
VARSITY REPORT

by Jamey Andrews

“Black Friday Dominance...Red Raiders Claim 10th Straight Victory Over Rivals, 58-7”

Two long-time, conference rivals limped into Arrowhead Stadium on the campus of East Gaston Friday night, each carrying disappointing 1-3 records. But records didn't matter on this night. Neither was worthy of mention the fact that one owned a remarkable string of victories over the other. It perhaps mattered for a brief moment that this would mark the first conference game of the season and could set the tone for a successful run to a conference title. What truly mattered on this night was...it was BLACK FRIDAY! A story goes that when South Point and East Gaston met on the gridiron for the first time way back in 1972, one coach was so thoroughly disgusted that his team would dare tie the decidedly lesser opponent that the sound of his extremely heated scorn of his team still echoes through the walls of the field house! That “chewing out” took, as they say, for his teams then reeled off three consecutive shutout victories by huge margins, 62-0, 54-0, and 36-0. The ground work had been laid for a series that may be matched by others, but few could boast more instances of total domination by one team! The Red Raiders, as they have in previous meetings, and specifically the most recent nine, pounded the Warriors into quick submission with an agile offense, a stingy defense, and solid special teams play en route to a convincing 58-7 victory. Try as they might the Warriors could gain no momentum against the South Point onslaught. It started with the toss, won by South Point, and the Red Raiders never looked back!

Deferring the option, South Point put their defense on the field to begin the game. East Gaston managed a first down and ran 5 plays before being forced to punt. Max Mead fielded the punt and a late hit out of bounds set the Raiders offense up in decent field position at their 46 yardline. Mario Brandon and Jake Alexander would quickly carry the Red ‘O’ across midfield and deeper into Warriors territory. But a holding call would back the Raiders up to the East Gaston forty-four. From there, quarterback Scottie Lee dropped back and lofted a perfect spiral into the hands of Nick Farmer, hitting him in stride behind the defense. Farmer notched the game's first score outrunning three defenders to the endzone. Thomas Lempereur's PAT split the uprights and South Point had the 7-0 advantage at the 7:33 mark of the first quarter. They were far from done! The Warriors gained three yards on two plays and then lost six yards on third down to be forced to punt on fourth and thirteen. What happen next could possibly be one of the most athletic plays ever witnessed on a football field, or on this night at least! Attempting a rugby style kick, the punter drilled a low line drive between the hashes that linebacker Nick Muse snatched like an interception. Muse's quick reaction to the ball (caught at the East Gaston 31) and immediate advance put the Raiders at the Warriors eleven for their second possession. On first and goal from the one, Alexander barreled in for the 14-0 lead. The teams then settled end for the remainder of the quarter with each punting once before the second stanza began.

With the lead and the ball in the second, South Point was content to run the offense, chew the clock, and control the game in the usual Red Raider style. But on this Black Friday the juggernaut could not be stopped! From the East Gaston forty-eight, South Point spread the ball around with a good mix of plays and ball handlers, easily covering the needed yardage to set up

Alexander's second touchdown. The Red Raiders margin had grown to 21-0 with 6:02 remaining in the half. The Red 'D' continued to swarm the Warriors, forcing a three and out possession and a punt that would put the Raiders in business at midfield. South Point advanced the fifty yards in four plays for their fourth touchdown, a Lee to Brandon pitch for eight yards and a 28-0 lead. To their credit, East Gaston was not willing to concede, although at this point depending exclusively on an air attack seemed the only solution to slow the Raiders attack. The Warriors could ill afford mistakes in a game in which South Point had been so dominant in all phases. But an errant pass and personal foul against East Gaston would move the ball to the Warriors three and set the Raiders defense up for a scoring opportunity. Defensive tackle Payton Graham shed a block and shot through the line for the quarterback sack in the endzone. His effort put two more points on the board for South Point, opening up a 30-0 advantage with 2:26 left on the clock. Asked about the preparation for the rivalry game and had any more emphasis been placed on this contest over others, Graham would stress, "We never took this game lightly, we treated it just like any other game we would ever play." The senior added, "We took some tough losses but it all paid off," a reference to the hard work put in by the team following the rough start to the season. The return of the free kick that followed served to dig the hole deeper for the Warriors. Brandon took the ball from the visitor side of the fifty and wove his way inside the East Gaston five, narrowly missing the pylon as he dove for the score. With the ball at the five, Lee pitched to wingback Caleb Gibson who then sprinted around the left side for the score. The Red Raider halftime lead had grown to 37-0 and the game seemed surely destined to finish under a live clock at some point in the second half.

With the ball to begin the third, and after a big return by Brandon across midfield, Lee and company made quick work of the East Gaston defense. Set up by a forty yard run by Lee, Alexander dove across from the one yardline for the 44-0 advantage. On the ensuing possession things continued to go "South" for the Warriors. A Nathan Hamilton interception and return placed the ball in the hands of the Red offense at the East Gaston five. From there, Gibson bounced off tacklers through the middle for another quick score for the Raiders. South Point was on top by a 51-0 count and the only thing that would be able to stop the Red was time. The clock, like the Raiders continued to roll. With the lead the Raiders were able to go to the bench to give the backups some valuable game time experience. Keaton Hale took over under center and others joined on both sides of the ball. The teams simply ran out the time remaining in the third and for the Warriors the fourth quarter would signal a merciful end to South Point's dominating effort.

Facing a fourth and eleven from their 19 yardline, a failed East Gaston fake punt added to the sting of the lopsided contest. South Point took over and Ty Tinker became the workhorse behind Hale. His effort notched the final points for the Red Raiders as he plunged in from a yard out at the 6:51 mark. South Point led 58-0 and was on pace for the shutout before an eighty yard pass was hauled in and taken the distance for the Warriors only points. The 58-7 margin of victory was not the largest in the history of the rivalry, but neither was it close to the 0-0 tie from 1972.

Nothing much mattered beyond the contest at Arrowhead Stadium last Friday night, not the records, not the streaks, or the fact that this would mark the first conference game of the

season. What mattered was that this was Black Friday and once again, in fact for the last 10 consecutive seasons, Black Friday was turned RED! South Point dominated all phases of the game en route to a 58-7 thrashing of the rival East Gaston Warriors. The win gives the Raiders momentum as they drive deeper into the conference schedule. Next up is a homecoming matchup with the surprising Hunter Huss Huskies. Time for another 'RED' Friday!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Hunter Huss comes to Lineberger Stadium having won their conference opener against North Gaston. They are confident and will be carrying some momentum from that victory. Add to that the opportunity to make a statement at South Point's homecoming and the Huskies would need little more motivation. No time to let the guard down for the Red.

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