'Cats Write Last Chapter To 10-0 Season

By MIKE CHASON

ALBANY — Valdosta came to town expecting a Dougherty resurrection, but the Trojans never came out of the tomb.

Riding the three-touchdown heroics of halfback Ernest King and the timebomb passing combination of John Lastinger to Irvin Roe, it was business as usual for the No. 1 rated Wildcats in a 33-7 demolition of Dougherty's playoff hopes before a crowd of 7,000 here Saturday night.

YARDSTICK

	VHS	Doug.
First Downs	16	10
Yards Rushing	152	95
Yards Passing	167	57
Passes	8-17	8-28
Passes Inct. By	3	0
Fumbles Lost	2	1
Punting	3-37	8-45.6
Penalties	4-30	5-45

With the victory, Valdosta wrapped up a perfect 10-0 season and its second straight region 1-AAAA (North) title. The Wildcats became the first team since Thomasville's state championship club in 1973 to go undefeated in the 12-team league.

No Valdosta team had ridden the unbeaten trail since 1971 in Wright Bazemore's final season as head coach. That pack of 'Cats captured the Class AAA (now AAAA) state title.

"I thought both teams played awful hard and with a lot of intensity," Valdosta Coach Nick Hyder said. "Dougherty kept attacking, and I think that's typical of Region 1-AAAA.

"Lastinger to Roe was an awful good combination for us. It seemed to click when we needed it. Our defense was rock rib the first half, and we let our younger boys finish out there at the end."

Hyder said his team came into the game well aware that if Dougherty won, the Trojans would be the first place finisher in the North subregion. If that had happened, both Valdosta and Dougherty would have had 4-1 subregion marks and in the case of a two-way tie, the championship goes to the team which won the regular season matchup.

As it stands now, Dougherty is eliminated from the playoffs, and Tift County (Tifton) is the No. 2 team from the North subregion. Dougherty and Tift both wound up with 3-2 subregion records, but Tift blasted the Trojans 23-0 in their regular season contest.

Tift Coach Gene Brodie attended Saturday night's game and breathed a noticeable sigh of relief when Valdosta took a 20-0 halftime edge. Brodie did say Tift quarterback Ken Hobby has a broken wrist and that flanker Antonio Terry is no longer on the team because of disciplinary reasons.

Tift meets Region 1-AAAA (South) champion Thomasville in Thomasville Friday night. Valdosta hosts crosstown rival Lowndes at Cleveland Field. Lowndes finished second in the South subregion.

"It was kind of a resurrection for Dougherty when Tift lost (to Crisp County Friday)," Hyder said. "They knew they had a chance to be subregion champions.

"But we prepared for that because we knew it was one of the possibilities."

As has been the case 10 straight weeks, Valdosta's preparation paid off handsomely.

The Trojans had only 95 yards rushing and 57 passing. The region's second leading rusher, Lionel James, was held to 32 yards in 11 carries.

Valdosta got a 66-yard rushing from King who scored two second-quarter touchdowns on 6-and 8-yard runs. King added a third quarter score on a 4-yard dash.

Lastinger assured himself of the region passing title when he threw for 154 yards on seven of 13 tosses. He hit the speedy Roe with a 50-yard TD bomb in the second quarter and with a 31-yard scoring strike in the third period.

Roe hauled in the final score laying on his back. For the night he had three catches for 122 yards.

"I really didn't realize I was in the end zone on that last one," Roe said. "I really didn't think I had it. John threw the ball good tonight."

Lastinger was relieved by John Bond with 37 seconds to play in the third quarter and watched the rest of the final regular season game of his senior season from the bench.

But Dougherty, which wound up 6-4, never made any comeback noises the rest of the way. The Trojans did finally escape a shutout with eight seconds left in the game when Bobby Rush caught an 11-yard pass from Dougherty quarterback Chris Norman.

In the second quarter, Dougherty almost scored after Valdosta had coughed up a fumble but Alonzo Hall fumbled what looked to be a sure touchdown into and then out of the end zone.

Valdosta blanked six opponents, the most shutouts by a VHS team since 1969. However, losing out on the seventh was not a major heartache to VHS defensive coordinator Jack Rudolph.

"No, that bunch of kids in there then needed to play," Rudolph said. "If you don't put them in there at a time like this, next year when it's time for them to play and the score is 7-7, they won't be ready.

"You've got to go with them in a situation like this and at least see what they can do."

Senior cornerback Troy Thomas keyed the Valdosta defensive effort with two interceptions of Norman passes. Thomas and the rest of the Valdosta secondary harassed Norman into an 8-28 night with three interceptions.

"The defense had a real good rush on him," Thomas said.

Dougherty's defensive team took a severe jolt in the first five minutes of the game when standout linebacker Freddie Blackmon went down with an ankle injury.

"Losing Blackmon really hurt us," 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. Thomasville has a chance to defeat them, but I'm picking Valdosta to win it."

Friday's winners are to flip a coin to see which hosts the region championship Nov. 17. The region titleist hosts the first round of the state playoffs Nov. 24.

Valdosta school officials said tickets for the Lowndes game are to go on sale Tuesday.

Score by Quarters:

Valdosta	0	20	13	0	—33
Dougherty	0	0	0	0	—7

Scoring: Val—King 6 run (Reaves kick); Val—King 8 run (Reaves kick); Val—I. Roe 50 pass from Lastinger. (Run failed). Val—King 4 run. (Pass failed.) Val—I. Roe 31 pass from Lastinger. (Reaves kick). Dou—Rush 11 pass from Norman. (Norman kick).

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing: Valdosta—I. Roe 3 39; King 14 66; Lastinger 6 minus 6; Gaskin 7 34; Johnson 6 25; Bond 3 minus 8; Frazier 1 2; Ruff 1 0. Dougherty—James 11 32; Hall 9 41; Norman 3 20.

Passing: Valdosta—Lastinger 7-13-0-154; I. Roe 0-1-0-0; Bond 1-3-0-13. Dougherty: Norman 8-28-3-57.

Pass Receiving: Valdosta—Smith 3 28; I. Roe 3 122; Fletcher 1 4; Hawkins 1 13; Dougherty—Glow 1 14; Hall 2 0; Rush 2 26; Roberts 1 16; James 2 12.

Punt Returns: Valdosta—Thomas 4 57; Dougherty—None.

Kickoff Returns: Valdosta—Patterson 1 5. Dougherty—James 4-54; Hall 1 5; Roberts 1 5.

Defense (Number of Tackles): Valdosta—Roberts 4; C. Roe 2; King 2; Battles 2; Evans 3; Clifford Johnson 2; Carroll Johnson 2; Caesar 3. Dougherty: Burrell 6; Hill 8; Clark 3; Holloway 4; Acree 2; Covin 2; Wade 4; Walker 2.

Interception Returns: Valdosta—Thomas 2 31; Beauford 1 0.

The Valdosta Daily Times

SPORTS

Lowndes Guts Almost Win

Mike Chason

Times Sports Editor

For a split second, 7,200 fans, two high school football teams and two very interested coaches held their breaths. Then it was over. The issue was decided. Jim Hughes breathed a sigh of relief. Joe Wilson didn't.

Anyone who was on hand for the final quarter of Friday night's 13-7 Thomasville win over Lowndes and is still alive today can forget all about jogging, exercise and eating the right food. If their heart survived that last 10 minutes of helter-skelter, wild and wooly football, the old thumper is going to be around a while longer.

It was a game that had to be seen to be believed.

For three quarters, Thomasville used its muscle to overpower a Lowndes team which was noticeably smaller at almost every position. The Bulldogs scored the first time they had the ball and drove to the 8 and 11-yard lines on two other occasions in the first half.

It is to the credit of the Lowndes defense that Hughes' team didn't lead by four touchdowns instead of only two heading into that momentous fourth quarter. Thomasville's defense had the LHS offense in a coma it didn't seem to be able to shake.

And it might never have busted loose had it not been for a defensive gem by Adam Reese, the LHS noseguard who stormed in to block a Johnny Chastain punt and wheelbarrow it toward the goal line.

"There were so many big plays but Reese blocking that punt is what really got them started," Hughes said.

Wilson doesn't question that at all.

"I was saying all along that we had to have field position or get a break," Wilson, the Lowndes coach, said.

"Adam was the break. He couldn't pick that thing up but he had instinct enough to keep it in front of him. He did that deliberately just as sure as I'm sitting here talking to you.

"Pound for pound, Adam Reese is the best football player in the world. He tackled the whole backfield against Crisp County and just kept throwing them out until he found the ballcarrier. It was just like you throw socks out of a drawer."

LHS quarterback Chuck DeVane took advantage of Reese's effort by throwing a 6-yard scoring strike to Brent Edwards.

"Chuck DeVane was outstanding throwing the ball," Wilson said of his junior signal-caller. "And little Brent Edwards caught the ball well."

But Lowndes still trailed and needed another break to stage a rally for the go-ahead TD. The Vikings got it when Chastain fumbled and Terry Cooper recovered.

From that point on, the crowd, which had hollered "offense, offense, offense," earlier instead of the usual defensive cheers, stayed on its feet.

That was right on through the crucial roughing-the-kicker call which was obvious but very surprising that Thomasville would even try such a thing with the lead and clock ticking off.

That was right on through the mini-fight between Steve Thomas and Steve Strickland which got Thomas ejected but left Strickland in the game, and that was right on through the marvelous passing show Lowndes put on enroute to what looked to be the winning touchdown.

But Phil Clay silenced the "Plowboy" side of the stadium when he picked off Terry Cooper's halfback pass in the end zone.

"Our kid was open in the end zone," Wilson said, "but their player just made a great play."

With 2:23 left on the clock, there seemed little chance Lowndes would ever see the ball again. But again the defense bowed its back and stopped the Bulldogs on a third down-and-two situation.

One punt later, Lowndes aimed for the goal line 68 yards away with 1:18 on the clock.

"All year long, I've been afraid of making mistakes but in the last part of the fourth quarter, I forgot all about that," DeVane said in the dressing room afterwards. "It was do or die then."

Indeed it was. And it was almost "die" when DeVane had his first pass of the drive picked off. A pass interference call left Lowndes with the ball however. Two DeVane passes to Chuck Jones and one to Edwards catapulted the Vikings to the 18-yard line with nine seconds left.

Then came one of many crucial calls.

Jones caught another pass close to the goal line and was knocked out of bounds. However, the officials said Thomasville had 12 men on the field and marked off the penalty. Lowndes did not have a choice of taking the play or the penalty, indicating the official blew his whistle before the play began.

That brings up an interesting point which Wilson thought about all Saturday morning.

"If he blows the whistle, that kills the clock," Wilson said. "If they stop the clock, we've still got nine seconds left. We could have gotten off two plays in nine seconds.

"I believe it's your choice to take the play or the penalty. We didn't have any choice. It cost us six seconds. That play was just about as important as the touchdown."

Ah yes, the apparent touchdown. It's a play Lowndes fans will never fotget.

With three seconds left and the ball on the 13-yard line, DeVane threw to Edwards in the end zone. He caught the ball inbounds in the back of the end zone. While Edwards was in the air, Thomasville's Scott Horton pushed him out of bounds.

Then came that split second when all breathing stopped. Then the zebra on the scene made his decision and both sides of the stadium exploded, Thomasville in cheers and Lowndes in jeers.

What was Wilson's immediate reaction when he saw Edwards catch the ball?

"I was thinking who was going to take Eric Thomas' place on the extra point team because I knew he was hurt," Wilson said.

Does that mean he was sure Edwards had scored?

"It was six," Wilson said.

"I saw Brent had his man by a couple of steps, and I tried to loft it," DeVane said. "Brent made a great catch on it. I thought it was a touchdown but I wasn't in any position to tell."

Edwards thought he had scored also. Hughes said there was no way he (Hughes) could see the play from his particular vantage point. Wilson pointed to the "human element."

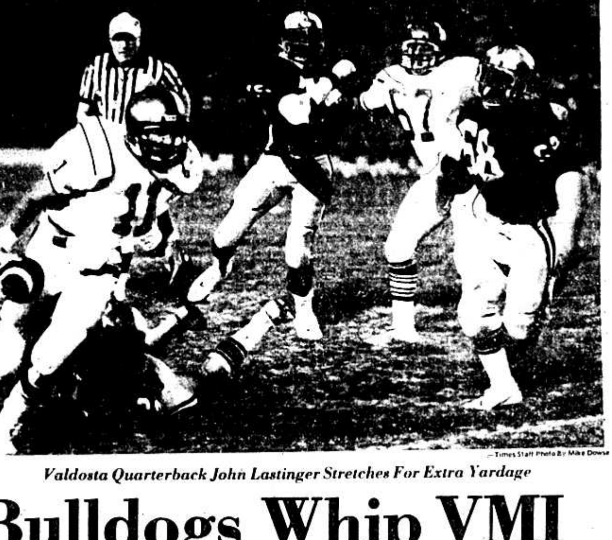
"The human element figures in there," he said. "It wasn't the human element of a kid making a mistake. It was the human element of the man in the striped shirt making a decision. It's just too bad it has to affect everything these kids have worked for.

"But I'm just as proud as punch of these kids and what they've accomplished. They've been up against tremendous odds all year. They never quit. Just like the Lowndes fans. By all rights, they could have given up the ghost after the first half. But they didn't.

"That's why they play two halves in a football game."

Even though it didn't win, Lowndes might have proved something Friday night. The Vikings were not even in the game until the fourth quarter as far as statistics are concerned. But stats are cold, hard facts. The emotion involved with the LHS comeback was something which had been hidden during the first nine games and three quarters of the season. That's one of those intangibles coaches are always talking about.

But they use another word for it . . . guts.



—Times Staff Photo By Mike Dowse

Valdosta Quarterback John Lastinger Stretches For Extra Yardage

Bulldogs Whip VMI

ATHENS, Ga. (AP) — Willie McClendon hammered out 149 yards, becoming Georgia's alltime single season rushing king, as the 13th ranked Bulldogs methodically blasted Virginia Military Institute 41-3 in college football Saturday.

McClendon's yardage lifted his season total to 1,115 yards, erasing by 12 yards the previous Georgia standard set by former Heisman Trophy winner Frank Sinkwich in 1941.

	VMI	Ga
First downs	10	26
Rushes yards	30-104	59-289
Passing yards	67	184
Return yards	0	21
Passes	5-16-0	9-16-0
Punts	10-41	3-49
Fumbles lost	3-0	2-1
Penalties yards	11-99	4-40

Georgia, a four-touchdown favorite, scored on four of its first five possessions as the Bulldogs easily rolled to their sixth straight victory and their seventh in eight games this year.

VMI, 3-6, avoided a shutout when Craig Jones kicked a 40-yard field goal with only 74 seconds remaining in the third quarter.

Jeff Pyburn fired a 30-yard pass to Lindsay Scott for Georgia's first touchdown and freshman quarterback Buck Belue scored on an 11-yard run as Georgia built a 20-0 halftime edge. The other scoring had come on field goals of 24 and 32 yards by Rex Robinson.

Georgia added three second-half touchdowns on a 1-yard run by James Womack, a 41-yard sprint by Ronnie Stewart and a 19-yard run by freshman Matt Simon.

McClendon also became only the fourth Georgia player in history to gain 2,000 yards, lifting his career total to 2,031.

McClendon did not easily make his yardage against the Kaydets. He had only 102 yards after his first 25 carries and then caught VMI off guard when he took a snap on a fake punt and raced 30 yards to the VMI 41, where on the next play Stewart broke loose on his scoring run.

With the score 34-3, McClendon came back in the game shooting for Sinkwich's school record and got only 5 yards on his first three carries before finally breaking the mark on a 12-yard run with about nine minutes left in the game. He saw no more action after that.

Georgia hit the Kaydets with two long passes during the game, a 51-yarder from Belue to Anthony Arnold at the 12, setting up a field goal, and a 56-yarder from Davy Sawyer to Gene Veal, setting up Simon's 19-yard touchdown run.

VMI crossed midfield only once in the first half, that after recovering a Georgia fumble on the Kaydets' 46. VMI moved to the Georgia 37, where Jones failed on a 54-yard field goal attempt.

VMI	0	0	3	0	—3
Georgia	10	10	7	14	—41

Ga—FG Robinson 24
Ga—Scott 30 pass from Pyburn (Robinson kick)
Ga—FG Robinson 32
Ga—Belue 11 run (Robinson kick)
Ga—Womack 1 run (Robinson kick)
VMI—FG Jones 40
Ga—Stewart 41 run (Robinson kick)
Ga—Simon 19 run (Robinson kick)
A—50,200

—AP Laserphoto

Georgia's Lindsay Scott Hauls In Pyburn Pass

Hawks Lose

ATLANTA — New Jersey's Eric Money sank a 17-footer with 32 seconds remaining as the Nets defeated the Atlanta Hawks 118-117 in overtime Saturday in National Basketball Association action.

Hawk John Drew's field goal with 1:52 remaining in regular time tied the score 109-109, and Net Winfred Boynes missed an 18-footer at the buzzer to send the game into overtime.

The Nets survived a frantic scramble for a rebound beneath Atlanta's goal after Eddie Johnson missed a 16-foot shot in the closing seconds of the overtime period.

Rookie Jack Givens put the Hawks up by six with 7:30 remaining in the game, but New Jersey came back to tie the game at 101-101 with 4:55 remaining. From then the lead changed hands three times but never by more than two points.

Canadiens End Flames Streak

MONTREAL (AP) — Guy Lapointe's power play goal at 1:33 of the third period snapped a tie and gave the Montreal Canadiens a 4-2 National Hockey League triumph over Atlanta Saturday night, ending the Flames' 12-game unbeaten streak.

Youth Football

Local Teams Near Season's End

BC Midget

From Times Staff Reports

Jeff Davis Lee caught a 26-yard pass from David Johnson and Flozell Stone scored on a three-yard run to lead Levi Strauss to a 14-8 win over Moody AFB in Boys Club Midget League action here Saturday morning. Gerald Mitchell scored on a one-yard run, then passed to Tony Rhynes for the conversion for Moody's scoring.

In other action, Kelvin Williams scored on a 16-yard run in the fourth quarter for the only score of the game as CWA 3223 downed C & S Bank 6-0.

In another game, Bobby Phillips scored two touchdowns on runs of two and 27 yards to lead Colson Printing Co. to a 12-0 victory over Dowling Bag Co.

BC Pee Wee

Ron Cowart scored three touchdowns on runs of 10, 14, and 26 yards to lead Roger Budd Chevrolet to a 33-0 romp over Massey Drugstore in Boys Club Pee Wee action here Saturday morning. Roger Budd's other points came on a 17-yard run by Greg Talley and a 25-yard pass interception by Tim Burke.

In other action, Gary Thomas scored two touchdowns on runs of 60 and 34 yards to lead First National Bank to a 19-0 shutout over Import Auto Center. David Crenshaw scored the game's first touchdown on a four-yard run.

In another game, Bosch Olds-Buick downed Crackin Good Bakers 19-6. Crackin Good scored first on a one-yard plunge by Guy Belue; but Bosch came back with three touchdowns.

Dirk Hardin scored on a 38-yard run, Lamar Richardson on a 4-yard run, and Brett Dwelle returned a punt 30 yards for the third score.

YMCA Flag

James Brown scored on a 12-yard run and passed to Ashley Moorman for a second touchdown to lead the Armstrong Loan Vikings to a 28-0 shutout win over the Vicco Warriors in YMCA Flag Football Playoff action here Saturday morning.

The other Viking scores came on runs of 44 and 6 yards by Barthaniel Werts and Ben Hogan respectively.

In other action, the Sports Unlimited Dolphins jumped out to an early lead and held on to down Judy's Hamburger Broncos 19-13. The Dolphins scored twice in the second quarter on a 3-yard run by Robbie Hastings and a 40-yard pass from Tim Williams to Robbie Hastings. In the third period, Dennis Reynolds scored on a 41-yard run for the Dolphins.

The Bronco scoring came on a 31-yard run by Gary Kohut and a 33-yard run by David Muskevitsch.

In the final game, Wade Walker scored on a one-yard plunge and Aaron Marshall ran in from eight yards to give the Griffin Corporation Cowboys a 13-0 shutout win over the Cam Company Falcons.

Tournament action will resume Tuesday night at 6:15 at Pendleton Park with the Sineath and Meeks Raiders (5-0-0) playing the Griffin Corporation Cowboys (2-3-1); and again Thursday night at 6:15 as the Armstrong Loan Vikings (6-1-0) play the Sports Unlimited Dolphins (4-2-1).

YMCA Midget

Jeffrey Cooper scored four touchdowns to lead the Quality Electric Raiders to a 41-6 romp over the Bray Home Improvement Cowboys in YMCA Midget league football action here Saturday morning. Keith Stith and Randy Merwin also scored for the Raiders.

The lone Cowboy score came on a touchdown run by Otis Henry.

In the only other game, Joey Davis rambled in for a dramatic fourth quarter score to give the Joe Hall Used Cars Warriors a 7-0 win over the Fleming Williams Used Cars Colts.

YMCA Pee Wee

The Valdosta Lighting Vikings scored a 14-0 shutout over the Harbin's Pool Bears in YMCA Pee Wee league football action here Saturday morning. The Vikings scored all their points in the second quarter as Pt Lynch made a tackle in the Bears end zone for a safety. Cedrik Horton and Brian Rehberg scored touchdowns on runs of 33 and 23 yards respectively.

In the other game, Ray NeSmith and Darren Astles scored on runs of 14 and three yards to lead the Union Electric Raiders to a 13-0 shutout over the Five Points Toyota Warriors.