

Game Recap

South Point Dominates Lincolnton - Whip Wolves, 28-6

With apologies to the RaiderNation, the absence of a season preview should not be considered a slight on the expectations of the 2024 edition of South Point football. The fact is, the relatively few practices and scrimmages seemed to set the season in motion at a quick pace and time just went away. Obviously, the lack of preparation on the part of this media outlet was not reflected by the team on the field last Friday night! And the pace of the pre-season was effectively mirrored in the game by the Red Raiders' effort! South Point hit the gridiron "chomping at the bit" and showcased a domination of speed, power, and teamwork in all phases that carried them to a 28-6 victory over the Lincolnton Wolves.

Former Dallas Cowboys quarterback, Tony Romo, once said, "I've played long enough to know that certain games are certain ways. You're gonna throw it less in others, more in others, and just look at what the team needs that day to win a football game." Although somewhat awkwardly stated, his point is valid. The ebb and flow of a contest demands adjustments by each team so that they can grasp, and work to maintain, momentum. Offense, defense, and special teams all play a part. And each of these phases were major contributors for the Big Red against the Wolves.

Lincolnton won the toss and deferred their option to the second half. South Point accepted the opening possession, and the offense went to work. A pair of miscues set the team off on a rocky start, and the cost was an early Raiders punt to begin the game. But the initial rush of adrenaline eventually subsided, and the teams settled in for the remainder of the first quarter. Neither dented the scoreboard after a pair of possessions. But South Point would change that as the second stanza began.

A holding call negated a long run from the Wolves' 41-yardline, backing the Raiders to the Lincolnton forty-five and forcing a replay of 1st down. QB Patrick Blee kept for five yards and on 2nd down FB Chayne Ford burst across the line and into the Wolves secondary to the Lincolnton seven. Ford carried again to the two and punched in from there for the first score. A Blee pitch to Ford completed the successful conversion and South Point grabbed the 8-0 advantage. Momentum was squarely in the corner of the Red Raiders and the stronghold appeared to be unbreakable when on the ensuing kickoff, Gavin Smith snatched a loose ball to give South Point possession at the Lincolnton 32-yardline. Unfortunately, a delay of game penalty and a holding call cost the Raiders positive yardage and stalled the drive, forcing a punt. The Red 'D', as they had been from the outset, was equal to the task. Allowing a net -3 yards on three plays, South Point forced a Wolves punt to reclaim the momentum. RS Kham Crawford

caught the ball on the run at the Lincoln 37-yardline. And like a bolt of lightning, he shot to the goal line! A toss from Blee to the corner of the endzone was hauled in by SE Chris Stowe, advancing the Raiders lead to 16-0 with 3:26 remaining in the half. Desperate for points, Lincoln went to the air. The South Point defensive pressure was too much for the Wolves. The Raiders were winning the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball, yet with emphasis on the defense. DB Gavin Smith made a remarkable one-handed grab for an interception at the South Point 22-yardline to halt the Lincoln possession. The Raiders ran out the remaining 1:58 and carried the 16-0 lead into the intermission.

With the ball to begin the third quarter, the Wolves looked to get things on track and change the complexion of the contest. The Raiders would have NONE of it! A three-and-out series saw the South Point defense push Lincoln back for another minus net yards (-5) for a possession. And for the second time in the game, Crawford would return a punt for six points. This time the speedy Return Specialist scooped up the ball and weaved his way through the coverage. His lunge with the ball across the goal line further ignited his team and the Red faithful. Asked about the significance of such game-changing plays, Crawford admitted, "It pumps us up and once we get pumped up, it's hard to stop us." His words rang true as the Raiders defense would protect the 22-0 lead again withstanding a Lincoln attempt for points. The Wolves managed the South Point 48-yardline, but the gain only proved beneficial when a quick kick on 4th down was downed at the South Point 1-yardline. QB Cayden Rumph engineered an impressive drive, moving his team to Lincoln thirty-three in the final 6:59 of the third.

The Raiders drive continued in the fourth as Rumph would pitch to FB Eric Forston for a 23-yard gain to the Wolves ten. Forston followed up the run by bulling his way through for the touchdown on the next play. The South Point advantage grew to 28-0 with 11:09 to go. With their next drive it seemed the Wolves were poised to gain a measure of respect. But the Red 'D' made a stand, forcing a turnover on downs after four plays from the South Point 5-yardline. DE Gavin Gibson made the final two stops in the series and was later asked to comment on the play of the Raiders defense. "All week we've been thinking be aggressive, be aggressive, fly around, hit somebody in the mouth", he said. "We worked so hard all week", Gibson added. His assessment perfectly described the effort of the Red Raiders. Throughout the contest, multiple red hats could be seen getting off the pile after a Lincoln runner was taken down. And with the game well in hand, it was obvious the only hope for the Wolves would be to take advantage of a South Point miscue for a chance to get on the board. That opportunity came on a Raiders fumble at their 5-yardline on the ensuing possession. Lincoln loaded the right side of the line with a pulling tackle and managed a score with 4:02 remaining in regulation. The Wolves' touchdown ended all scoring and accounted for the final 28-6 win for the Red Raiders.

Somehow after blazing through pre-season practices and scrimmages, the Coach's message of focusing on the job at hand took root. Despite the first game miscues, the Red Raiders displayed a dominating characteristic of South Point football. In all phases of the game, the Big Red used their speed, power, and teamwork to thoroughly pound the Lincolnton Wolves for a season opening victory. Winning the opener is great! Winning the next one is better!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

South Point hosts Charlotte Christian net week in a rematch of last year's 41-36 win by the Knights. The contest was competitive with the teams going back-and-forth until one would simply run out of time. This season the Raiders will look to control the game and own the clock!