
VARSITY REPORT

by Jamey Andrews

“Champions Crowned!”

On November 18th, thirty-two NCHSAA 3A football teams embarked on a journey to achieve a common goal, one that enshrines a select group of young men in an exclusive fraternity for all of history. Perhaps such a description overstates the significance of the accomplishment, but the glory requires a level of focus and hard work that cannot be denied. Storylines suggest that many of those journeys began weeks and even months before. For South Point, the drive began over a year ago with a final whistle on December 11, 2015. From that moment, the Red Raiders evaluated their effort on and off the field. They considered the longstanding, proud tradition of South Point football. And they renewed their commitment to the program, determined to be one of those thirty-two teams given an opportunity, this season, to reach the pinnacle of high school football success. Only one of those thirty-two teams would win five consecutive games in the playoffs. Only one of those thirty-two teams would claim the ultimate trophy. And only one of those thirty-two teams would earn the right to be crowned “Champions”. Following Saturday’s matchup at Wake Forest’s BB&T Stadium between South Point and the Rocky Mount Gryphons, the team that will be forever marked as the 2016 NCHSAA 3A State Champions calls Belmont home! The Red Raiders returned to glory with a hard fought and exciting 16-7 victory over the Gryphons.

Individual statistics provide for interesting analyses, yet generally have little meaning in team-driven sports. Accolades are awarded as a necessity and are well-deserved. But each player receiving an individual award on Saturday would be quick to remind that their good fortune is a shared tribute to their teammates and the effort put forth by the entire team in every game. Such is an admirable character trait of those who don the red and white. And the evidence on the field was no less convincing. The “team” brought home the hardware! After scoring first at the 3:32 mark of the first quarter, the Raiders found themselves trailing 7-3 going in to the half by virtue of a pass play in the closing seconds of the second stanza. The second half would be a different and more determined story. The Red ‘D’ shutdown Rocky Mount, the Red ‘O’ put seven on the board, and the Red Special Teams added two more field goals for the final 16-7 margin of victory. South Point had won their fifth consecutive playoff contest, including the championship, outscoring their opponents by a 188-13 margin. Truly an undeniable champion was crowned!

The seniors, who may now claim victory in their final high school football game, have helped to advance a tradition that has been established for over forty-five years (South Point). Leaving the field, many acknowledged that their success had been founded by those who had gone before. Adding their names to the list of South Point greats are Nick Farmer, Payton Graham, James Granson, Jerme Leeper, Thomas Lempereur, and Hunter Marett. Joining them are Max Mead, Nick Muse, Zach Scandrett, J.R. Scipio, and Nathan Silver. Along with their teammates they walk off the field as winners. Along with their mentors they pass the torch of tradition and advance the legacy of a program that is second to none.

Only one team could be crowned as NCHSAA 3A State Champions. Only one of thirty-two teams vying for the top award would prove worthy to be crowned “Champion”. Only one of thirty-two teams would claim the ultimate prize. This season, the champion’s trophy returns to Belmont. For 2016 the South Point Red Raiders are...CHAMPIONS!

Go Get ‘Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

As the trophy was held aloft and carried toward the visitor’s stands, the intent of the gesture became immediately obvious. The support of RaiderNation is beyond remarkable and impossible to be captured in words. Whether in attendance, watching from home, or following through social media throughout the world, Raiders fans, above all others, truly deserve to share in South Point’s high accomplishment! Thank you for being a tremendous part of the Red Raiders success!

Similarly, and in spite of their efforts to deflect recognition, the South Point coaching staff is to be commended for their dedication to the team from the standpoint of establishing a proper work ethic, admirable character, and strong faith. Coach Lineberger sums up the value of the staff by acknowledging that they “take who comes through the door” and make them the best football player and person they can be. This year and every year, thanks to this coaching staff, the Red Raiders are the best!

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