

## Game Recap

### River Rumble Rout! - Big Red Slams Storm, 47-14

Mention upsets on any level of football and every fan could point to a game that seems the most significant of all time. In 1926, the Notre Dame Fighting Irish traveled to face the Carnegie Tech Tartans (now Carnegie Mellon University) in Pittsburgh. The Irish had been so dominant that they had yet to surrender a point in eight games. Head Coach Knute Rockne was so confident his team would not be challenged that he decided not to attend the contest. Rather the storied coach decided to allow his assistant coaches to brave the snowy conditions and guide Notre Dame to the inevitable victory. The Tartans though, showed a resolve to defend their honor, and their home field. They fought like never before and when the final seconds ticked off the analog clock (the kind with a moving hand) they had claimed a 19-0, shutout victory. This historical event is not intended to draw direct comparisons to the 2022 version of the River Rumble. After all, in this game, all coaches were in attendance. But after eight consecutive losses to establish the rivalry, it could be suggested that one side expects victory while the other expects to defend their honor. The Big Red made sure the storyline remained the same! Eight seconds into the contest, the Raiders had claimed the first turnover and one play later put points on the board. South Point went on to slam the Storm, 47-14, to remain undefeated in the series!

South Point won the toss and deferred their option to the second half. The Storm would receive the ball to begin the game. K Charles Birtwistle drilled the opening kick into the endzone and Stuart Cramer started play from their twenty yardline. One snap would be all the Storm would get as CB Micah Stowe made a diving interception for the game's first turnover. From the Stuart Cramer twenty-six, QB Patrick Blee kept the ball, turned up field and ran to the endzone. The Raiders had the 6-0 advantage inside the first minute of play! The Storm managed some positive yardage on their ensuing drive but were stopped shortly after crossing midfield and were forced to punt. South Point began from their thirty-one. The expectation was a series that would establish the ground attack and dictate the flow of the contest. But the Red 'O' took control at the line of scrimmage allowing Blee to reel off a first down run to the Storm five. Two plays later WB Harrison McKinney dove across the goal line to advance the Raiders lead, 13-0, with 9:04 remaining in the quarter. Stuart Cramer's ensuing possession failed to collect a needed ten yards so the Storm would punt for the second time. South Point pounded the ball inside for positive yardage, gaining the Stuart Cramer forty-two. From there WB Dawson Tobin took a pitch around the left side and blazed to the endzone. His dive across the goal line put the Raiders up 20-0 with 4:38 to go. The Storm managed success on their next drive, earning a touchdown on a 17 yard pass over the middle.

Then following a South Point fumble, Stuart Cramer looked to maintain the momentum and cut more into the Raiders 20-7 lead. The Storm carried their next possession into the second stanza.

Facing a fourth and four to begin play in the quarter, the Stuart Cramer QB was forced to scramble to make a play and keep the drive alive. The Red 'D' held and the ball went over on downs, crushing the Storm's scoring chance. For the game the highly publicized passing attack for Stuart Cramer had some measure of success. But there was an equal measure of success for South Point in defending the pass. On many occasions, even though the outcome did not result in a coverage sack for lost yardage, the pursuit of the Raiders defensive line forced the Storm QB to make rushed decisions. Asked about this effort, DL Aiden Ramirez said, "that's what we do", suggesting the intent is to dictate the play of the opposing offense. "We do our job so our offense can do theirs", he added. The proof came immediately after the stop as the Raiders put together a thirteen-play drive of over six minutes to increase the advantage. FB Cam Medlock burst through the middle for six and the PAT put South Point up 27-7. Stuart Cramer managed points on their next drive to pull within thirteen at 27-14, but the Storm left 2:01 on the clock. The Red Raiders took advantage. Moving quickly downfield, the Red 'O' gained the Stuart Cramer twenty. From there, Medlock took the handoff, ran off right tackle and bowled over two 'would-be' tacklers in the open field before diving across the line. South Point sent the teams to the locker room with a commanding 34-14 lead.

With the ball to begin the second half of play, the Raiders maintained momentum. A sixty-five yard drive ended with seven more points on a Blee 3-yard run. The South Point advantage had grown to twenty-seven at 41-14 with over seven minutes remaining in the third quarter. The contest took a turn from that point as the Storm displayed desperation, the Raiders suffered miscues, and both teams engaged in the "chippy-ness" often seen in one-sided rivalry games. Two South Point fumbles, a punt and turnover on downs by the Storm, and an interception of a Stuart Cramer pass by S Jaquis Rumph ended play in the third. Rumph's interception was one for the highlight reels, as was the hit by FS Will Ross that made it possible. Ross laid the lumber as the ball arrived causing it to bounce up before hitting the ground. Rumph alertly tapped the ball twice to keep it alive before hauling it in for the turnover. The teams went to the final 12:00 with South Point comfortably ahead.

In the final quarter, the game continued in a manner far different from how it had started. The teams traded turnovers before the Raiders mounted the final scoring drive of the contest. CB Jayden Garrett-Straite set the Big Red up with a one-handed interception off a pass defended by CB Kam Crawford. The South Point ground attack

got back in gear and when Medlock powered through from four yards out the statement was finalized! The Raiders won their ninth straight in the series without a loss.

Upsets become an expectation throughout a football season. On any given week, in any given contest, an underdog could have his day. Some games may seem so overly one-sided that a Head Coach could decide to take the day off. (An ill-advised option as proven by the late, great Knute Rockne of Notre Dame). Rivalry games provide the most promising atmosphere and rewriting a storyline of futility seems destined to happen in such a scenario. But not this year. Not this game. The Big Red owns the River Rumble!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

### **Notable Facts and Thoughts**

“On the road we’re somebody else’s guest - and we play in a way that they’re not going to forget we visited them.” - Knute Rockne