
VARSITY REPORT

by Jamey Andrews

“Red Raiders End Non-Conference Schedule Dropping Third Straight...17-14 to Clover”

The 2016 non-conference schedule for South Point, with or without intention, appeared to be designed to prepare the Red Raiders for an easy run through the conference and a successful run through the playoffs. Match-ups against championship caliber opponents would answer questions at key positions and allow the team to pinpoint, and then compensate, for weaknesses that could turn a successful season sour. Unfortunately, after a tough loss to the Clover Blue Eagles last Friday night at Clover's Memorial Stadium, South Point may be left with more questions than answers as to how to turn things around. The team will have an extra week to prepare for what will now be a huge Black Friday contest against East Gaston on the 23rd of September. The bye week would normally provide a much needed opportunity to recharge from the physicality of football, but somehow this upcoming week away from a regularly scheduled challenge may elicit something more from players and coaches. “How do we address the ‘psyche’ of a team that has spiraled to three consecutive losses after an outstanding season opener?” The goals haven't changed and the desire isn't diminished. But somehow, somehow, something good has to happen to put this squad back on track and in position to be the winners they've proven to be in the past.

The Blue Eagles raced out to a ten point advantage accounting for all of the scoring in the first quarter. Bust as has been the case for South Point teams and fans, it's never expected that a game is lost until the final horn sounds, and certainly not after an opening quarter or half of football. A six yard Scottie Lee run and Thomas Lempereur PAT put the Raiders on the board and the Red D was able to hold their ground so that the teams went to the intermission with South Point trailing by a scant 10-7 count. The teams traded blows in the third before Jake Alexander was able to break through for a long touchdown run to give the Raiders a 14-10 late in the third. To say that football is a game of momentum shifts is to both, state the obvious and understate the importance of fighting to the end. South Point was able to hold the lead until a Blue Eagles pass reception resulted in a go-ahead score with three minutes remaining in the game. The Raiders drove deep into Clover territory and momentum certainly seemed to be their favor, but it was not to be on this evening and in this contest. South Point fell 17-14 to the Blue Eagles and to 1-3 on the season. The Red Raiders will now prepare for the conference schedule.

As strange as it may sound, “doing enough” to win sometimes isn't enough. Hard work and solid effort certainly positions a team for success. But sometimes a team just needs to have something “good” to happen, whether expected or unexpected, in order to build upon the positive. South Point has an extra week to figure out how to make that something “good” happen if they are to realize the goals they set for themselves at the beginning of the season. At this point there may be more questions than answers, but what is for sure is that there will be no quit in this team of Red Raiders. The standard is high and the tradition is solid! What better way to silence any doubters than by demolishing a long time rival?! Two weeks to THINK about it, Red. Two weeks to WORRY about it, Warriors! Turn it around and own Black Friday!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

With a 1-3 record, South Point certainly doesn't seem to be the quality of team their tradition boasts for so many years. But noting the opening victory and that two of the three losses were certainly winnable games up to the end suggests that this group of Raiders is, for the most part, putting forth a positive effort. The results may not currently bear that out, but expect that they soon will.

Pending next week's outcome, East Gaston will do no better than to limp into Black Friday with 3 losses just like the Red Raiders. Prior to this week's bye, the Warriors had been beaten by Bessemer City, thumped by Kings Mountain, and drilled by Lincolnton. Cherryville gets their shot at East next Friday night.

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