

Game Recap

South Point Bounces Back – Top Ashbrook, 35-21

Bill Cowher, Super Bowl winning Head Coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers once stated, “So what if we won ugly?” He went on to imply that style points are left off the ledger. Rather, he suggested, the simple objective is to have a higher number on your side of the scoreboard. South Point’s Homecoming matchup, originally slated for Friday night but postponed to Monday due to virus concerns, aligned perfectly with Coach Cowher’s summation. Conference foe Ashbrook came in looking to double their season’s win total – to two. And Raiders’ miscues gave the Greenwave early hope. Ashbrook had an upper hand for much of the contest in many statistical categories, including, and especially, time of possession and number of offensive plays. The Greenwave found ways to extend possessions and keep the Red ‘O’ off the field. Several first downs came as gifts due to Raiders penalties while other drives benefitted from third and short situations. But the Red ‘D’ continued to battle, and was able to open the scoring to help South Point grab control of the scoreboard and lead to the 35-21 victory.

South Point won the toss and elected to defer their option to the second half, giving the Greenwave the game’s first possession. Ashbrook was forced to punt and the contest seemed to be settling in as expected with the Raiders grabbing early momentum. But a chop block penalty served to end South Point’s advance and the ball was punted back to Ashbrook. The Greenwave then drove deep into Raiders territory on a drive that went back and forth with South Point penalties and Ashbrook false starts. Facing a 3rd and 8 from the Raiders’ nineteen, the Greenwave quarterback dropped back to pass. His delivery across the middle was picked off by LB Ryan Harris who then ran to the open field 86 yards for the touchdown. K Charles Birtwistle added the PAT and South Point claimed the opening 7-0 advantage. The Greenwave’s ensuing possession mirrored their first as they were able to hold on to the ball by virtue of short third down conversions. The drive extended into the second quarter.

Moving to midfield, Ashbrook faced a 1st and 15 nearly two minutes into the stanza. A muffed shotgun snap was recovered by DB Ben Lunsford, ending the threat and bringing the Red ‘O’ back onto the field. QB Elijah Phiffer engineered a drive that pushed South Point to the Greenwave five. An Ashbrook facemask penalty aided the push. From there, Phiffer pounded through for six and the Raiders extended the lead to 14-0 with 9:22 remaining in the half. To this point the Greenwave had displayed a formidable ground attack with speedy, slashing runners, quick to the gaps. And the flow of the contest aided the ball control style of play. Positive gains, though at times short, were still enabling Ashbrook to move downfield. The 9:22 on the clock wound down to 1:56 before the Greenwave would notch their first score. Their five yard run drew them to within seven at 14-7 just before the half. Neither team mounted another threat and so the score held at the intermission.

With the ball to begin the third quarter the Red 'O' ground out the yardage, quickly moving out to midfield. A drive of just less than four minutes gained South Point the Ashbrook four yardline. From there, RB Tyson Riley burst through for the touchdown, extending the Raiders lead to 21-7. A Greenwave pass completion and fumble on the next possession quickly set the Big Red up in great field position. DB Micah Stowe was on the spot for the recovery after the tackle and strip by teammates DB Jaquis Rumph, DL Xarique Culbreath, and LB Ryan Harris. In three plays, South Point was back on the board with a 27 yard touchdown run by RB Ashton Harris. The Red Raiders lead grew to 28-7 with 5:50 to go in the third. The Greenwave's next drive carried over into the fourth with Ashbrook mounting another time-consuming scoring threat.

Early in the final 12:00, the Greenwave needed four plays to cross the goalline from inside the South Point ten. The touchdown closed the gap to two scores at 28-14. Needing a solid drive that would both take time off the clock and end with points, the Raiders offense took the field. Twelve plays from the South Point forty took 5:26 off the game clock and pushed the lead back to twenty-one at 35-14. As might be expected from a conference opponent, Ashbrook did not fold the tents and go quietly. A fourth down conversion and a personal foul on South Point kept the Greenwaves' hopes alive. Ultimately a four yard touchdown pass brought Ashbrook to within 35-21, but it would be all the Raiders would allow.

Penalties and miscues marred an already non-typical South Point football contest. The Red Raiders Homecoming game had been postponed from the usual Friday night slate to a special Monday night matchup. And statistically speaking, Ashbrook had advantages in categories that ordinarily signal victory. But winning ugly is still – winning. And even a Super Bowl winning Coach knows that all that's needed is the proper tilt of the scoreboard.

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

With both teams having dropped contests to conference opponents from Cleveland County, South Point and Forestview could be considered to have fallen into the category of "Best of the Rest" in Big South 3A. The foes meet next Friday night at Forestview. And while neither may control their playoff fate from a conference standpoint, both control their program destinies. Sometimes pride is all you need to play for! Cage the Jaguars! Go Big Red!