
VARSITY REPORT

by Jamey Andrews

“Nothing Doing’ for Red Raiders...South Point Blanked by Shelby, 24-0”

South Point visited the Shelby Golden Lions for a special Thursday night edition of high school varsity football. The rain storm that rolled through the area cleared well before game time. Raider fans filled the stands for a fine turnout to support the team. And win, lose, or draw there was every confidence that this game would provide another opportunity for a young squad to learn how to raise their level of play against a formidable opponent. Unfortunately, when the final horn sounded, these remained the only absolute positives for South Point on the night. The Red Raiders never got on track and, in spite of a handful of good plays, could never string enough of them together to keep the contest close. Shelby scored early and often enough to hand South Point their second loss of the season by a 24-0 count. Sometimes the result on the scoreboard is not indicative of the effort on the field and for the most part this is true of Thursday night. Perhaps one other positive in this game for the Red Raiders is that, as their tradition has been, the team fought hard from beginning to end and walked from the field with heads held high, bent on hard work and improvement. Mention was given last week to the fact that the South Point had at that time, experienced a “chest-pumping” victory and a “head-shaking” loss. Add to those now a “convincing defeat” and these Red Raiders have surely run through the gamut of what can happen each time they step on the field.

A rundown of quarter by quarter stats serves little purpose as each South Point possession ended with minimal gains. Five punts and an interception ended the first two quarters of play and the teams went to the locker room with the Golden Lions holding a 9-0 advantage. The lead at this point certainly did not seem insurmountable. And South Point has had the reputation of being a “second half” team. Once settled in, the defense played fairly well although somewhat below their capability. They spent quite a bit of time on the field. The offense tried to open the holes to free up the triple option runs but Shelby was able to get to the ball quickly. The result was unusually quick possessions for the Red Raiders. Penalties piled up for both teams in the first half. South Point never could overcome the mistakes.

With the ball to begin the third quarter, the Red Raiders were set to turn things around. It could be noted that in the third quarter South Point never punted the ball to the opponent. Unfortunately it could also be noted that they never had the chance to as the three Raiders possessions of the quarter ended in an interception and two fumbles. The Golden Lions took advantage of the turnovers and short fields to pad the lead by another 13 points. Even trailing 22-0 entering the fourth quarter, South Point expected to make good things happen. The “good things” never materialized as points on the board. The Raiders continued to sputter and drives ended with punts. And the miscues of the first half carried over into the second. A safety in the game’s final minutes ended all scoring and the final 24-0 defeat was a harsh blow to the confidence of the Red Raiders. South Point must now mark this loss as a learning experience and move forward.

The special Thursday night edition of varsity high school football turned out to be “special” for the opponent and a regrettable outing for the Red Raiders. The hope for the team

now, following a great victory, a tough loss, and a thorough defeat, is to mirror the turnaround that sent last year's squad on a remarkable run. As Quarterback Scottie Lee and Linebacker Nathan Hamilton expressed after the first game against Crest, "this team can be as good as (we) want to be." The next opportunity to set that plan in motion comes next Friday night in Clover as the Raiders visit the Blue Eagles. And there should be little else needed to motivate South Point after the first three games of the season. But just in case there is need to "add fuel to the flame", in their history, South Point has never defeated an out of state opponent while playing outside the state of North Carolina. The lone victory over an out of state opponent came against those same Blue Eagles in Lineberger Stadium. So the visit to Clover could mark a first in South Point history. And it could go a long way to set this team on the right track for a successful season. Let's go get it, Red!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

South Point football is adamant to refrain from excuses following embarrassing losses. And in victory, the Red Raiders have endeavored to win with class. In fact, one of the more popular plays in every playbook should be the "Win" (or "Victory") formation. It is a fine testament to the winning tradition of a team that the opponent leaves in starters and continues to try to throw for big gains in a game in which the outcome, for all intent and purpose, is decided. It's a difficult call to make. Sometimes it's more embarrassing when a team "calls off the dogs" than when they continue to try to build a lead that will not be overcome. In that manner of thinking, it is the outstanding tradition of South Point football that brings out the "best" and "worst" of opponents. Just a thought.

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