

Game Recap

Raiders Corral Chargers - Power Through Crest, 35 - 13

Many factors contribute to the perceived magnitude of a football game. A victory that decides a conference champion, a win that determines playoff seeding, or simply bragging rights for having claimed a hard-hitting affair on the gridiron, all describe reasons the outcome of a game has significance. Programs that over the years have been evenly matched tend to generate motivation for the players without the need for further hype. South Point and Crest have perfectly fit that mold. The rivals are routinely atop conference standings, and both have championship aspirations year after year. So, after the horn sounds to end a game between the Raiders and Chargers, one thing is for certain. Every ounce of football strength has been left on the field. Last Thursday night at Linberger Stadium the trend continued. The two heavyweights delivered hits and sustained blows until the eventual victor rose above the battle. With the move from Friday to Thursday due to inclement weather considerations, both teams had a short week for preparation. The Raiders faced their strongest challenge after having given up no more than 14 points to any of their first five opponents. And the Chargers came in with a five-game scoring average of nearly 40 points. Longtime Seattle Seahawks and current Denver Broncos quarterback, Russell Wilson once stated, "Separation comes from preparation." The key to defeating the Chargers and gaining separation in the standings would be the focus on preparation. And the Big Red put in the work. South Point ground out the yardage with time-consuming drives while managing to defend a potent big-play attack by Crest. The result was a convincing 35-13 victory.

The Red Raiders won the toss and deferred their option, electing to send the defense onto the field for the opening possession. A mobile quarterback posed a challenge but in three plays the Red 'D' had managed to back the Chargers up and force a punt. The short kick gave South Point the ball at the Crest 41-yardline. FB Cam Medlock took a handoff up the middle and broke free to the endzone. In one play, the Raiders had opened the scoring. K Charlie Birtwistle added the PAT, and the Raiders had the early 7-0 lead. The Chargers battled back on their ensuing drive. Chewing up over five minutes, Crest moved to the South Point 9-yardline. From that point, the Red 'D' slammed the door. CB Micah Stowe picked off a pass in the endzone for the game's first turnover and preserved the South Point advantage. The Raiders moved out of the

shadow of their endzone but faced a fourth and one and were forced to punt. P(DL) Aiden Ramirez sent the ball back across midfield erasing any Chargers' hopes of winning a field position battle. The Crest possession began at their 38-yardline and would carry over into the second stanza.

The Chargers mounted some success on the drive and faced a fourth and three from the South Point 5-yardline to begin the quarter. A quarterback keeper scored on the play and the teams were knotted at seven. The Raiders immediately answered. A twelve-play drive carried the Red 'O' to the Crest 4-yardline. On the thirteenth play of the drive, Medlock carried the Raiders back ahead with a run to put South Point up 14-7 with 4:17 remaining in the half. The Raiders defense came with the pressure on the Chargers next possession. DL teammates Hunter Jackson, Jack Milford, and Josh Crowder met at the quarterback, throwing him for a 7-yard loss. The Red 'D' allowed two more plays before forcing a punt. For the game, the Raiders defense played "lights out" against the potent Chargers, shutting them down at critical junctures to maintain the advantage and momentum. LB Chayne Ford laid the lumber on several hits, some resulting in tackles for loss. With plenty of time remaining following the defensive stop, the Raiders set out for more points. WB Dawson Tobin carried the Raiders beyond midfield and South Point worked down to the Crest 41-yardline. From there, QB Patrick Blee connected with SE Aaron Chaney through the air. Chaney hauled in the pass, dodged a couple of tacklers, and weaved his way to the endzone. The Raiders pushed the advantage to 21-7 with under a minute to go. Crest tried to mount a threat in the time remaining and was able to pick up some yardage on a couple of pass plays. But the drive ended on a heads-up play by Ford. A completed Chargers pass near the Raiders 30-yardline appeared headed for points. CB Kam Crawford never gave up pursuit and was able to grab the receiver from behind causing the ball to pop out. Ford was positioned to aid in the tackle but instead caught the ball and headed back up field. The alert play ended the half and sent the teams to the locker rooms.

Crest covered an onside kick to start the third quarter and the good fortune provided momentum for a drive. The Chargers worked the short field and scored on a 1-yard touchdown pass to cut into the lead. The PAT was blocked by the middle of the Raiders line, so the score held at 21-13. Once again South Point had an immediate answer. A ground-pounding drive of over five minutes covered seventy-eight yards ending with a 2-yard touchdown run by Blee. The Raiders moved in front 28-13 as time wound down in the third. Crest carried their next possession into the final quarter.

Facing a fourth and two to begin the quarter, the Chargers attempted a pass over the middle that was underthrown. South Point took over on downs from their 40-yardline. Nine plays covered the sixty yards and the Raiders moved ahead 35-13 on another Blee run of three yards. In desperation, Crest moved downfield on their next drive but were stopped at the Raiders 19-yardline. For the second consecutive possession the Red 'D' had taken the ball over on downs and with just over 5:00 remaining, essentially sealed the win. The Red 'O' came on and picked up first downs to run out the clock. The South Point effort was explained by Medlock when asked about the nature of the teams' preparation over the short week. "We were laser-focused in, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (and) came out and played on Thursday", said the Fullback, adding, "we just came to play ball." Medlock also gave credit to the South Point defense for the first score while addressing the effort to set the early tone. "The defense came out, got a three-and-out, and we're going to go score", he exclaimed. His comments pointed to the value of the teamwork and preparation that went into the total team effort against the Cleveland County rival.

South Point and Crest matchups are routinely games of significance. A victory has generally vaulted the winner through successful regular seasons and beyond. A short week of preparation stood to diminish either's will and determination. But focusing on what the opponent is doing to prepare and then doing that much more was the key. The Raiders kept pace with a convincing 35-13 win. Now the focus shifts to the next contest, a battle of unbeatens as South Point visits the Kings Mountain Mountaineers. It's not hard to bring an 'A' game when that's all you have!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Kings Mountain and South Point have managed similar numbers through six games. The Mountaineers have scored 227 points while giving up a paltry 47 with three shutouts along the way. The Red Raiders have scored 235 points and surrendered 67. The stage is set. Who'll be more prepared?!