
VARSITY REPORT

by Jamey Andrews

“South Point Suffers 'Unthinkable' Loss; Fall to Huskies, 21-16”

Even the unseasoned sports fan recognizes that sometimes the unthinkable happens. That is one aspect that draws us to contests of skill. Considering the intangibles that may be the difference between a victory and a loss is so cerebrally captivating, that we can't turn away. We embrace our teams to the point that our hearts beat in rhythm to their successes and failures. Okay, so maybe "cerebrally captivating" is a stretch, but there is no denying that as fans, our hearts hurt when our teams stumble. And that's when the brain becomes engaged. We dissect every play to try to figure out what went wrong, what could have been done differently, why did the ball bounce that way, or...did I forget to wear my "lucky" jersey?! Last Friday night at Lineberger Stadium, the unthinkable happened. The Red Raiders' unblemished run to a conference title (off to a 1-0 start) was, for lack of a fancier term, blemished. Riding a wave of emotion that followed a trouncing of their long time rival, South Point faced a Hunter Huss squad that, while improved, was not expected to pull out a victory over the Raiders. But again, in sports, sometimes the unthinkable happens. South Point put forth what could have been considered a winning effort. Unfortunately, and here's another part where the brain comes into play, the team that has success in every phase of the game generally has the best chance to come away with more points on the board. Hunter Huss boasted a single score on offense. But that was sandwiched between an 87 yard kickoff return and a 98 yard fumble recovery, both for touchdowns. So defense and special teams bolstered the Huskies and the Raiders could only answer with field goals until late in the fourth quarter. The Red never gave up, though, managing to put themselves in position to win at the end, but it was not meant to be on this night. And now the Raiders find themselves in a position they haven't been in for a while. They need to become fans of other conference foes in hopes to have a chance to at least share the conference title.

The Huskies won the toss and deferred the option, giving South Point the first offensive opportunity. The Raiders began with good field position following the short kick. And the Red 'O' was able to drive to the Huss 16 before facing a fourth and three. No gain on the fourth down play gave the Huskies the ball and a small measure of momentum. The South Point defense forced a quick three and out, allowing Huss less than two minutes on the possession. The Raiders ground attack got in gear. Jake Alexander was the workhorse and he benefitted from some tough blocking by his offensive linemen. Center Ethan Jackson, Guard Wesley Barker, and Tackle Sean Burns opened a hole for Alexander to rush from the Huskies 43 to the 12 yardline. The 31 yard pickup put South Point in great position for the score, but then the momentum stalled. The Raiders would have to convert a 23 yard Thomas Lempereur field goal to take the early advantage. The lead lasted all of 15 seconds as the ensuing kickoff was returned for the go ahead score by the Huskies. The teams would trade punts on the next two possessions before the Raiders would draw close at the 11:01 mark of the second quarter with another Lempereur field goal, this one from 24 yards out. The field position was once again set up by a long run by Alexander. This time cutting through the left side, anchored by Guard James

Granson and Tackle Larry Dowdy, Alexander rushed from the South Point 35 to the Hunter Huss 22 yardline. The points closed the gap to one, 7-6, but it just didn't seem right that the Raiders were settling for 3 points when they were accustomed to 6 when entering the redzone. Again the teams would trade punts before the Huskies would mount their only true offensive threat of the game. Driving 69 yards, Huss cashed in on the fortunes of a scrambling quarterback who bought time before finding an open receiver in the endzone. The 14-6 score took the teams to the intermission.

South Point forced a quick three-and-out series for the Huskies to begin the third. Leaders of the swarming defense were Linebackers Nick Muse, Tanner Canterbury, and Safety Max Mead. After a short punt and a positive bounce, the Raiders were in good field position to take the ball downfield. The drive stalled at the eight and so South Point would again put three on the board with a 25 yard field goal. The third quarter clock read 7:56 and the Raiders continued to play hard. A Muse interception and return to the Huss three yardline seemed to be the boost needed for South Point to capture their first lead of the game. But on a second and goal from the one, the ball popped loose and, as could be imagined, right into Huskie hands. The credited return was for 98 yards but it might as well been 198 because the sting could hurt no worse. The result was a 14 point swing. Rather than going up by two, the Raiders fell behind by 12, and the hole was dug deeper. The Huskies led 21-9 with 5:19 remaining in the third. The next three Raiders' possessions, stretching into the fourth quarter, would end with two turnovers on downs and an interception. When they needed it the most, South Point just could not muster that one big play that would give them the momentum for good. But to their credit the Red never gave up. A thirty yard connection from quarterback Scottie Lee to Muse cut the lead to 21-16 with 1:55 remaining in regulation. At that point, the Huss offense became very diligent managers of the clock. The Red 'D' was able to force a punt and South Point had a paltry 48 seconds to stay undefeated in the conference. They managed to push the ball to the Huss 26 but a final desperation pass in the endzone was batted down and the unthinkable had happened. The Red Raiders had to become dependent upon help to achieve one of their goals for the season.

Sports fans understand. Just when it seems the outcome of a contest is a forgone conclusion, the unthinkable can happen. It's hard to imagine that the Hunter Huss Huskies could pull off an upset and put the Raiders in a position to need help for a conference title. What is for certain is that South Point will not give up at this venture. This team will continue to fight for every goal they put in place to begin the season. The Raiders will work hard to improve, and every member of RaiderNation can be assured that the Red will never quit! In the meantime, make sure that "lucky jersey" doesn't get lost!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Next week South Point travels to Gastonia for a matchup with the Huskies long time rival Ashbrook. The Greenwave defeated North Gaston on Friday by racking up a whopping 500+ rushing yards. Ashbrook may have wanted to make a statement following their loss to Cramer

two weeks ago. And with the Raiders loss to the Huskies, the Greenwave is likely to think that it's their time to make another statement against the perennial Big South powerhouse.

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