

## Game Recap

### Big Red Rolls, Solid Second Half Crushes Jaguars, 42-7

When Walter Camp became involved with the effort to establish structure to the “new” sport that was drawn from elements of soccer and rugby, the Yale undergraduate medical student could not have known what “gridiron football” would grow to become. Camp, considered the Father of American Football, served on a rules board that, in the 1880s, was created to shape the sport. He played halfback and was captain of his Yale squad, a position that at that time was equivalent to coach. His affinity and drive for the game qualified him for participation on the board. Among the early rules and designs of the game, Camp is credited with having instituted the position of quarterback, the creation of the line of scrimmage, and the establishment of the division of downs among others. And while over the years those rules and designs have undergone changes, the basic elements have remained throughout. Perhaps one of the most overlooked, or least considered, elements of a contest may be the four quarters timing with the break in the middle. After two quarters of play in which opponents spar to put points on a scoreboard, the intermission, or halftime, provides players with a needed rest and coaches with time to reassess a game plan that has (or has not) worked to that point in the game. The opportunity also provides time for words of motivation and encouragement as required. And the tilt of the scoreboard will guide the tone (and volume!) of the speech. We may only speculate as to how the phenomenon of a “halftime” speech may have evolved since Camp’s time, but as of last Friday night at Lineberger Stadium, we can be assured that the practice can achieve a desired result! South Point scored a touchdown late in the second quarter to take a one score lead into the intermission. The Raiders were favored over the Forestview Jaguars, but the conference foe took advantage of a South Point miscue to keep the contest close throughout the first half. A thoroughly dominant second half though, suggested that the halftime discourse was effective. The Big Red took control in the second half, crushing the Jaguars in a 42-7 victory.

Forestview won the toss and deferred their option to the second half. With due regards to Walter Camp, the rule associated with the coin toss is often misunderstood. There are technically four options that are offered upon winning the toss, to kick, receive, field direction, or defer. Both teams have to make a choice after the coin toss. (For the sake

of clarity, disregard the field direction consideration.) The winner often chooses to save, or defer, their option to the second half, meaning they will likely choose to receive the second half kickoff (but they could choose to kick off to begin the third quarter). Naturally, once the option is deferred, the team that did not win the coin toss must make a decision for the opening of the game. Expecting that the winner of the toss is going to choose to receive the second half kick, the usual choice is to receive the opening kick of the first quarter. The point is, the receiving team in either half is not automatically decided. The receiving team in the first quarter could also receive the opening kick of the third quarter as well. (This seemingly simple rule associated with tossing a coin can get complicated, so it is suggested that fans, and players, study it carefully otherwise a Dak Prescott moment is possible. Look it up.) The Raiders elected to receive the ball to start the game. From their 33-yardline the Red 'O' moved efficiently downfield in just over 4 1/2 minutes. A 3-yard run by QB Patrick Blee opened the scoring and put South Point on top 7-0. The Jaguars were stopped by the Raiders 'D' and were forced to punt on their first possession. In fact, the early part of the game became a series of stalled drives. On their third possession, a South Point fumble was recovered by Forestview at the Raiders 36-yardline. The ensuing Jaguars drive carried over into the second quarter.

With momentum and a short field, Forestview managed a ball-control drive that ended with points. The Raiders defense held strong, forcing the Jaguars to use 5:38 to cover the needed 30 yards before cashing in with a 1-yard run for the touchdown. The score was knotted at 7 and the flow became a little more uneasy for South Point after they were held and forced to punt on their next possession. The Red 'D' returned the favor, and the ball was punted back to the Raiders with 3:28 remaining before the half. South Point moved from their 41-yardline across midfield to the Forestview forty-seven. From there, Blee hit SE Aaron Chaney down the right sideline for a 32-yard pickup to the Jaguars 15-yardline. Three plays later, FB Cam Medlock barreled in from 1-yard out to put the Raiders up 14-7 as the teams headed to the intermission.

To this point the pace of the low-scoring contest seemed to favor the underdog visitors. Any change in the final two quarters would be the result of productive halftime "encouragement" in the Big Red locker room! The encouragement took! South Point came out in the third, recovered a Forestview fumble and set their sights on crushing their opponent. A 13-yard run by Blee moved the Raiders in front, 21-7. And after the Red 'D' notched another stop, Blee made good on another chance from 10-yards out for a 28-7 South Point advantage. The drive benefitted from a short field courtesy of a RS Will Ross punt return to the Jaguars 22-yardline. The Raiders 'D' continued to pressure

and when CB Micah Stowe made a leaping interception to thwart yet another Forestview drive, the dagger was being pulled from the sheath! South Point had scored on both of their possessions in the third and were looking to add more. The Raiders' next possession carried over into the final stanza.

Driving from the Forestview 44-yardline, the Red 'O' continued to move the ball downfield. The offensive line managed to open holes and maintain their blocks deep into a play. The result was another Medlock touchdown run of five yards and a 35-7 South Point lead. Asked about the effectiveness of the team and specifically the 'O' line coming out of the half, OL Sullivan Absher explained, "we realized going into halftime that something had to change, something had to give". "We had a mentality change and just started grinding it out", he added. The 'O' line anchor also gave credit to his running backs. "They just go right at you, they're not going to stop", he said. The assessment was accurate. With just over four minutes to go, and QB Elijah Phifer taking over under center, the Raiders offense didn't miss a beat. From the Forestview 45-yardline, Phifer lofted a pass that Chaney pulled down at the 14-yardline. From there, FB Wyatt Moore burst through the left side and raced untouched for six. His first varsity touchdown ended the scoring and sent South Point to the final 42-7 victory.

The game of football has withstood a test of time to become arguably one of the most watched sporting events in the nation and beyond. Credit is due men like Walter Camp who gave of themselves to participate, study, and hone the rules and design of the game taken from soccer and rugby. Somehow the enhancements and divisions that make up the game today contribute to the excitement that brings fans to the stadiums. Not lost among these elements is the halftime break that provides opportunity for motivation to be renewed and determination to be rekindled. A productive intermission can, after all, turn into a 42-7 crushing - by the Big Red!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

### **Notable Facts and Thoughts**

The Dallas Cowboys won the toss and ended up kicking off to the LA Rams in both halves of a 2019 game after Dak Prescott said to the Referee that the Cowboys wanted

to kick. That constituted a decision (choice) and the Rams were awarded the ball to begin the game and the option to decide which they preferred at the beginning of the second half by virtue of their not winning the coin toss. Prescott, it's explained, should have used the term "defer" to indicate Dallas' desire to save their choice for the beginning of the second half (which likely would have been the decision to receive the opening kick of the third quarter).