

Game Recap

South Point Powers Over Lincolnnton – Down Wolves, 35-21

This season the Minnesota Vikings will pay respects to their long time head coach, Bud Grant, who passed away at age 95 in March. The Hall of Fame Coach guided the Vikings to each of the franchise's four Super Bowls. A three-sport star in college, Grant understood firsthand the importance of grabbing momentum in a contest and fighting against the mistakes that can easily cost a team a victory. "The tragedy in sports is seeing a team beaten not by a better team, but by themselves", said Grant. So much of what took place last Friday night in Lincolnnton perfectly reflected that idea as the Red Raiders took charge early and then battled against their own mistakes. A number of false start penalties cost South Point, often more than once in a single drive. But the powerful run game was able to overcome the miscues, regain the yardage lost, and control both the clock and the contest en route to a 35-21 dismantling of the Wolves.

Lincolnnton won the toss and deferred the option, electing to receive the second half kickoff. The decision gave the Raiders the ball and the first chance for points in the season opener. The Red 'O' wasted no time. Driving from their 22 yardline, South Point needed less than two minutes to reach the endzone on a QB Patrick Blee 24-yard run. K Charlie Birtwistle drilled the PAT and with 10:06 remaining in the quarter, the Raiders had a 7-0 lead. The Wolves had an answer on their first possession. A drive of 80 yards evened the tilt at 7-7. The tie score would not last. South Point quickly jumped back in front 14-7 on a 52-yard scamper by Blee. The Wolves went to the air to try to keep pace on their next drive. On the third play of the possession, DB Javonte Lowery ran down an overthrown pass and hauled in the interception, giving the Raiders the ball near midfield at the Wolves' forty-eight. The possession carried over into the second stanza.

To begin the second quarter, an early false start penalty moved South Point back to their side of midfield, but the ground game was otherwise in gear so the lost yardage was quickly reclaimed. The eight play drive would cover more than the original 48 yards as two more false starts would back up the Raiders. But South Point managed a score on Blee's third touchdown, a 22-yard run through traffic. The teams traded possessions for the remainder of the quarter with a Wolves punt, a Raiders errant FG attempt, and the clock expiring on the final Lincolnnton drive. South Point carried the 21-7 advantage into the intermission.

The Red 'D' held on the opening Wolves possession of the third quarter. A scrambling, elusive QB posed a challenge after having picked up positive yardage following bad snaps. But the Raiders were able to halt the momentum and force a punt. From their 29 yardline, South Point

put together an 11-play, 71-yard drive that ended with a FB Chayne Ford 3-yard TD run. With 10:34 remaining in the quarter, the Raiders had built a 28-7 lead and appeared to be in total control. But the Wolves were not going to go quietly. Lincolnnton fought back by reaching into a bag of trick plays. A reverse covered 46 yards for a quick score and closed the gap to 28-13. Just under two minutes remained and the Raiders would carry their next possession into the final quarter of play.

The Raiders carryover drive began on their 29 yardline and managed the Wolves 41 yardline as play began in the fourth quarter. It would become a trademark drive for which South Point football is known. Although the O-line had struggled throughout the game to remain set through the signal count, this drive showcased the potential of the unit. Ford carried eight times in the nine play drive, and with the help of the O-line was able to consistently pick up positive yardage. His 5-yard touchdown run moved the Raiders out front by a 35-13 total and more importantly kept the momentum for South Point. Asked how the team was able to stay positive given the drive-stalling miscues that plagued them throughout the game, Ford said, "I just told my team to keep their heads up; you do your job, I'll do my job and we'll work together as a team." He further encouraged his teammates by assuring them that they would score as a result. Ford's words proved true as the Raiders remained in control. Lincolnnton managed to drive to a final score to close the gap, but the Red 'D' forced the Wolves to burn valuable minutes from the clock on the possession. The teams again traded possessions with the Raiders using five minutes on a final drive to leave the contest in no doubt. The Big Red opened the season with the 35-21 victory.

Momentum and miscues mark every high school football contest. South Point was determined not to be defeated by a better team, but in the season opener, the Raiders were at times their own toughest opponent. The Big Red was able to gather it in, and in spite of the miscues, managed a big win ahead of an early open date. With no game next Friday, the week of practice will be the biggest challenge facing the Red Raiders. There's work to be done and two weeks to prepare for a visit to Charlotte Christian.

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

The Red Raiders will need to find a way to stay motivated given the early Open Date on the schedule. The game at Charlotte Christian may have an opening game feel with the break. South Point will need to work hard to re-establish the momentum that is built from a season opening victory.