

Game Recap

Black Friday, Red Raiders – Any Questions? South Point Powers Past East Gaston, 44-6

So long as teams suit up and take the field, there will be rivalries. In some cases it might be suggested that a rivalry has waned to the point of no longer existing. Generally these ideas are founded in the minds of the perpetual underdog, typically as a means to come to terms with the total domination from which they suffer year after year. But, make no mistake, the rivalry still exists! Don't think for a moment that if that underdog were to stumble upon a rare victory against the cross-town "bullies", the shout would not come from the tallest mountain! Likely there would be bells ringing, dancing in the streets, and year-long reminders of the accomplishment. For that over-achieving underdog, the season would be made, even if every other contest ended with a mark in the 'L' column. A wise and longtime Red Raider fan observed that, "South Point makes other teams' seasons; we are the one teams want to mark as a win on the schedule." The most recent opportunity for that took place Friday night at Arrowhead Stadium, home of the East Gaston Warriors. Fans were permitted to attend in larger numbers due to the easing of some pandemic restrictions. And they took full advantage, further emphasizing that Raiders and Warriors fans are among the best in high school football. The atmosphere also served proof that the rivalry is still very much alive the world over – or at least in the eastern part of Gaston County. The teams were primed, their determination sure, and the will to win firmly established. Surely this would be the night! And for one team, it was. East Gaston won the toss, and little else, as South Point came out firing on all cylinders in every phase of the game en route to a decisive 44-6 thumping!

The Raiders received the opening kickoff – and the rout was on! With the opening possession, the Raiders established their customary ground-pounding attack for a 65 yard drive that ended with a 3-yard TD run by RB Hunter Hogue. K Carson Smith added the extra point and the Raiders had quickly put what would turn out be the game winning points on the board. But the early 7-0 advantage would be short-lived. On the ensuing kickoff, Smith pooched the kick over the front receiving line of the Warriors. The ball traveled 12 yards, bouncing at the East Gaston 48 yardline and into the arms of South Point's Tyson Riley playing on Special Teams. High school rules prohibit the recovering (kicking) team from advancing the onside kick, but Riley's alert play set the Red 'O' up for more dominance. From under center, QB Will Rhinehart engineered a drive that was slowed by back-and-forth penalties on both sides. RBs Hogue and Cam Medlock ran hard behind solid O-line blocking to the Warriors 10 yardline. From there, Hogue took a pitch around the right side to put the Raiders up 14-0 with 3:56 remaining in the first quarter. Smith's third kickoff of the game sailed into the endzone for the touchback allowing the East Gaston offense to finally take the field. Their stay would not last. A muffed handoff on their first offensive play resulted in a turnover. DL Aiden Ramirez and LB Ryan Harris, from opposite sides of the line, met at the ball and were joined by DL Jackson Risk. The trio co-possessed the ball giving the Raiders another shot for points at the East Gaston 16 yardline. On the short drive, South Point was penalized but managed to regain the original line

of scrimmage. From there Rhinehart kept the ball and weaved his way to the goalline for the 21-0 lead. Unofficially, with 3:02 left in the opening stanza, the Warriors stood 21 points down with a mere 6 seconds of offensive possession. East Gaston would carry there next drive into the second quarter. But by this time, the Raiders had thoroughly dominated the game's opening.

The Warriors built momentum on the initial drive of the second quarter, managing to reach the South Point twelve. LB Omari Hunt made a touchdown saving tackle to help turn the tide for the Raiders. His effort reignited the Red 'D'. A series of Warrior penalties and South Point tackles for losses eliminated the scoring chance. The Raiders held firm and took over on downs at the East Gaston twenty-seven. South Point did not mount a charge and would punt at the 9:00 mark before the half. The Warriors built on the rare success of the defense. With excellent field position set up by a Raider mistake on special teams, East Gaston set out on an opportunistic scoring drive. Facing a fourth and eight from the South Point eighteen, the scrambling Warrior QB heaved a throw as he was being taken to the ground. The ball found its way into the arms of a waiting safety valve in the flat. With no Raiders nearby, the Warriors netted their first points of the game. And when South Point was forced to punt on the ensuing possession, the teams headed to the half with the Raiders in control by a 21-6 count.

A promising drive for East Gaston to begin the third quarter was shaping up to be the Warriors next best scoring opportunity. East Gaston chewed nearly six minutes off the clock before the Red 'D' shut them down. Factoring in on another Warrior turnover, Ramirez made a hit that jarred the ball loose from an East Gaston ball carrier at the South Point thirty-seven. His teammate, DL Shane Wilson, fell on the ball to give the Raiders offense another chance. South Point wasted no time reclaiming the momentum. Medlock and Jones picked up chunks of yardage on the drive. Jones sped in from 21 yards out to move the Raiders ahead, 28-6, with 5:20 remaining in the third. The Warriors failed to convert on a third and two and were forced to punt on their next possession. South Point took the field with the ball resting at their 33 yardline. The drive extended into the final twelve minutes.

To begin the fourth quarter of play, the Raiders faced a second and goal at the East Gaston one. Medlock dove into the line for the touchdown. The South Point advantage grew to 35-6. The Red 'D' came out inspired on the next Warrior drive. Consecutive tackles behind the line of scrimmage by LB Matt Hastings, DL Wilson, DL Xarique Culbreath, and LB Josh Crowder forced East Gaston to punt from their own endzone. A snap over the head of the punter and out of the back of the endzone netted two more points for the Red Raiders. South Point moved out to a 37-6 advantage due to the miscue, and would receive the free kick for a chance to add more. On the kick, Return Specialist Javus Davis took the ball at the Raiders' forty-six. Davis set up his blockers and motored his way toward the goalline. A lunging tackler caused Davis' knee to touch at the two yardline before the ball broke the plane of the goal. But his effort was rewarded when RB Jack Milford took a handoff from Rhinehart up the middle for the touchdown. South Point had put the exclamation point on a powerful Black Friday performance! The remaining minutes wound down and the Red Raiders secured the 44-6 victory.

Rivalries are built between teams for various reasons. David vs. Goliath, Us vs. Them, cross-town or cross words, there will always be something that makes victory in a certain contest a little (or a lot) sweeter than others. Over the years one team may have a decided advantage, but be assured that if winning a game over a rival makes, or salvages, a season, the rivalry still exists. The Red Raiders added another notch to their belt with a dominating win over rival East Gaston at Arrowhead Stadium. South Point now moves on to a matchup with the Stuart Cramer Storm. Another game, another rival, another opportunity to dominate! Can you say – “**River Rumble**”?!

Go Get ‘Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

South Point carries a six game win streak into the Stuart Cramer game. The Storm has yet to win a game against the Red Raiders with play beginning in 2014. In the six meetings, South Point owns a 303-21 scoring margin against Cramer. As was the case with Forestview when the Jaguars became a regular opponent for the Raiders, no Raider team wants to be the first to drop a contest against the opponent. Such is the making of a rivalry! The **River Rumble**! Don’t even let ‘em win the toss! Go Big Red!!!