
VARSITY REPORT

by Jamey Andrews

“South Point Weathers Delays and Chargers...Defeat Crest 22-14”

The highly anticipated start to the 2017 South Point Red Raiders football campaign had finally arrived! RaiderNation filled the visitor stands at Sid Bryson Stadium in Boiling Springs, eager to show their support for the defending State Champion Red Raiders as they took on the Crest Chargers! But alas, as is sometimes the case, the wait would be painfully extended. A weather delay, caused by lightning in the area, sent the teams back to the lockerrooms as the time for kickoff approached. The 7:30 PM start time was pushed to 7:45 and then to 8:00, but the spirits of the Raider faithful was not diminished. Neither did South Point lose intensity! Even with subsequent delays during the contest, the Red Raiders maintained steady momentum. The team showcased outstanding play in every phase of the “marathon” game en route to the 22-14 victory.

Winning the toss and deferring the option, South Point went on defense to begin the game. The Chargers called a mix of plays, runs and passes, but only managed minimal gains. The Crest offense was aided by two offsides penalties against the Red Raiders to move the ball out to near midfield. At that point the Red D pushed back! Linebacker Tanner Canterbury stepped in front of a pass across the middle, picking it off and giving the Raiders offense their first opportunity of the new season. With the ball at the South Point 33 yardline, the Raiders hit the line hard. Quarterback Scottie Lee and Fullback Jake Alexander took advantage of some solid blocking from the offensive line and were able to move into Chargers territory. The promising drive ultimately stalled and South Point would punt. A light steady rain had begun to fall as Crest would take over at their ten yardline. A mishandled pitch backed up the Chargers and the Raiders defense turned up the pressure. Two plays later another mishandled snap while operating out of the wildcat formation cost the Chargers. The ball bounced into the endzone and was touched by the Crest running back while he was out of bounds. The South Point defense had scored the first points of the season on a safety! A return of the ensuing free kick to the Crest 43, by returner Devon King, set up the Raiders. And the offense was ready to take advantage. In five plays, the Raiders advanced the lead on a Ray Grier pitch that covered 11 yards and the game’s first touchdown. A Lee to Alexander connection completed the two point conversion and the Red Raiders were ahead by a 10-0 score with 1:50 remaining in the first quarter. Another weather delay would halt the game but not South Point’s momentum. Crest could muster no gains against the Raiders defense and would be forced to punt as the second stanza began.

With the ball at their 40 yardline, the Raiders began their first drive of the second quarter. In two plays South Point moved to the Crest twenty-seven. Lee lofted a pass to Grier, who made a remarkable juggling catch to cover 33 yards. Grier’s catch was made even more impressive as the Sophomore Split End had to battle a defender who was step for step and in contact with the receiver. The Chargers defense stiffened and a Raiders false start stalled the drive. But Kicker Cade Ratliff was equal to the distance as he split the uprights with a 41 yard field goal to put South Point up 13-0 with 8:15 remaining before the half. The Red D immediately forced a three

and out series and the Raiders offense was quickly back in business! Wasting no time moving into Chargers territory, South Point used a clock chewing 11 play drive to get to the Crest twenty-three. Ratliff then booted a 40 yard field goal to send the Red Raiders to a 16-0 advantage with 1:15 left before halftime. The Chargers mounted no further charge and so the score held as the teams exited the field.

With the ball to begin the third, South Point looked to pad the lead they had built with solid and steady play in the first half. Instead, penalties began to mount and cost the Raiders field position. Crest could do little to take advantage though and South Point was able to get on track on offense with their second possession of the third quarter. In seven plays the Raiders moved ahead 22-0 on a ground attack that would not be denied! With 6:13 remaining in the third, South Point had proven to be ready to face any Charger challenge. The Raiders were in control, but Crest continued to battle. And the penalties continued to hurt South Point, stalling their momentum. Crest suffered a similar fate and the teams traded punts to close out the third. Entering the final 12 minutes, the play on the field began to mirror the playing conditions...sloppy.

On a drive that extended into the fourth, Crest needed 3 plays from inside the South Point five yardline to score their first points. The Chargers shaved 7 points off the Raiders lead still trailing 22-7, but with a lot of time, and momentum shifting. On the following South Point possession, the Raiders seemed to be putting together a promising drive that could seal the victory. But once again the team became its own worst enemy by being flagged for costly infractions and miscues. A muffed snap on a punt attempt set Crest up at the South Point 35 yardline. The desperate Chargers resorted to gadget plays. A pitch on a misdirection play moved the ball deeper into Raiders territory at the 9 yardline. One play later, Crest had drawn to within eight at 22-14 with 5:02 remaining in regulation. After the play, the Chargers were flagged for an unsportsmanlike conduct call that would be enforced on the ensuing kickoff. The fifteen yard penalty would place the tee at the Chargers 25 yardline, nearly assuring the Red Raiders offense of good field position. South Point took possession near midfield and the offense got back in gear! The Red O picked up 4 first downs, killing the clock and three Crest timeouts to close out the season opener. South Point took a knee on the final play for the 22-14 victory.

From the moment the Red Raiders hoisted a state championship trophy last year the excitement would begin to build for the 2017 season. Unfortunately that eager anticipation would be delayed by weather. However, neither the determination of South Point nor the spirit of the RaiderNation was dampened as the Red Raiders powered to a win against Crest in the opening game of the season. The Raiders put together enough plays and made enough stops to earn the victory. The 2017 campaign is off to a positive start with a mark in the win column. This is South Point football. Expect the hard work to continue.

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Of course with the first game of the season penalties, some costly, can mount up. Fortunately for the Red Raiders, miscues in this area will be corrected. Coach Hodge made certain to assure his charges of this fact following the game!

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