

Game Recap

Homecoming? “Home-pounding” - Red Raiders Smash Cavaliers, 42-14

By South Point’s own standards, the first half of the season was, at best, mediocre. Battling through injuries and mistakes is a part of sports and something that all teams fight through. But in their history, the Red Raiders have proven a remarkable ability to survive those challenges, even to the point of ultimately claiming conference and state championships. So, it was with some measure of concern that after a convincing victory over rival East Gaston, the week off might erase the momentum established, and send the Raiders back to square one in team development. Such would be a greater concern for any other, routinely mediocre, squad. But that’s not the South Point program! Eager to get back on the field, the Raiders remained focused and were determined to defend the home turf. From the outset it was obvious that the Big Red had every intention to make the returning alumni proud and prove that the traditions established years ago would be carried on for years to come. Backed by the many classes and former classmates in attendance, the Raiders turned the 2019 Homecoming into a ‘Home-pounding’ by smashing the East Rutherford Cavaliers, 42-14. The impressive showing moved the Raiders to 2-1 in conference play and served notice of what the team can accomplish as the season continues.

East Rutherford received the opening kick and was soon shutdown by the Red ‘D’. DL Xarique Culbreath shot through the line on a third down play, grabbed the Cavalier quarterback and, with the aid of some teammates, put him on the ground. South Point then defended a fourth and long pass to the endzone to take over on downs at the 32 yardline. Will Rhinehart started under center for the Raiders and he quickly moved the team downfield with help from his ball carriers, Naseem Jones and Jammari Lewis. Working to the East Rutherford 13, Rhinehart called his own number and sped through the line to the endzone. K Carson Smith’s PAT was true and South Point took the 7-0 early lead. East Rutherford found small success with the passing game on their second possession but were forced to punt. The Red ‘O’ began their second drive of the game with 4:21 on the clock and the ball at midfield courtesy of a Devon King punt return. The Raiders continued to dominate the line of scrimmage moving the ball to the Cavaliers’ 20 yardline. From there, and after taking over at quarterback, King burst free for a 20 yard scamper that advanced the lead to 14-0. Again, East Rutherford would rely on a passing attack to try to stay in the game. And coupled with some uncharacteristic South Point mistakes, the Cavaliers managed a drive across midfield that would carry over into the second quarter.

Facing a third and six from the South Point forty-eight to begin the stanza, East Rutherford tried to catch the Raiders off-guard with an inside handoff. LB Matt Hastings darted across the line, meeting the ball carrier at the point of the exchange, to snuff the play and force a punt. Back deep for the punt, King faked defenders before scoping up the ball and racing back across the fifty to the Cavaliers 49 yardline. A South Point fumble stalled the drive and at that point Red Raider mistakes were the only defensive muscle East Rutherford could boast. The swarming Red ‘D’ had the backs of their offensive teammates by forcing a three and out on the

East Rutherford possession. A shanked punt gave the Raiders the ball at the Cavaliers' 43 yardline. Two plays later, King ran in from 32 yards out for the touchdown and 21-0 advantage. The Cavaliers continued to try to mount drives against the Red 'D' and had some success with their third possession of the quarter. Working into South Point territory at the Raiders' 47 yardline, East Rutherford managed positive yardage on arguably their best drive. But facing a second and fifteen after a false start penalty, LB Jackson Risk added to the Cavaliers troubles. Blazing off the corner, Risk dropped the quarterback for an 8-yard loss and essentially crushed the drive. The South Point offense continued to impress, a 47-yard run by King was followed by another East Rutherford punt and then a 1-yard dive by Jones to end all scoring for the first half. The teams went to the intermission with South Point up 35-0.

With the ball to begin the third, the Raiders were looking to put points on the board and send the clock into perpetual motion. The plan worked. Jammari Lewis returned the second half kickoff to the East Rutherford twenty-five. Eight plays later, and after two questionable stops inside the one, King dove over the top to leave no doubt that the ball crossed the plane. With South Point up 42-0, the clock went live from around the nine minute mark of the third quarter. Substitutions were in order and the Cavaliers managed to dodge the shutout with an ensuing 98-yard kick return for points. The game though, was never in doubt and the job for the offense became to hold the ball and the task for the defense was to bend but don't break. At 42-7 in favor of the home team, the fourth quarter soon arrived.

The contest sped through the final 12 minutes with both teams claiming two possessions each. On the final drive of the game, the Cavaliers scored on a closing second 83-yard bomb to account for the final 42-14.

The week off between a blowout victory and a homecoming challenge did nothing to slow the momentum of the Red Raiders. With alumni looking on, South Point took charge, scoring early and often to turn the Homecoming into a 'Home-pounding' against the conference opponent, East Rutherford Cavaliers. The win keeps South Point on pace to remain near the top of the conference standings. And the confidence of the Red Raiders continues to grow as the post season approaches. In Coach's words, "Somebody has to win the state championship; why not us?!"

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

For what it's worth (FWIT)...South Point demolished East Gaston (10/4) and goes on a Bye Week. Last week, R-S Central demolished East Gaston (10/11) and followed that with a Bye Week. Pattern?

More FWIT...South Point's next opponent, R-S Central, defeated East Rutherford 35-28 at home. The Red Raiders defeated East Rutherford 42-14 at home. On paper that means...Nothing!