

Raiders outlast Kings Mountain

By Mike Purkey

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BELMONT — South Point coach Jim Biggerstaff shared a concern before Friday night's game with Kings Mountain that his Red Raiders might have been looking past the Mountaineers and forward to next week's showdown with Crest.

But by the time the sound of the explosions had quieted and the shrapnel had settled on South Point's 34-26 win, Biggerstaff and his players knew they had been in a war.

"I'm glad to we got out alive," Biggerstaff said. "I'm tickled to death to get out of this with a win. I was afraid of (Kings Mountain). They are like a sleeping giant waking up."

South Point, the No. 5-ranked 3-A team in the state, did not get a surrender from Kings Mountain in its seventh win in a row (6-0 in the Southwestern 3-A Conference). Kings Mountain falls to 1-5 in the conference and 1-6 overall.

South Point brought out the high-powered weapons, scoring its touchdowns on big blasts. Raider quarterback Mark Young, who finished the night with 138 yards on just 10 carries, scored two long-

distance touchdowns — on runs of 58 and 43 yards.

Tailback Tonja Watson two touchdowns, one from far beyond enemy lines with a 56-yard touchdown run on the first play of the game. Watson gained 107 yards on 11 carries.

Everyone, by now, is well aware of the talent South Point's offensive backfield is loaded with. Kings Mountain served notice, however, that its running backs are not to be taken lightly any longer.

Eric Odems carried the ball 26 times for 110 yards and three touchdowns while Timmy Elder ran 18 times for 67 yards. The Mountaineers controlled the ball with 68 offensive plays to just 38 for South Point, leaving a tired Raider defense at the end of the game.

"We have a lot of players going both ways (playing offense and defense)," Biggerstaff said. "Yes, our defense got tired. There was a bunch of given-out kids when this game was over."

Kings Mountain coach Denny Hicks, disappointed with the loss, found a bright spot in his offense.

"Offensively, this was our best

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Gazette photo by Robert Lahser

Eric Odems (38) of Kings Mountain dives for score
... but Mountaineers failed in bid to beat South Point

Raiders

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game," Hicks said. "We are extremely pleased with the way we moved the football. The key to the game was our offensive line. Our kids whipped them on the line of scrimmage. They had to do a heckuva job."

The Raiders looked as if they were going to dismantle Kings Mountain in the opening minutes of the game. After an offside penalty against Kings Mountain (the Mountaineers were saddled with 86 penalty yards) Watson blew a gaping hole in the right side of the Mountaineer defense with his touchdown run and a 6-0 South Point lead with 11:15 remaining in the first quarter.

But, surprise. Kings Mountain rode Odems' 6-2, 235-pound back to put together a 16-play, 68-yard drive that consumed 8:18 of the first quarter. Odems went over from the 2-yard line and Don Quandoudone added the extra point to give the Mountaineers a 7-6 lead with 2:45 left in the period.

But that was to be the last time Kings Mountain was to lead in the game. South Point drove 55 yards on its next possession in 11 plays to take a 12-7 lead with 10:36 left in the first half on Chris Wooten's four-yard touchdown run.

Three minutes later, Young gave the Raiders an 18-7 lead with the first of his touchdowns. With the ball on the South Point 42-yard line, Young took the snap and stepped to his left as if to run the option to that side of the field.

He then made a reverse pivot

and blazed through the spot where his offensive right guard used to be. No one else occupied that spot, either and Young raced 58 yards without a Kings Mountain defender coming close to him.

Kings Mountain close the gap to 18-14 with another long drive. The Mountaineers went 78 yards in 16 plays with Odems carrying the final four yards with 1:13 left in the half.

South Point took a 26-14 halftime lead by moving the ball 63 yards in eight plays. A personal foul penalty against Kings Mountain on the last play of the half nullified Elder's interception of a Young pass at the Mountaineer three-yard line.

Armed with one more play in the half, Watson scored his second touchdown on a four-yard run with no time showing on the clock.

Kings Mountain closed the gap to 26-20 in the third quarter on an eight-play, 68-yard drive with 1:06 left in the period on a 1-yard run by Elder.

The Raiders scored the clincher on Young's second touchdown to give the Raiders a 34-20 lead with 11:28 remaining in the game. Young kept the ball on the option play around the right side and ran 43 yards for the score. Young passed to Mike Pearson for the two-point conversion.

Kings Mountain scored its final touchdown on still another long march, this time 15 plays and 89 yards, with Odems carrying for the final three yards.

South Point 34

Kings Mountain 26

Kings Mountain	7	7	6	6	—	24
South Point	6	20	0	8	—	34

SP — Watson 56 run (kick failed)

KM — Odems 2 run (Quandoudone kick)

SP — Wooten 4 run (run failed)

KM — Odems 4 run (Quandoudone kick)

SP — Watson 4 run (Watson run)

KM — Elder 1 run (kick failed)

SP — Young 43 run (Pearson pass from Young)

KM — Odems 3 run (run failed)