

Game Recap

Raiders Drop Slugfest, Crest Hands South Point Second Straight Loss, 61-49

South Point's bid to bounce back after a head-scratching conference loss came up short last Friday night in Cleveland County. The Red Raiders dropped a high-scoring affair to the Crest Chargers, and while the conference run may have taken a hit, the Big Red's focus remains intent on continued improvement. There is no denying the effort against the Chargers. The Raiders left everything on the field, pushing the state's top ranked 3A team for the entire 48:00 minutes of regulation. A few minutes into the second quarter, South Point had moved in front by three touchdowns. But it was too early to decide the outcome as both teams kept doing what they do best. And when the dust settled, the Chargers remained unbeaten with the 61-49 final. Hall of Fame running back Emmitt Smith of the Dallas Cowboys once stated, "I may win and I may lose, but I will never be defeated." The Raiders will need to embrace this attitude and keep battling as the season progresses. Great teams refuse to dwell on the past, rather they hit the practice field bent on getting better. Championship teams take that mindset a step further, adding an intense motivation to prove themselves at the next opportunity. Four regular season games remain on the schedule. Each one is an opportunity to prove that this team of Red Raiders is ready to take the next step.

The Chargers won the toss and decided to give the Raiders the opening possession. South Point took advantage by driving 76-yards in 6:31 to take the lead on a FB Chayne Ford 1-yard run. The score was soon matched by Crest. Both offenses found success with their game plans and the bout was on! The Raiders retook the lead at 13-7 on a Ford 40-yard burst. But they would fall behind by a point at 14-13 with the ensuing Chargers drive. The scoring onslaught continued as South Point carried their next possession into the second quarter.

The Red 'O' moved from the Chargers 45-yardline to begin the quarter and put 8 more on the board with a 37-yard run by QB Patrick Blee. The Raiders were not done. A Crest facemask penalty on the 2-point conversion was assessed on the kickoff. K Charlie Birtwistle executed a textbook onside kick, causing the ball to bounce into the air, end-over-end, and traveling the required ten yards. South Point recovered the kick and took advantage of the good fortune beginning at the Crest 31-yardline. Three plays later, Ford rushed through the middle of the line, 27-yards for the touchdown. The Raiders advanced to a 28-14 lead with less than two minutes gone in the stanza. The Chargers stuck with their game plan to stretch the field with a potent passing attack. The Red 'D' was equal to the task though, as Ashton Green playing in a safety position, tipped an errant ball to himself, securing the interception for South Point. On the first play from scrimmage at the Crest 14-yardline, Blee cut up field, hurtled the line and crossed the goal line. The Raiders had built a 35-14 lead less than 15 minutes into the contest. The Chargers would quickly answer with a touchdown pass on the next possession, proving that the slugfest was on, and the game was far from over. After a South Point punt, the Chargers added 7 more to close within 35-27, grabbing momentum heading into the intermission.

Crest managed the equalizer as the teams returned to the field in the third quarter. An 11-yard run and 2-point conversion knotted the contest at 35-35 two minutes into the second half. Crest then took the lead with 4:32 to go in the quarter on a 5-yard run to go up 42-35. The Big Red answered with a 9-yard Blee run to draw even at 42-42 as time would expire in the quarter. The stage was set for the final 12:00 of regulation to determine the outcome.

The Chargers answered South Point's score with a 1-yard touchdown run to move out to a 48-42 advantage early in the fourth. The PAT was pushed to the right, no good, giving hope to the Raider faithful that a long South Point drive could garner victory. A solid drive of 5:02 ended with a Blee to WB Dawson Tobin 19-yard pass for the score. The PAT put the Raiders up 49-48 with 4:50 remaining. The late game desperation played right into the wheelhouse of Crest's talent for quick strikes. The Chargers added two more scores, aided by long passes downfield and chunks of yardage on the ground, to account for the last 13 points scored and the final 61-49.

Two conference losses would cause lesser teams to pack it in for the rest of a season, go home and look forward to next year. But Coach emphasized that only a battle has been lost, "the war is not over." Opportunities remain, opportunities to get better in practice and win football games on Friday nights. The effort has been proven. The Raiders had nothing left to give after the slugfest at Crest. This team of Red Raiders is not defeated. Another battle awaits and the level of intensity is kicking up. Time for this team to rise to the top. The restart begins with a visit from another Cleveland County foe. The Kings Mountain Mountaineers come to Lineberger Stadium next Friday night. A debt is owed!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Kings Mountain sits atop the Big South 3A standings with Crest. The Mountaineers have taken care of business against teams with less talent, proving they take no opponent for granted. And for certain they'll know what they're going to get when they come to Lineberger Stadium.