

## Game Recap

“Red Raiders Stay Focused...Roll Over Greenwave, 46-14”

Scheduling could have proven South Point's toughest opponent yet this season, following a convincing victory over rival Stuart Cramer on September 14, 2018. After the game, the Red Raiders entered a bye week, essentially eliminating any established rhythm and momentum gained from victory. Coach Hodge made clear to the team that they would be their own toughest competition as there would be no on-field opponent for which to prepare in the week that followed. Rest assured, it was stated, the Greenwave of Ashbrook would not take days off in preparing for upcoming contests. And no doubt Ashbrook's familiarity with South Point's triple option attack and stingy defense would aid the Greenwave in tuning the skills needed to catch the Raiders off guard. Again, scheduling COULD have proven South Point's toughest opponent yet this season. It was NOT! The Red Raiders took charge from the outset, neutralized the Greenwave's impressive athletic talent, and pulled away from Ashbrook for the decisive victory, 46-14. The win closed out the non-conference schedule for South Point as the Raiders (4-2) compiled a 3-1 record in four games against former opponents from the Big South 3A conference (Crest, Forestview, Cramer, Ashbrook). South Point will now set their sights on a run through the Southwestern 2A beginning with a Black Friday visit to East Gaston.

Ashbrook claimed the game's first possession and would begin play at their 20 yardline. Three plays and one false start penalty later, the Greenwave would be forced to punt. The ball rolled dead at the Ashbrook forty-nine, giving the Raiders excellent field position. QB Keaton Hale and FB Naseem Jones followed the push of the offensive line to the Greenwave twenty-nine. From there, Hale faked a pitch and cut upfield, racing to the score. With 6:32 remaining in the opening quarter, South Point had the 6-0 lead and the line of scrimmage had yet to be played on the Raiders' side of the field. The Greenwave quickly erased that stat with a slippery kick return to the Raiders 34 yardline. But that was still 34 yards from six points, so the Red 'D' dug in! Ashbrook managed 9 yards in three plays, but South Point stuffed the fourth-and-one run to end the threat. LB Tanner Canterbury, LB Omari Hunt, and OL Nolan Cochran converged to crush the attempt. The Raiders Defense would amass several tackles for loss throughout the contest. Asked about the Raiders ability to get into the backfield, Cochran explained, “Coach wanted use to use our speed and shoot the gaps if they were there, so that's mainly what we focused on.” The lineman added that he and his teammates would make initial contact and the linebackers would come over the top to help finish the play. The effort was essentially flawless as the Greenwave would not muster another scoring chance in the quarter. With 4:01 on the clock, the Raiders carried their next offensive possession into the second stanza.

Facing a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5 from the Ashbrook thirty-one, Hale cut through the line for a scamper to the endzone. South Point moved in front by a 12-0 score and would soon get another chance to advance the lead. The ensuing pooch kick was muffed by the Greenwave and the Raiders recovered at the Ashbrook thirty-three. A loss of seven yards on a quarterback sack moved the Raiders back to the forty. After two incomplete passes, South Point was facing a third and long. The play called in the huddle was obviously “3<sup>rd</sup> and long, give it to #30, and knock the green shirts off the line” because with the handoff, Jones burst through a hole up the middle and

covered the needed forty yards for the touchdown! K Gustavo Tadokoro dug his left foot into the PAT and the kick was true, putting the Raiders up 19-0 with just over two minutes gone in the quarter. The teams would then trade possessions with South Point reclaiming an advantage following a Greenwave fumble at the Ashbrook twenty-five. The Raiders made good on the turnover with just under a minute before halftime. Jones carried over from 3 yards out to grab six more for the South Point and send the teams to the locker room with the Raiders commanding a 25-0 lead.

With the opening possession of the third quarter, South Point marched from their twenty to another score. RB Caleb Gibson delivered the hits and shared the load to move the Raiders downfield. His seven-yard run capped the drive and put the Red Raiders up 32-0. Gibson would later state that “It all starts with a crease, the quarterback making the right read, and then I’ll pick the hole.” The speedy ball carrier also gave credit to the downfield blocking of the wide receivers. The team effort was indeed apparent as South Point increased an already comfortable lead and held on throughout the third giving the Greenwave no chance to sniff the endzone. After a couple of punts, the Raiders took the final possession of the quarter at the South Point forty-five. On the backs of Hale, Jones, Gibson, and RB Jamani Leeper, the Raiders moved to the Ashbrook one as time expired in the third.

Hale dove across from the one with the first play of the final quarter. South Point had built a 39-0 advantage and had the luxury of inserting players with their deep bench. The Greenwave finally broke through on a two-yard run but were immediately answered by a Leeper run of 58 yards to make the score 46-7 with 6:27 remaining in regulation. A time-consuming drive by the Greenwave ended in a touchdown with 3 seconds to go to account for the final 46-14.

With the week off following the Cramer game, South Point stood to lose valuable rhythm and momentum entering the final non-conference tune-up leading into Southwestern 2A Conference play. But the Big Red met the challenge and managed to stay sharp! Coach Hodge insisted that in the Ashbrook game, the Raiders played “South Point Football” and it was evident in the outstanding team effort! Black Friday is next up for the Raiders with a visit to East Gaston. And with the Raiders attitude, and intent, to get a little better with every practice and game, South Point is primed to add another notch in the “Belt of Dominance” over the rival Warriors!

Go Get ‘Em, Red!

### **Notable Facts and Thoughts**

The victory at Ashbrook would mark South Point’s 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive in the series. Prior to the run that dates to 2006, the Raiders suffered with a 12-16-3 record against the Greenwave. With the win, the Raiders now boast a 26-16-3 record over their Gastonia opponent. “South Point Football”

Jamey Andrews