

Game Recap

“South Point Rebounds...Crushes Cramer, 33-7”

Four games into the season, the Red Raiders had dealt with more than a fair amount of adversity on and off the football field. And it has been the various difficulties, usually measured by a win-loss record, that have helped to define the character of this South Point team. If ever there were a time for the squad to be kicked while they were down, then the meeting with the rival Storm of Stuart Cramer would have provided the perfect venue and the opportune moment. The Storm boasted an undefeated record and carried a chip...make that a railroad crosstie...on their shoulders given the Red Raiders total dominance in the series. And South Point has faced injuries and team struggles that could have easily resulted in a winless streak rather than a 2-2 record. But the character of the Red Raiders shone against Cramer, in a big way! A victory by any margin would have been satisfying as coach would point out that the team won “the Red Raider way”. South Point made an outstanding statement by crushing the Storm 33-7 in the contest moved up a day due to weather concerns. The Raiders were able to put struggles behind and shift total focus to the gridiron for the win ahead of the bye week.

South Point won the toss and deferred the option, electing to give their host first opportunity with the ball. Cramer came out strong, but only served to ignite a crowd with a fuse that would eventually fizzle, or more appropriately be extinguished by the Big Red ‘D’! The Storm hit a few holes with quick darts and were able to move to the Raiders thirty-one. Assuming they had South Point on their heels, Cramer attempted an air attack. The ploy backfired as an overthrow on first down was followed by a Nolan Cochran and Josh Bogen combined tackle for loss on second down. A third down pass was incomplete and would have been well short of the line to make, putting Cramer in a fourth and twelve situation in “no man’s land”. A QB scramble was well played by LB Omari Hunt, halting the drive and forcing a turnover on downs. The Red ‘O’ took the field with 8:50 on the first quarter clock and proceeded to do what they do best. Bursting through holes created by his offensive linemen, FB Naseem Jones carried the ball for big gains. RB Caleb Gibson assisted with positive gains to move the ball to the Storm 5-yardline. From there, Jones burst through for the game’s first score. K Cade Ratliff nailed the PAT and with 4:33 to go, South Point had the 7-0 lead. Jones admitted, “I can do none of this without my linemen.” OL Larry Dowdy returned the compliment saying, “We get our blocks, he makes the big runs. That’s how the Big Red Machine works.” Maintaining the established momentum, the Red Defense forced a punt on Cramer’s second possession allowing South Point to take the field on offense for a drive that would carry over in to the second stanza.

The teams traded punts before the Raiders would finally break through on a drive that began from their twenty-eight yardline with 7:17 to go before the half. On the drive, QB Keaton Hale called his own number and picked up positive yards to near midfield. A few unfortunate penalties moved the ball back to the South Point forty-one. From there Hale dropped back and found a wide-open Devon King. King hauled in the pass, cut across field and outran defenders to the endzone. The Raiders had struck for the 14-0 advantage. It seemed all that remained was to clamp down the Storm and carry home the victory. But Cramer did not go quietly. In fact, the

Storm, after having been throttled in each of the first four meetings in the series had taken a page from the Raiders' book of resiliency. Cramer spread the field and magically converted a 4th and 6 in South Point territory en route to the closing touchdown. With the ball to begin the second half, the Raiders, up 14-7, carried the one touchdown lead into the intermission.

To begin the third, the Red Raiders put together an opening drive that took them to the Cramer thirty-four. Jones hit a hole off the left side of the line and sped to paydirt. South Point moved in front by a 20-7 score and put control back into the capable hands of the defense. The Red 'D' did not disappoint. With relentless pursuit by the defense, a scrambling Storm QB could not keep his team from suffering a quick three-and-out series. South Point forced a Cramer punt to keep momentum in the third. In eleven, clock controlling, plays, the Raiders moved from their twenty-six to the Cramer twenty-five yardline. On the twelfth play of the drive, Jones raced to the endzone to put South Point up 26-7 with just under 2:00 remaining in the quarter. The ensuing Storm possession carried over into the final stanza.

The teams traded possessions in the fourth with the South Point defense displaying their total control over Cramer. The Red 'D' would not allow another Storm threat, shutting down the host the entire second half. Meanwhile, the Red offense managed a final one-yard run from Jones, his fourth touchdown of the game, to account for the final 33-7 thrashing. Asked about the play of the defense, LB Tanner Canterbury summed up the effort and attitude of the Red 'D'. "We play one hundred percent every game", said Canterbury. The linebacker further echoed the response to the teams struggles and including the loss to Clover last week. "We didn't want to lose like that again, so we really played our hearts out tonight", he insisted. His words bore out with the play on the field and the rebound by the Raiders.

Teams that take to the field expect adversity. It is the nature of competitive sports. How a team responds marks their character and determines their success. Former champion body-builder turned California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, once noted, "Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength." After being shutout in the second half at Clover, the Red Raiders dug deep and showed their strength in an impressive showing at Stuart Cramer. Winning the Red Raider way!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Meant to be??? Naseem Jones rushed for 259 yards in Thursday night's matchup against the Stuart Cramer Storm. His effort comes exactly a year to the day that former Red Raider FB (current Davidson Wildcat) Jake Alexander ran for 259 yards to thump the Storm in 2017.

Jamey Andrews

