

Game Recap

South Point Falls Short – Ragin' Bulls Hand Raiders First Loss, 27-7

It wasn't for a lack of effort. Neither was it a question of talent. Determination was not missing. The fact is South Point simply came up on the short end of the scoreboard against a formidable 4A opponent. The Hickory Ridge Ragin' Bulls used a potent offensive attack backed up by a solid defense to send the Red Raiders to their first loss of the season. The 27-7 tally doesn't completely tell the story of what appears to have been a lopsided victory by Hickory Ridge. Rather it was a combination of big plays, fortuitous bounces, and a rushed week of preparation that contributed to the season's first blemish. The Bulls, ranked 16th among fifty-four Western 4A football squads and 25th in the state overall, would pose a significant challenge to any opponent. So credit South Point for not backing down from the fight. Added to the docket as a last minute replacement for the originally scheduled R-S Central game, Hickory Ridge was looking to bounce back after falling to Charlotte Catholic a week prior. The Ragin' Bulls carried a chip on their shoulder and they were intent on taking every advantage against the confident Red Raiders. After two convincing victories against lesser opponents, South Point had yet to truly gain a measure of where they could stack up as the season progresses. With the loss, this team now knows what it will take to carry on the championship tradition of Red Raider football.

South Point began the contest on offense, beginning play at their twenty-three yardline. Positive yardage on some tough runs by RB Tyson Riley and a breakout by QB Cam Medlock moved the ball into Hickory Ridge territory. But an errant pitch on 3rd and 2 from the Bulls thirty-nine ended the Raiders early threat. P Dylan Nicks pinned the Bulls down at the three yardline to recapture a measure of the momentum lost on the opening drive. Hickory Ridge didn't stay down long. The Ragin' Bulls lived up to their billing with two quick bursts to gain their thirty-three yardline. Then they engaged a passing attack with a scrambling quarterback that has on more than one occasion burned South Point for big gains. The Red 'D' dug in but was unable to take advantage of fumbled snaps by the Bulls. On a second down play from the Bulls' forty-seven, a pass was launched down the center of the field and into the hands of a streaking wide receiver. The result was the game's first score and a 6-0 lead for the Bulls. South Point came back with a strong running game that moved them quickly beyond midfield. The effort carried them to the Hickory Ridge twenty-nine yardline and a first down. But then the series ended on downs after a false start and two incomplete passes. The Bulls took over and once again hit the big plays. A burst up the middle sent them deep into South Point territory and then a second blast hit paydirt for the 12-0 advantage. The score ended the quarter and would give the Raiders the ball to begin the second stanza.

To begin the quarter, South Point moved from their twenty-four to their thirty-four in one play and a first down. To this point the Red Raiders had experienced some success in the ground game but had nothing to show for the effort. That was about to change...or would it? With the new set of downs, Riley took a handoff and crashed into the line, spinning out and away from

would-be tacklers. The speedy back darted past the secondary and covered the 66 yards needed for the apparent touchdown. But what can only be described as an inadvertent whistle blew the play dead after a gain of seven yards! Disappointed but still determined, the Red Raiders sustained the drive up to a 3rd and 9 from their forty-six. From there, Medlock launched a pass in the direction of TE Jackson Blee. The taller receiver grabbed the ball, threw his defender to the ground and completed the 54 yard touchdown play. The PAT brought South Point to within five at 12-7 and sustained the confidence of the Red Raiders. But the momentum was short-lived. The Bulls' passing attack picked up chunks of yardage in quick order. Hickory Ridge drove to the South Point four where they would punch in to extend the lead. A successful two point conversion put the Bulls up 20-7 with time remaining before the half. The Raiders continued to battle but could not finish drives for points. Meanwhile Hickory Ridge was able to move the ball with big plays on the ground and through the air, effectively keeping the Raiders offense off the field. The teams traded possessions without scoring to end the first half.

With the ball to begin play in the third quarter, the Ragin' Bulls drove to the South Point twenty-six yardline. There, facing a 3rd and 13, the fate of the Red Raiders was essentially sealed for the night. A 26 yard run pushed the Hickory Ridge lead out to the eventual final, 27-7. The clock indicated 8:36 remaining in the quarter and South Point would kill the majority of that with the ensuing drive. The possession carried them into Bulls territory but ended on an interception. Hickory Ridge carried their next drive into the final 12 minutes of regulation.

The fourth quarter served little more than to give both teams opportunities to build on their strengths. South Point picked up positive yards but never mounted a true scoring threat. The Red 'D' battled to the end, knocking down passes and forcing a punt. The contest came to its close with the Red Raiders on the bitter side of a hard fought affair. Hickory Ridge handed South Point their first loss of the season.

It would have taken a flawless effort to come out on top against the home team. And the only flaw in South Point's game was the inability to come away with points on promising drives. Few teams escape unscathed in a long football season. Losing may be common to some teams while winning becomes a habit for others. It is that winning habit that causes the pain of a season's first loss. Bouncing back is the mark of a championship program. South Point...bounces back!
~~Next up~~ Next VICTORY – The “River Rumble”!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Following the Bye Week, South Point will host Stuart Cramer in the “River Rumble”. The Red Raiders **own** a 7-0 record against the Storm. South Point **owns** a 345 – 45 scoring margin over Stuart Cramer. The Big Red **OWNS** the puny purple.