

Raiders win thriller over Mounties

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KINGS MOUNTAIN — Todd Armstrong's clutch interception of a Kings Mountain look-in pass with just over two minutes left in the game saved a 15-12 victory for unbeaten South Point and ruined the Mountaineer Homecoming here at John Gamble Stadium Friday night.

Armstrong, one of several Red Raider defensive standouts, made a leaping grab of Jeff Cloninger's pass to put a halt to what was nearly a game-winning 70-yard touchdown drive.

The interception was the last of several wild occurrences in the battle of the two Southwestern 3-A Conference powerhouses, as South Point ran its record to 7-0 for the season, and the Mountaineers, who had won five in a row, dropped to 5-2.

A crowd of approximately 4,000 was driven into a frenzy on several occasions by what was without question a spectator's football game.

The underdog Kings Mountain squad, after winning the toss, ran two offensive plays from a full-house "T" formation before fullback Avery Smith burst through the center of the South Point defense, broke three tackles, and raced 82 yards for a touchdown to give the Mounties a 6-0 lead with just 1:11 missing

from the clock.

Smith, a 5-11, 177-pound senior who has played in the shadow of stellar teammate Kevin Mack all season, collected 176 yards on 19 carries in what was probably the best game of his prep career.

What proved to be one of the key plays of the entire evening occurred seconds later, when South Point tackle David McKinney broke through to block Tony Boyce's extra point attempt.

The Raiders, who had to be a bit stunned by Kings Mountain's early success, nearly scored on the ensuing kickoff when Jeff Hartness handed off to Boone Davis on a reverse, and Davis scampered from his 12-yard line to the Mountaineer 10 — 78 yards — before he was dragged down from behind. Unfortunately for the Raiders, they were cited for an illegal block on the return and the ball was brought back to the Kings Mountain 40.

South Point quickly showed some offense of its own, gobbling up the 40 yards in just six plays, with the scoring blow being a 12-yard pass from quarterback Jeff Williams to tight end Tim Rector in the corner of the end zone. The biggest play of the drive was a 24-yard quarterback keeper by Williams, who raced from his 37 to the 13 on the third snap from center.

Williams scored a two-point conversion, giving the Raiders an 8-6 lead with 8:55 left in the first quarter, sweeping the right side to go into the end zone untouched.

After the initial explosions, both offenses fell prey to brilliant defensive play. Kings Mountain penetrated to the South Point 24 before McKinney and David Spence sacked Cloninger on a fourth-down play.

A short time later, the Red Raiders appeared to get the break they had been waiting for when Larry Tribble fell on an Avery Smith fumble on the Kings Mountain 29. They lost the ball on downs, but got it back less than a minute later when Carl Sims intercepted a Cloninger bomb on his own 39.

From there, the Raiders were able to drive onto Kings Mountain turf again, reaching the 14-yard line before Williams' fourth down pass to Rector in the end zone was knocked down on a spectacular defensive play by Mark Shuman.

The Mountaineers never escaped their own territory in the third quarter, and South Point threatened only once, but the fourth frame was an entirely different story.

The Mountaineers scored, three-and-a-half minutes into the final period on a drive that began when Markus Hager recovered a Williams fumble on his own 46-yard line. Kings Mountain lost a yard on a second-and-

seven play, but Chris Wright had been dragged down by his face mask, and the Raiders were tagged with a 15-yard penalty, giving the Mounties a first down in South Point territory. Eight plays later, the Mounties scored on a two-yard run by Mack. A 24-yard run by Wright was the big play in the drive.

With 8:21 left in the game, the Mounties went for a two-point conversion, but Mack was stopped for a loss on a sweep, and they had to settle for a 12-8 edge.

That lead was only temporary, however, as Williams led the Raiders back down the field on the very next drive.

After June Jones returned the kickoff to the 28 yardline, Williams raced all the way to the 45 on a keeper but, it was ruled, was aided by a clip, moving the ball back to the 30. Two plays later, Williams took to the air, hitting Armstrong with a 16-yarder, and connecting with Boone Davis on a majestic 51-yard bomb to move the ball to the enemy three. Perry Fewell bulled over for the score with 6:19 left in the game, and Tim Parrish added the extra point to make it 15-12.

Bléak as it appeared for the Mounties at that point, Cloninger used the running of Mack and Smith to march from his own 30 to the South Point 10. After a five-yard penalty moved it back to the 15, Armstrong burst the bubble with the interception.

South Point	8	0	0	7-15
Kings Mtn	6	0	0	6-12

Scoring Summary

KM — Smith, 82 run, kick failed

SP — Rector, 12 pass from Williams, Williams run

KM — Mack, 2 run, run failed

SP — Fewell, 3 run, Parrish kick

	South Point	Kings Mtn
First Downs	165	14
Yards Rushing	6-15-0	306
Passing	117	0-7-2
Yards Passing	1	0
Fumbles Lost	3-28-3	2
Punting	70	1-45
Yards Penalized		40

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

KINGS MOUNTAIN RUSHING — Smith 19-176, Mack 21-113, Wright 4-19, Cloninger 3-0.

SOUTHPOINT RUSHING — Williams 12-81, Fewell 11-50, Jones 9-34, Armstrong 3-6, Gibson 1-0.

KINGS MOUNTAIN PASSING — Cloninger 0-4-2, Woodbury 0-3.

SOUTH POINT PASSING — Williams 6-14-0, 117; Jones 0-1.