

# Slow start no issue for South Point

## Red Raiders score on six of seven possessions after initial stall

**By Jack Flagler**

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BELMONT — On its first possession of Friday night's first-round state tournament game, the South Point offense was unable to pick up a first down. The Red Raiders went four-and-out, moving backwards on their first two plays before turning over the ball on downs. The offense jogged off the field just two minutes after it had run out.

From that point on, the Red Raiders were nearly unstoppable.

Before the starters were pulled from the game late in the contest, South Point drove down for a score on six of its seven possessions after coming up empty on that first trip. Senior fullback Ryland Etherton ran 16 times for 145 yards and two touchdowns, while senior quarterback Diontree King added 104 yards and three scores on seven carries, as the No. 2 Red Raiders cruised to a 47-7 win over No. 15 Southwest Randolph.

Senior South Point linebacker Tyler Hall said the Cougars took the Red Raiders by surprise a bit on the first few series of the game.

"They were a bit more physical than we expected, but we were able to deal with adversity like we usually are," Hall said.

Red Raiders coach Mickey Lineberger was blunt in his description of the slow start.

"We took them a little lightly," Lineberger said. "That's the first time in a long time we've underestimated a team and come out a little bit flat."

However, to their credit, the Red Raiders did not take long to adjust after the flat start. On the offense's second possession, Etherton pounded the ball on five straight carries for a total of 41 yards, capping it off with a 6-yard scoring run to put South Point up 6-0. The Red Raiders would score three more times before the half, taking a

score three more times before the half, taking a 28-7 lead into the break.

Late in the first quarter, a 2-yard run from Southwest Randolph's Kenyan Beason ended a three-game shutout streak for the Red Raider defense. Prior to that Cougar touchdown, South Point had not allowed a point in more than 96 minutes of play — since a fourth quarter Forest-view touchdown in Week 9 of the regular season.

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Bill Bostick/Special to The Gazette

**South Point quarterback Diontre King runs for a touchdown as Southwest Randolph's Walter Farrish tries to stop him Friday night at South Point High.**

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"We strive for that. That's kind of our goal every week, to get a shut-out. we call it a goose egg, and we came up a bit short. We let up one touchdown, but that's alright," Hall said. "We're going to keep striving for a goose egg."

"I hated to give up seven tonight," Lineberger added, "but we'll have to

go back and start us a new streak I guess."

South Point put the game out of reach in the third quarter as the offensive starters were able to call it an early night. King ran in for a 38-yard touchdown on the team's first play from scrimmage 18 seconds into the half. On the next possession for Southwest Randolph, junior Max Mead returned an interception 58 yards for a score, darting down the sideline, then

reversing field to come back to the middle on his way to the end zone.

South Point improved to 10-2 on the season, extending its Gaston County record with a fifth consecutive season of double-digit wins. Southwest Randolph ended its season 5-7. The Red Raiders will take on No. 7 Statesville next Friday in Belmont after the Greyhounds defeated No. 10 Tuscola, 28-14, in their first round matchup.





**South Point's Ryland Etherton runs for a touchdown past Steven Ruiz, of Southwest Randolph, during Friday night's first-round win for the Red Raiders.**

Bill Bostick/  
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**SOUTH POINT 47,****SOUTHWESTERN RANDOLPH 7**

South Point 14 14 19 0 — 47

SW Randolph 7 0 0 0 — 7

**First quarter****SP** — Ryland Etherton 6 run (kick no good), 6:30.**SP** — Nolan Wilson 5 run (Diontreia King run), 4:28.**SWR** — Kenyan Beason 2 run (Brycen Walker kick), 1:05.**Second quarter****SP** — King 32 run (Thomas Lempereur kick), 11:26.**SP** — Etherton 6 run (Lempereur kick), 8:18.**Third quarter****SP** — King 38 run (Lempereur kick), 11:42.**SP** — Max Mead 58 interception return, (kick no good).**SP** — King 19 run (kick no good), 5:12.

	<b>SP</b>	<b>SWR</b>
First downs	15	41
Rushes-yards	34-359	36-93
Passing yards	59	153
Comp-Att-Int	3-6-1	13-27-1
Total yards	418	246
Fumbles-lost	2-0	1-1
Punts-avg.	2-27	4-25
Penalties-yards	5-65	6-55

**INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS**

**RUSHING** — **SP:** Ryland Etherton 17-145, Diontreia King 7-104, Scottie Lee 2-67, Nolan Wilson 3-20, Jake Alexander 3-17, Ty Tinker 1-3, Mario Brandon 1-3. **SWR:** Rayshan Hoskie 18-57, Kenyan Beason 7-21, Walter Farrish 4-15, Joey Evans 3-8, Michael Taylor 2-1, Ethan Walker 5-(minus 9).

**PASSING** — **SP:** King 3-6-1, 59. **SWR:** Walker, 13-27-1, 153.

**RECEIVING** — **SP:** Brandon 1-33, Wilson 2-26. **SWR:** Ryan Hill 5-71, Brice Dalke 1-30, Tyler Harris 3-29, Trey Ross 1-9, Beason 1-5, Hoskie 1-3.