

Game Recap

Raiders Pound Huskies - Humble Huss, 35 - 7

Time of Possession (TOP) is one of those stats that may tell the story of a game but is just as likely to be ignored for its perceived lack of value. After all, points are not awarded for simply having the ball in the offense's hands. And even though scoring opportunities are enhanced when the offense has possession, TOP does not guarantee a win. In 2009, over the course of a 60-minute NFL game, the Miami Dolphins possessed the ball for over 45 minutes (45:07) yet lost 27-23 to the Indianapolis Colts. Obviously, it's not about how long a team keeps the ball. It's about what they do with it when they have it. So, TOP may be counted among the obscure stats that may - or may not - factor into the outcome of a game. Proof of the latter came last Friday night at Lineberger Stadium. The visiting Hunter Huss Huskies held the ball for 17:15 of the first half, just under seven minutes shy of the total 24 minutes. Yet the Big Red carried a 14-0 lead into the locker room at halftime. The scales were more balanced in the second half with South Point nearly doubling the time of possession by the Huskies. Ultimately the outcome was decided by the scoring efficiency of the Big Red. The Raiders made good use of their time with the pigskin, running away with a convincing 35-7 victory.

The Red Raiders won the toss and elected to give Hunter Huss the initial possession. The Huskies began play from their 32-yard line and were quickly forced to punt by the Red 'D'. An errant snap was covered at the Huss 12-yard line by S Jaquis Rumph. The Red 'O' took the field with 8:24 on the clock. And by the time it reached 8:19, FB Cam Medlock had put South Point on the board. His 12-yard carry up the middle was followed by K Charles Birtwistle's PAT and the Raiders led 7-0. The Huskies began again from their 20-yard line following a Birtwistle touchback. A drive of nearly six minutes stalled and Rumph once again figured into the final play of the Huskies possession. Speeding off the corner, Rumph laid out in front of an attempted field goal, blocking the kick and giving his offense another turn with the ball. South Point carried the ensuing possession into the second quarter. But for the record, the Hunter Huss offense claimed 9:14 of the opening 12:00 and found themselves trailing on the scoreboard.

Early in the second stanza the Raiders were forced to attempt a field goal to extend the lead. But the ball sailed wide right, and the Huskies took over. Huss went to the air without success and after three plays the punting team came back onto the field. South Point began from their 44-yard line and moved downfield in eight plays. WB Dawson Tobin's 13-yard run put the Raiders in a first and goal from the two-yard line. From there, Medlock punched in for the 14-0 advantage. Hunter Huss again tried to counter

with a drive of 6:57 but the Red 'D' held strong. The Raiders took over on downs with 22 seconds remaining in the half. The teams went to the locker room with both leading in different statistical categories. The Huskies in TOP and the Raiders on the scoreboard - where it counted!

With the ball to begin the third quarter, South Point turned the tables on the time of possession stat. With the offensive attack in solid form, the Raiders chewed up the turf and over half the clock. Facing a second and nine from the Huss 13-yard line, QB Patrick Blee lofted a pass over the line of scrimmage to SE Aaron Chaney. Chaney never broke stride, hauling in the pass and crossing the goal line for six. The Raiders moved in front 21-0 and were eager for more. Another Huskies punt after a short possession gave South Point their next scoring opportunity. With excellent field position at the Huss forty-three, the Raiders moved quickly to the Huskies five. From there, Blee kept around the left side and ran in to add to the South Point lead. The Raiders made good on two possessions for a total 9:18 in the third to move in front by a 28-0 tally.

In the final 12:00, Hunter Huss managed a touchdown after a Raiders miscue. An interception return to the South Point 11 yard line gave the Huskies the chance to get on the scoreboard. A six-yard run with 6:42 remaining erased the shutout. The Red 'O' immediately answered with a 49-yard drive after covering an onside kick. Medlock's 29 yard burst up the middle ended the scoring and gave the Raiders the final 35-7 victory.

Looking at multiple season stats, there was sufficient reason to believe that South Point would easily take care of business against Hunter Huss. On paper the contest may not have appeared to be a very competitive matchup. Statistically speaking, the Raiders owned many of the categories that typically lead to victory. Yet the first half of Friday night's game began to tell a different story. The Huskies best defense was their offense. By staying on the field, they kept the ball out of the hands of the Red 'O'. But the Raiders responded by making the best of their opportunities. Capturing points on 5 of 7 true scoring chances (excluding 2 "take a knee" possessions that ended both halves), South Point took care of the Huskies to remain undefeated on the season. Keep the time, we'll take the points!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Productivity with the ball overshadows Time of Possession. An eight-minute drive may make it seem that a team is controlling the ballgame. But if the drive ends with a punt, TOP hasn't contributed to the one stat that determines a victor - a score. Then again, holding onto the ball keeps the opponent's offense from scoring. So, is TOP important? Yes. And No.