

Game Recap

South Point Falls in OT, Huss Downs Raiders, 31-24

One week removed from a convincing win, and the continuation of a championship caliber season, the Red Raiders suffered a loss that just didn't seem possible on paper. But that's not where the game is played. Rather it's played between the lines of the gridiron and among the lessons learned for South Point is the fact that records mean nothing. Instead, the team must recognize that, week in and week out, the opponent is spending an equal number of days in practice, preparing to win a football game. There is no denying that with the Raiders outstanding football tradition the target rests squarely on their backs, and the team routinely gives a good account of themselves to maintain that respect. But as is the case in any sport, an underdog will have its day. No team enters a contest expecting to lose. A famous saying holds that even underdogs prepare victory speeches. So, if there was even the slightest hint that the Raiders underestimated the opponent, the challenges going forward will be to practice winning, control what you can control, and take no team for granted.

The Huskies won the toss and deferred the option to the second half. South Point had the first possession and the Big Red made good on the drive. With the ball to begin the game, the Raiders employed one of their patented ground-pounding attacks. The drive took 7:31 off the clock - well over half the quarter - and ended with a FB Chayne Ford 2-yard run for the score. K Charlie Birtwistle nailed the PAT and South Point had the initial lead, 7-0. Hunter Huss' first possession of the opening stanza carried over into the second quarter of regulation.

Driving from within Raider's territory to begin the second, the Huskies gained the equalizer on a 32-yard touchdown pass to even the score, 7-7. Both teams had success with the game plans that have served them well throughout each programs' history. And the same held true on South Point's second drive. Covering seventy yards in 4:27, the Red 'O' moved back in front on a 5-yard run by QB Patrick Blee. The two-point conversion gave the Raiders the 15-7 advantage they would take to the intermission as the Red 'D' held the Huskies on downs with time running out in the first half.

With the ball to begin play in the third, Huss drove deep into Raider's territory, but were forced to settle for a field goal attempt. The kick was good, and the Huskies closed to within five, 15-10. South Point matched the effort on their ensuing drive. Birtwistle notched a 21-yard field goal to push the lead back to eight, 18-10. A little over halfway through the quarter, the game had not turned into the blowout that some may have expected. The Huskies remained within striking distance and aided by the speed of an elusive scrambling quarterback; it appeared the Raiders would need to continue to work to stay out in front. The Red 'D' battled, forcing a punt on Huss' next possession. Blasting across the line, DB Ashton Green blocked the punt and recovered the ball at the Huskies 12-yardline. In three plays the Raiders advanced their lead. WB Harrison McKinney took a Blee pitch and covered the necessary two yards for the 24-10 tally. At this point the Big Red looked to be in solid control. But there remained a final 12:00 to play in regulation.

The teams traded possessions in the final stanza with South Point forcing a Huss punt before giving the ball back on a turnover. The Huskies took advantage of the miscue, scoring to cut into the Raiders lead, 24-17, with 5:06 to go. Huss then forced a South Point punt with 1:44 on the clock to give themselves a chance to draw even. A quick strike with 0:42 remaining knotted the game at 24-24. The turn of events, while putting the team in a difficult situation, did not cause panic in the Red Raiders. South Point managed to drive to the Huss 29-yardline with 0:02 left in regulation. The field goal unit ran on to try to nail down the victory. Birtwistle's kick was perfectly aligned but hit the crossbar. The ball bounced back into the field of play rather than over, sending the contest into overtime. In the extra session, the Huskies scored on a long pass to take their first lead at 31-24. Unfortunately, South Point's second miscue handed Huss the victory.

Even underdogs expect to win. And what's left after such a loss is to learn the valuable lesson. The Red Raiders will need to hit the practice field a little more determined. They'll need to ignore the records of any opponent and continue to fight for the tradition. With the lesson learned, the next opportunity to leave it all on the field is next week in Boiling Springs.

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

The Crest Chargers have amassed victories over Gaffney (SC), Burns, Shelby, Ashbrook, and Stuart Cramer. The stage is set for a battle. And a solid week of practice will be necessary for the Raiders to bounce back.