

Game Recap

Win Streak Ends – Hilltoppers Outlast Red Raiders, 21-19

Among the most elite forces of the US military, the Navy SEALs have a reputation to adhere to duty that surpasses most others. Outside of media accounts, interviews, permitted publications and broadcasts, little detail can be truly known concerning the training, maneuvers, and engagements of the force. What we can know for certain is that those worthy of the qualification have common traits not typically evident throughout the general population. To greatly understate the obvious, the training is physically and emotionally demanding and recruits are pushed beyond reasonable limits in order to achieve and maintain the highest quality member of the Special Force. A symbolic gesture shared through mainstream media is the idea that when the training exceeds one's abilities, a recruit is afforded the opportunity to "ring the bell" to signify tapping out of the training. Make no mistake consequences follow, not the least of which is the lifetime one has to reflect on the decision and what might have been with just one more day of effort. In an interview, Admiral Bill McRaven (Ret.) described "the only thing a SEAL recruit has to do during their grueling training: 'Not quit'". The Admiral points out that those recruits going through the training are defined by their not "ringing the bell." Naturally, the loss of a football game tremendously pales in comparison, but the attitude of not quitting is universal. And after a heartbreaking loss to R-S Central, the Red Raiders are faced with a decision. How they respond will reflect the character of the team and the respect they have for the program.

It was obvious, early in the contest, that the teams were equally matched. R-S Central won the toss and deferred the option allowing the Red 'O' to take the first shot. South Point responded with a solid drive on the ground, managing yardage from their twenty-eight yardline to the Hilltoppers twenty-three. From there, K Carson Smith put the Raiders on the board with a forty yard field goal that gave South Point the early 3-0 lead. R-S Central responded with a drive of eighty yards that culminated with a five yard touchdown run to take over the advantage, 7-3. The ground-pounding slugfest was on! The Raiders offense returned to the field and managed a drive that added three more to their total with a 32 yard field goal. South Point had drawn to within 7-6 as time expired in the first quarter.

The Red 'D' gained a measure of respect on the second Hilltopper possession, one that continued from the first into the second stanza. Forcing a punt, the defense set up the Red 'O' across midfield at the R-S Central forty-six. Chewing up the field, and the clock, the Raiders drove to the Hilltoppers one yardline. From there, RB Hunter Hogue bounded over to reclaim the lead for South Point. The teams continued the back-and-forth effort throughout the remaining 6:22 of the first half. Two R-S Central drives ended with a fumble and turnover on downs, while South Point would punt and run out the clock with their final possessions of the half. The teams went to the intermission with the Raiders holding the 13-7 advantage.

With the ball to begin the third quarter, the Hilltoppers made good on a drive that ended with a five yard touchdown run and a 14-13 lead. With the momentum, R-S Central forced a South Point punt on the Raiders first possession of the quarter. Once again the Hilltoppers kept the ball on the ground and worked their way deep into South Point territory. With but thirty seconds remaining in the third, by virtue of both teams' ground attacks, R-S Central scored from one yard out to own the quarter and carry a 21-13 lead into the final twelve minutes of regulation.

A South Point punt on their first drive of the fourth quarter made things a little uneasy for the home crowd. And things got even more uncomfortable as the Hilltoppers put together a drive deep into Raiders territory. But the Red 'D' forced another fumble to stall the R-S Central advance. South Point drove to the opponent's nineteen before coming up short on a fourth down pass incompleteness. Just over eight minutes remained and the Raiders needed a stop. The Red 'D' played an inspired brand of football, halting a drive that did not manage two minutes off the clock. South Point received the Hilltoppers punt with 6:20 remaining. Driving to R-S Central territory, the Raiders claimed a first and goal at the Hilltoppers one. Once again, Hogue plowed through and South Point set up for the tying two-point conversion attempt. The attempt was short, but the same would not be said about the effort. R-S Central held on for the final three minutes to claim the 21-19 victory.

The sting of a football loss must be kept in perspective. And while it may seem disrespectfully absurd to compare the fighting spirit of a high school football player with that of an aspiring Navy SEAL, the intent is to suggest that no better example can be set forth when it comes to unwavering resolve and an attitude of determination. The Red Raiders, as a team, are faced with a decision as the season nears an end. Whatever decision they make and whichever direction they choose, the consequences will serve to define their character. Considering the proud Raiders tradition that has gone before, there is only one thing this team needs to do to be successful: "Not quit."

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

With all due respect, we express our appreciation to veteran's from all military branches. Your outstanding examples of service, commitment, discipline, and strength are models to be emulated by all. We thank you for your service!

We are also grateful for the commitment of our Naval JROTC. They routinely display the proper level of respect while presenting our American flag. And theirs is the model that should be followed when standing and saluting the national ensign.