

## Game Recap

### South Point Fights For Victory Over Hibriten, Pound Panthers, 20-7

In victory and defeat many constants remain in the South Point Football tradition. Year after year the determination to put the best offensive and defensive effort on the field describes the attitude of Red Raider teams. Friday night proved no different as the Raiders traveled to face the Hibriten Panthers in Lenoir. Following the season's first loss, South Point met the challenges posed by a capable Hibriten squad. The contest was labeled the Military Appreciation game with a salute to active duty personnel and veterans. These recognitions provide an opportunity to express our gratitude to those who have served and who continue to serve in our nation's armed forces. We are also reminded of how important it is to maintain strong forces charged with protecting the freedoms we often take for granted. We are grateful for those who have, and who continue to serve. They live out daily admirable character traits, many of which coaches strive to instill within their teams (discipline, focus, determination...). Last Friday night the Raiders remained focused on the task at hand, outworked the opponent, and celebrated victory. Consider the words of famed World War II General George S. Patton who once urged his troops, "Accept the challenges, so that you may feel the exhilaration of victory." The victory over Hibriten was realized because South Point, first, accepted the challenge.

The Raiders won the toss and elected to defer their option to the second half. After the first of four kickoff touchbacks by K Charlie Birtwistle, the Panthers took possession at their own 20 yardline. On the third play from scrimmage, an errant pitch was covered by DB Kam Crawford at the Hibriten 19 and the Raiders 'O' took the field. One Panthers penalty and three plays later, FB Chayne Ford burst through from 5 yards out for the initial score. Birtwistle's PAT was true and South Point had the early 7-0 lead. The remainder of the quarter was a battle between the redzones as both teams would trade punts before the Raiders turned the ball over late in the stanza, giving Hibriten the ball at the South Point forty-five. The possession carried over into the second quarter.

The Panthers managed a drive to the Raiders 18 yardline. They then took advantage of the South Point turnover with a touchdown that knotted the contest at 7-7 with 8:54 remaining in the half. The Raiders fought back. A mix of runs by WBs Dawson Tobin, Harrison McKinney, FB Chayne Ford, and QB Patrick Blee moved the ball downfield. After penalties by both squads the ball rested at the Hibriten 36 yardline. From there a pass from Blee was hauled in by SE Peyton McCarn who raced to the endzone untouched. South Point reclaimed the lead, 14-7, and held on through the remainder of the half.

In the third, both teams worked the game plans that have routinely marked their success. Ground-pounding offenses were met with stingy defenses and the clock wound down with neither posing a scoring threat. The Raiders' second drive of the quarter continued into the final stanza.

In total, the South Point drive that carried over into the fourth quarter burned 6:20 off the clock. But the result was a failed field goal attempt. Hibriten took over at their twenty. The Red 'D' continued to keep the Panthers offense in check and forced a punt with 4:46 to go in regulation. Moving quickly across midfield, the Raiders drove to the Hibriten 34 yardline. From there, Ford took a handoff, bounced to the outside off left tackle and outran defenders to the endzone. South Point posted the 20-7 advantage that would become the games final. Asked to sum up the effort, Blee admitted, "You strive for excellence, but there's always room for improvement." The talented QB added that the team works hard in every phase. "The guys on offense were competitive and our defense held them to seven points and that kept us in the game", he said. Blee's teammate and a leader on defense, DL Luke Wesolowski further addressed the team's attitude. "It was a team effort", said Wesolowski, adding "We have a lot of grit on this team, a lot of guys that don't give up."

South Point took a determined approach in their matchup with Hibriten. The team met the challenge head-on and, using a solid team effort, experienced the satisfaction that comes with victory. Going forward, the coaches are urging the team to remain competitive and focus intently on the fundamentals. The River Rumble opens conference play next week and a thorough thrashing of rival Stuart Cramer will prove the message is received loud and clear!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

### **Notable Facts and Thoughts**

River Rumble - The Storm come to Lineberger Stadium winless on the season having dropped contests to East Lincoln, Chase, and East Gaston. Cramer has surrendered 130 points on the season while putting 28 on the board in those matchups. Motivation will not be lacking for the Storm. Neither should it be for the Big Red