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SportsTone.net

ASHEBORO - Fun. It's been a lot of fun.

Southwestern Randolph High School senior running back Brody Sheppard said he's just having fun and that fun has led to two of the most impressive weeks by a running back in a long time.

One week after recording 245 yards rushing and five touchdowns against Wheatmore, Sheppard's encore performance Friday night was just as impressive as he rushed 25 times for 237 yards and three more scores in the Cougars' 50-26 victory over pass-happy McMichael.

SWR trailed 14-0 early and 20-14 at halftime before scoring 36 unanswered points in the second half to run its record to 4-2 heading into a bye week. The Cougars scored touchdowns on all five second-half possessions.

Sheppard, who bided his time in coach Seth Baxter's offensive system, received an opportunity last year at running back and, as the saying goes, he's taken the ball and run with it. He's run with it inside. He's run with it outside. He's spun away from some defenders and simply outrun others.

With four conference games remaining for the Cougars, expect Sheppard to be a very busy runner.

"He's always had his high work ethic," Baxter said moments after the win over McMichael, which was played in an off-and-on rain. "He just waited his turn. He was one of those kids last year, early in the season, we didn't have him in the backfield. He went for 1,000 yards last year and it was all in the conference. He worked his way into it. He has a unique running style. He's always a forward lean. He doesn't lose yardage."

His running style was on full display the past couple of weeks. Against McMichael, he had 13 carries for 134 yards and a score - in the first half. Trailing 20-14, he returned the second-half kickoff 40 yards to the Phoenix 35-yard line and six



Brody Sheppard rushing against McMichael High School. Photo by PJ Ward-Brown Photography.



Brody Sheppard carries the ball against McMichael High School. September 26, 2025. Photo by PJ Ward-Brown Photography.

consecutive runs by Sheppard tied the game. The Cougars, who amassed 375 yards on the ground in the game, then ran away from the visitors despite an 18-for-37 passing effort for 329 yards and two touchdowns from Phoenix junior quarterback Tai Tart.



Senior Brody Sheppard. Photo provided.

With a great deal of the running talent having graduated after last year's 6-5 record, Baxter told Sheppard he was going to get a ton of carries during his senior campaign.

"This is my last year of high school football and I wanted to make sure I put as much into it as I can and just work and make it the best season I had and try to get everyone around me on the same page. And it's working," Sheppard said, "everyone is focused."

The Cougars started with wins over East Davidson and Trinity before a shutout loss to Providence Grove and a 10-point setback at Randleman. The past two weeks were led by Sheppard, who on Friday ran behind an offensive line of Colton McKee, JJ Foland, Ayden Latham, Dakota Dunn and

Laken Elberson. Quarterback Levi Dalke spent most of his time as a lead blocker for Sheppard, who was the recipient of a direct snap throughout the game. Receivers Carson Wood, Devonte Dukes, Jaxon Campbell and others blocked downfield, helping Sheppard spring for chunk yardage on the ground. He had five carries in which he gained double-digit yardage, including runs of 39 and 46 yards.

"I love running the ball," said Sheppard, who also plays linebacker on defense. "My line up front and my lead blockers are killing it up there. It's them doing all the work. It's fun playing both ways. It's tiring, but it's fun. I love being on both sides of the ball, getting as much as I can get out there."

Baxter said he had conversations with Sheppard in the offseason, readying him for what would certainly lie ahead.

"We talked in the offseason about how the focus was going to be on him and he would have the ball in his hands a lot," Baxter said. "As a coach, you always look back at games and we didn't get the ball in his hands enough in those two losses and that's on me. We want to find different ways to get his hands on the ball."

The direct snap used last Friday was implemented as a "quicker way to get him the ball," Baxter said.

"He's just a kid who has grown over time," Baxter added. "The maturity level, yes. But I think his speed. Last week he had a 91-yard run and I didn't know he had that speed. One guy usually isn't going to tackle him. He makes people miss. He's very intelligent on the football field. He understands what he's supposed to do."

"We lost so many guys on the offensive side, but we knew we had (No. 4) back there and we had to figure out ways to get his hands on the ball," Baxter said. "He's accepted that role and has had a great season so far."

A great season and a whole lot of fun.