



Shih Fa Kao/The Gazette

Kings Mountain's Darik Gary tackles South Point's Cameron McGlenn Friday evening during the Red Raiders' 44-21 win in Belmont. McGlenn returned a blocked punt for a touchdown in the Red Raiders' win.

A win's a win

Raiders fumble 10 times on opening night, still beat Mountaineers

By PHILLIP GARDNER
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BELMONT — The South Point Red Raiders didn't exactly look like the state champs of a year ago, but they were just as effective in their season debut.

South Point opened the season in impressive fashion Friday, defeating Kings Mountain 44-21 at a packed Lineberger Stadium.

The Red Raiders (1-0) scored offensively, defensively and via special teams and made enough big plays to overcome a whopping 10 fumbles (four lost).

"We knew all along — as long as we worked hard and executed — what we could do," South Point quarterback Andrew Rinehart said. "It's just a matter of executing, but it feels good to win."

Questions surrounded South Point's team after it lost 27 seniors and 18 of 22 starters from its dominant state champi-

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■ East Gaston blown away by West Meck, 48-0.

Preps, 6-7C

onship team. If Friday's game was any indication, Red Raiders fans might not have as much to worry about as they first thought, even though the team discovered plenty of areas it needs to improve on.

With Rinehart making his first career start at quarterback and only one offensive line starter returning from last year, the offense understandably had its rough moments.

The Red Raiders fumbled 10 times, all of which Rinehart and fullback Bryan Jennings accounted for. Rinehart even turned the ball over on a bad pitch on South Point's very first play from scrimmage.

"It all starts with the quarterback,"

Rinehart said. "You can't blame anybody else. I was nervous out there. The game came at me pretty fast, but I think we can get things straightened out."

But the Mountaineers (1-1) made their share of mistakes, too, and South Point took full advantage. Kings Mountain lost three of their six fumbles and botched two long snaps that led to Red Raider punts.

With Kings Mountain trailing 7-0 in the first quarter, a holding call on fourth and nine backed the Mountaineers to their own 9-yard line. Wes Dixon then snapped the ball over punter Brad Moffitt's head and out of the end zone for a South Point safety.

Then, in the second quarter, another high snap sent Moffitt chasing the ball deep in his own territory. When he tried to punt on the run, South Point's Tyler

▼ Raiders

continued from Page 1C

Lemons got a piece of the ball. Cameron McGlenn scooped up the loose ball and returned it 16 yards for a score, putting the Red Raiders up 14-2.

"You could see it in Kings Mountain when we made plays like that they kind of got down and didn't want to fight any more," Lemons said.

Kings Mountain coach Dave Farquharson said Dixon's snaps were low last week in a 45-34 win at East Gaston and he worked on the long snap this week in practice.

The Mountaineers had other blunders deep in their own territory. Lemons tipped a Josh Gilbert pass into the hands of McGlenn on Kings Mountain's first series of the second half, giving South Point the ball on the Kings Mountain 25. On their next possession, the Mountaineers fumbled on their own 20. Then, running back Sidney Goode blemished an otherwise nice individual rushing night when he fumbled in his own end zone, allowing South Point's Chuck McCoskey to pounce on it for a 31-14 Red Raider lead.

"You can't do that against any football team and not expect them to be able to capitalize on it," Farquharson said. "We broke down in some areas mentally tonight that hurt us."

After leading 16-14 at the break, South Point held Kings Mountain scoreless until its final possession late in the fourth quarter. The Red Raiders outgained Kings Mountain 323-241, with Jennings gaining 164 yards on 17 carries.

Rinehart finished with 18 rushing yards on 19 carries and scored twice from 13 and 12 yards out. He completed 3 of 5 passes for 76 yards, including the first touchdown on a 51-yard fling to Josh Robinson.

KM 0 14 0 7 — 21

SP 9 7 7 21 — 44

SP — Josh Robinson 51 pass from Andrew Rinehart (Rinehart kick)

SP — Safety. Kings Mountain snap out of end zone.

KM — Sidney Goode 10 run (Will Franks kick)

SP — Cameron McGlenn 16 blocked punt return (Rinehart kick)

KM — Johnny Phillips 5 run (Franks kick)

SP — Rinehart 13 run (Rinehart kick)

SP — Chuck McCoskey fumble recovery in end zone (Bryan Jennings run)

SP — Rinehart 12 run (Rinehart kick)

SP — Jennings 4 run (kick failed)

KM — Josh Gilbert 4 run (Franks kick)



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The ball slips through the hands of both Kings Mountain Mountaineers' wide receiver Antonio Feaster and South Point Red Raiders' defensive back Thomas Davie Friday evening at the game between the Mountaineers and the Red Raiders.