

Game Recap

Regular Season Ends For Battling Red Raiders; Golden Lions Claim Victory, 49-21

While the outcome was not a forgone conclusion, especially given the “Pride of the Tribe”, somehow, win or lose, the final regular season game would be a welcome event. The contest would mark the end of a season-long struggle for South Point. Week-in and week-out the Red Raiders would be challenged on the field, both by an opponent and the requirement to fill positions with sometimes untested players. The promise at season’s outset quickly unraveled as injuries took an early toll. South Point, for one of the few times in program history, found themselves in a position whereby they could not depend on the star players that had customarily enabled the Big Red to keep rivals at bay. Rather, the Red Raiders fought hard through every matchup with a patchwork line-up of sorts. Perhaps more than any other, this team deserves credit for the deep-seated determination with which they took the field. Make no mistake, this group put up as much fight as any that has worn the red hats. Unfortunately, the inexperience was often evident and could not be overcome by sheer emotion. From a fanbase point of view, it’s easy to show pride and eagerly support a team that battles hard and wins every game. But the mark of true character is revealed when we recognize and applaud the heart of those players who gave all they had without regard to experience and talent level. The conference finish fell far short of South Point football expectations. But the effort of the players on the field in every contest, by some measure, exceeded the seasonal projections. In the final regular season game, the Golden Lions extended a seven point halftime lead to roll to a 49-21 victory over the Red Raiders. Shelby certainly deserves a high seed and expects a successful run in the state playoffs. But be assured that for 48 minutes of the final regulation game in the Southwestern 2A Conference, the Golden Lions knew they were in a fight. And with the playoffs set to begin, tradition demands that South Point “smack somebody in the mouth” and leave everything on the field.

With three possessions in the first quarter, the Red Raiders would be forced to punt after each drive stalled. The conference-leading Golden Lions took advantage to build a 14-0 lead going into the second. On a possession that carried over, Shelby drove deep into South Point territory. The Red ‘D’ stiffened to force a field goal attempt. The kick was rushed and sailed wide left to hold the score. The momentum shift ignited the Red Offense. Driving from their twenty yardline, South Point moved to their thirty-four. From there, RB Omari Hunt sped around the outside and raced 66 yards for the touchdown. The extra point cut the lead in half at 14-7 in favor of the visitors. But the closed gap did not last long. The Golden Lions used a big play offense to quickly go back up by fourteen, 21-7. Rather than recede in disappointment, the Raiders boldly answered. A Devon King 51-yard run pulled South Point back within seven, 21-14. The teams would trade fumbles and punts to end the half. The contest was still up for grabs.

A Red ‘D’ stand against the Golden Lions seemed sure to set the tone for the second half on Shelby’s opening possession. But instead, the teams traded punts until the mid-point of the quarter. A Shelby touchdown was then followed by a South Point fumble and another Golden

Lions touchdown to send the teams to the final stanza with Shelby ahead 35-14. The Raiders managed a touchdown on a 28-yard pass connection from QB Will Rhinehart to King. The score stood at 35-21 with 6:13 remaining. Shelby took advantage of their big play offense to tack on two more scores for the final 49-21. South Point suffered from being overmatched but their determination kept them from being outplayed.

The final contest of the regular season dropped South Point in the conference standings and is disappointing to a team that expects more from themselves. The Red Raiders' struggles this season stemmed from circumstances beyond their control. But there were no excuses expressed in the locker room, on the practice, or game fields. The long standing tradition of South Point football is marked by an impressive win-loss record. These are the numbers that are easy to tabulate. But the tradition is further, and perhaps more importantly, defined by the character of players that take the field. The playoffs begin with the Red Raiders traveling to Smoky Mountain to face the Mustangs in a first round tilt. "Somebody's going to get smacked in the mouth!" No quit in these Red Raiders!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

For what it's worth...For those who like this sort of thing...And because there's nothing more to write about...

The closest thing to a common opponent between South Point and Smoky Mountain comes from contests involving Pisgah and East Rutherford. Pisgah squeaked by East Rutherford, 28-25. Smoky Mountain squeaked by Pisgah, 19-13 (OT). South Point DEMOLISHED East Rutherford, 42-14. Simple, yet skewed, logic therefore dictates that the Red Raiders will LEVEL the Mountain!