For J.J. McClain it must have seemed like a bad dream.
This wasn't the way things were supposed to turn out.
Last year the Mustangs ran up the score on Yazoo County in a 46-7 win.
If anything the Mustangs were even stronger this year.
McClain entered the contest undefeated. The team's wins included an 18-8 win over perennial powerhouse Durant in the season opener and a 64-0 shellacking of Marshall. A 30-12 win over Lanier provided plenty of momentum for the short trip down Highway 49 Friday.
The icing on the cake was the news that Panthers star running back Gerald Lampkin was sidelined with a hamstring injury. It seemed that the good times would roll once more, and the aggressive Mustangs defense likely had dreams of watching Panthers quarterback Michael Collum run for his life.
But things didn't go according to plan.
For one thing junior Akevin Jones made his season debut after being injured and proved to be a solid running back in his own right.
But most significantly, the Panthers broke out a passing game that no one realized they had. I'm not convinced that even Yazoo County knew they were capable of such a great performance.
Collum, who has shown some passing skills but mostly relied on his quick feet this season, was brilliant as he picked apart the Mustangs defense. Collum hit three different receivers for touchdowns on his way to a total of 243 passing yards.
Collum even kicked a field goal in the first half just in case there was anyone wondering if there was anything he couldn't do.
McClain brought a talented defense to Yazoo County. They blitzed frequently and attempted to cover the receivers at full speed. But Collum and receivers Devontea White, Marty Rhodes and Marlo Watkins made them look like the junior varsity practice squad.
The Panthers defense was brutally effective, however. Stephen Matory racked up a dozen tackles to set the pace for a night full of highlights. Jaylin Mosely shut down McClain's determined drive just before halftime with an interception in the end zone.
My personal favorite defensive moment was when Fabiean Davis blocked a punt and scooped up the ball for a nice gain.
Yazoo County has just one more game before conference play begins. Coach Bernard Euell stressed that his team is taking this season one game at a time, but it's hard not to look ahead

to a conference in which Yazoo County should be very competitive.
I've been watching Yazoo County football for a long time, and I haven't seen a team with this much potential since the 2006 squad that made it to the second round of the playoffs.
What more surprises do the Panthers have in store this season? That's a question Yazoo County football fans would like to know, but not as much as Riverside's defensive coordinator. He has the unenviable task of trying to get his team ready to defend against the Panthers Friday.