbled when he was hit. Several players had opportunities to capture the

bouncing pigskin, but officials ruled the ball rolled past the end line, giving Valdosta a touchdown.

Dougherty mentor Luther Welsh flew out on the field to protest and was penalized 15 yards for his troubles with 4:01 left in the half. It was at that point, that Valdosta's quick-strike potential took hold.

From there on 35, the 'Cats moved 64 yards in four plays. Quarterback John Lastinger whipped a 41-yard pass to running back Irven Roe, taking the ball to the Dougherty 8 and King rolled in on a sweep with 2:48 left for a 14-0 lead.

Frustrated, the Trojans could not move and Norman unleashed one of his long, high punts, a 43-yarder that was returned

nine yards to the Dougherty 49 by Troy Thomas.

Again, it took the 'Cats just four plays to score, although they needed a pass interference call to nullify a Dougherty interception on the second play. Linebacker Wendell Covin blitzed in on second down with the 'Cats on the Trojan 34, dropping Lastinger for a 16-yard loss, but the senior quarterback, who won the region passing title with his performance, tossed a 50-yard touchdown pass to Roe on the very next play with just three seconds left on the clock. A bad snap prevented an extra point.

Thomas intercepted a Norman pass midway through the third stanza

with Valdosta holding a 20-0 lead and returned it from the Trojan 37 to the 4. The Wildcats needed only one play to score, with King crossing easily. The pass for two points failed, leaving the score 26-0.

Valdosta's final score came after a Norman punt was returned by Thomas to the Dougherty 43. King picked up eight yards and Lastinger passed to Sam Fletcher for four yards, then loaded up and found Roe again in the end zone for a sparkling 31-yard connection. Dave Reaves' kick with 2:06 in the period ended the 'Cats scoring at 33.

"Lastinger-to-Roe was an awful good combination tonight," Hyder said. It

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Valdosta	THE YARDSTICK	Dougherty
14	FIRST DOWNS	10
144	YARDS RUSHING	94
168	YARDS PASSING	65
8-17	COMP./ATTEMPTS	8-28
3	INTERCEPTED BY	0
2	FUMBLES LOST	1
4-31.0	PUNTS	7-45.9
3-15	PENALTIES	5-45

'Cats Bomb Trojans

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 seemed to click for us when we needed it."

Dougherty finally scored on its last possession, taking the ball on its own 32 and driving the length of the field on Norman's passing. His 31-yard screen to Bobby Rush was good for the six pointer with just eight seconds left.

The Trojans played most of the game without standout linebacker Freddie Blackmon, who sustained a serious ankle injury in the first quarter. That, according to Lynch, cut down on the Trojan's defensive capabilities considerably.

King was the game's leading rusher with 63

yards, while Lestinger provided the Trojan secondary for 134 yards on seven completions in 33 tries. Norman hit eight passes in 28 attempts and was intercepted three times.

Norman's punting was outstanding for the Trojans. The junior kicked eight times for better than 45 yards per effort and

probably was the region punting crown. Lionel James, the second leading rusher in the region, was held to 32 yards in 33 carries. Hall led the team with 51 yards in 31 trips.

Dougherty ended the season 8-4, while the Wildcats continue in their quest for a region and state title, hosting cross-town rival Lowndes next Friday.

- Valdosta: * * * * *
- Dougherty: * * * * *
- Long run (Dougherty):
 V — King 2 run (Norman) 63
 V — Rex 5 pass from Lestinger (no catch)
 V — King 2 run (pass failed)
 V — Rex 2 pass from Lestinger (Norman catch)
 D — Hall 1 pass from Norman (Norman catch)
- Individual heading:
 V — Lestinger 6-11, Rex 2-8, King 6-6, James 1-0, Hall 2-0, Johnson 2-0, Fraser 1-1, D — Norman 2-0, James 0-0, Hall 0-0
- Punting:
 V — Lestinger 7-31, 50 yards, best 32
 D — Rex 0-0, D — Norman 4-31, 40 yards
- Receiving:
 V — Smith 2-25, Stearns 1-14, Rex 1-40, Fletcher 1-0, D — Smith 2-0, James 1-11, Hall 0-0, King 1-0, Roberts 1-0

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Valhalla 0 20 13 0-33
Dougherty 0 0 0 7-7

V - King 4 run (Reaves kick)

V - King 4 run (Reaves kick)

V - Roe 30 pass from Lastinger (run failed)

V - King 4 run (pass failed)

V - Roe 11 pass from Lastinger (Reaves kick)

D - Rush 11 pass from Norman (Norman kick)

Individual Rushing

V - Lastinger 6-5, Roe 3-8, King 14-68,

Gaskin 7-33, Bond 3-4, Johnson 8-24,

Frazier 1-1, D - Norman 3-19, James 10-23,

Hall 10-53.

Passing

V - Lastinger 7-13-0, 154 yards, Bond 1-3-

0, 14, Roe 0-1-0, 0, D - Norman 8-28-2, 95

yards.

Receiving

V - Smith 3-28, Hankins 1-14, Roe 3-122,

Fletcher 1-4, D - Rush 2-25, James 2-13,

Hall 2-9, Glass 1-13, Roberts 1-15.