

Game Recap

South Point Comes Up Short - Crest Dodges Raider Effort, 27-26

At this very moment, somewhere in the football world, a coach or two (or a few thousand) are watching films of their teams' performance in a recent contest. Plays, positive and negative, good and not so good, will be dissected to an "nth" degree. The intent will be to improve in areas that may make up the difference in a close contest. They may lose track of time as they study so intently because their passion is to drive their players to be the absolute best they can be --- in the next game. Many of those coaches will have plenty to choose from when it comes to teaching points. Others will need to dig a little deeper because the effort was admirable, but just a point or two shy of success. The South Point coaching staff will engage in the same practice. But when the images fill the screen over the course of the hours it takes to review an entire game, what they'll discover is that the Raiders matchup with the Crest Chargers was the epitome of a high school football game. A hard fought battle with big plays, big miscues, momentum shifts, and game-changing scenarios. Whether the opponents are marked by a heavy favorite against a huge underdog or two evenly matched, championship caliber programs, the fact remains that at the end of the night the scoreboard will tilt in one direction. In Boiling Springs last Friday night, it tilted the wrong way.

South Point won the toss and elected to send the defense on the field to begin the game. It was the first right call of the night! Two plays in, DB Micah Stowe intercepted a pass that appeared to be deflected by LB Matt Hastings and the Raiders offense quickly took the field. With the ball at the Chargers thirty-seven, the Red 'O' needed but one play to get into the endzone. A pass downfield from QB Cam Medlock to TE Jackson Blee netted the first six. K Charles Birtwistle drilled the extra point and in 56 seconds of official game time, the Red Raiders had a 7-0 lead. South Point forced a punt on Crest's next series and the Raiders held the momentum on their second possession of the contest. A steady ground attack drove the Big Red to the Chargers' two. From there RB Tyson Riley punched in for the 14-0 advantage with 4:11 remaining in the first. Crest finally mounted an offensive charge, moving into South Point territory to the twenty-two. But a 4th and 7, quarterback scramble came up inches short of the line to make and the Raiders took over on downs. Thirty-two seconds was left on the clock and the Red 'O' carried the possession into the second stanza.

South Point continued to gain positive yards on the ground but a false start changed the complexion of the drive. On 2nd and 10, the unthinkable happened. Facing a heavy rush, a pass was forced to a receiver out of the back field who had slipped to the ground while the ball was in air. The result was a pick six that quickly put Crest on the board and shifted momentum. Disappointed but not undaunted, the Raiders returned to the field after the ensuing kickoff and drove sixty-five yards in six plays to answer. Riley stretched across from five yards out for the score. The South Point lead moved to 20-7 after the PAT sailed wide right. The teams then exchanged punts and went to the half with the Red Raiders holding a 20-7 lead.

Set to begin the third with the ball, South Point knew that a score could greatly damage the Chargers' hopes of a comeback. The Raiders managed positive gains but were only able to advance the clock and not the ball so were forced to punt. Crest matched the ground effort and sustained the ensuing drive into South Point territory to the Raiders thirty-one. Consecutive false start penalties seemed destined to help South Point stall the threat, but then a screen pass to a slippery receiver covered the needed yardage to close the gap. The Raiders lead had been cut to 20-14 with 4:06 remaining in the third quarter. The Red 'O' continued to battle but the Chargers had life. Their defense went into a bend but don't break mode and South Point was faced with a 4th and inches from their forty-four. At that point, the game experienced a strange twist, the likes of which should never occur as they often figure into the outcome of a contest. The ball was snapped and a whistle sounded. Play on the Raiders line stopped. The officiating crew rushed in and determined that the play was ended with South Point having been called short of the line to make. Arguments and discussions with both coaches followed, but the ruling was upheld and the ball went over on downs ending the South Point drive. Immediately an announcement from the press box warned against the use of whistles (or whistling devices) from the stands. The implication was that play on the field could be adversely affected by such actions. Of course, this was of little consolation to South Point but the official's decision had been made and play continued with Crest in possession at the Raiders forty-three. Realizing the magnitude of the situation, the Red 'D' bowed up! On a 2nd and 8, DB Jaquis Rumph stepped in front of a Chargers pass attempt and put the Raiders back on offense with 1:37 left in the third. South Point carried the possession into the final twelve minutes of regulation.

With the ball to begin the fourth quarter, the Raiders managed midfield. From there, Riley took a handoff up the middle, shed tacklers and broke free for 50 yards for the touchdown. The 2-point conversion was just shy of the goalline, but South Point was back in front by two scores at 26-14. Crest ran wild with desperation as the clock became their concern and the Chargers were rewarded with success by some Raiders miscues. A 55-yard touchdown pass to a receiver that had opened up five yards of distance behind the defense brought Crest to with six at 26-21. Their defense forced a punt on South Point's next drive, but all seemed in good order for the Raiders as P Dylan Nicks nailed a high end-over-end effort that was downed at the Chargers' two yardline. Crest had over six minutes to work with and the Chargers took advantage. And they did so in quick order. Picking up chunks of yardage, Crest drove 98 yards in just over two minutes to notch the go ahead score. The 2-point conversion failed giving the Raiders a glimmer of hope for last minute heroics, trailing 27-26. Unfortunately that glimmer was snuffed on the ensuing kickoff. The short kick was well placed beyond the up men yet in a spot that required the deep backs to make a catch on the run. The kick was muffed and the Chargers recovered. Crest ran off more clock but was stopped by the Red 'D' and South Point took over on downs. The Raiders passing game showed promise but a leaping interception downfield ended the South Point threat, but in true Red Raiders fashion it did not end their determination. The Chargers attempted to kneel out the victory but South Point made use of their remaining timeouts to give

themselves a shot at the end. The long field goal attempt with 7 seconds remaining fell short and along with it, the Raiders stout effort.

Scanning game film for teaching points is a common and necessary practice for coaches bent on improving the performance of players on the field. The sessions provide the information needed to motivate a player to reach a higher level to contribute to a team's success. When the Crest game is reviewed by the Red Raiders staff, several teaching moments will become evident. But even more evident will be the fact that this particular game encompassed all that is routine in a hard fought gridiron contest between two championship caliber programs. Big plays, big miscues, momentum shifts, and game-changing scenarios mark the difference in the tilt of the scoreboard. South Point was on the short end this time. But the Big Red will go to work so that there'll be no more "coming up short."

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

South Point has an opportunity to bounce back as Kings Mountain comes to call next Friday night. The Mountaineers remained unbeaten in conference play with a win over Forestview. The Raiders can keep pace at the top of the standings with a victory. Big Game --- Big Red!