

# Red Raiders' season dragged down, 24-16

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KANNAPOLIS — A trick play that should have worked didn't.

As a result, South Point's football season is over.

The Red Raiders failed to convert a faked punt, setting up an A.L. Brown touchdown that proved the difference in the Wonders' 24-16 second-round state 3-A playoff game Friday night.

"If I had to fake punt again, I'd do the same thing," said South Point coach Phil

Tate. "It should have worked. Somebody just missed a block."

The Wonders' strong start to the second half forced Tate's hand. Driving 78 yards on its first possession, A.L. Brown widened its lead to 17-8 when Tarus Johnson broke a pair of tackles, then barreled into the end zone on an 18-yard burst.

When South Point gained just three yards in its next three plays, Tate knew what he had to do on fourth-and-7 from

Please see RAIDERS/5C

# RAIDERS

FROM 1C

his team's own 23.

"They took the ball and crammed it down our throat on their first possession of the second half. I wasn't about to give it to them at the 35 and let them do it again," Tate said.

The Raiders (7-4-1) snapped the ball to Hunter Armstrong, who was wrestled to the turf after a 5-yard gain, two yards short of a first down. Three plays later, Brown's Keenan Lott widened the gap to 24-8 with a 7-yard TD dash.

"When you're the underdog, you've got to take some chances somewhere," Tate said.

The Red Raiders nearly recovered from the key stop, keeping the Wonders on the ropes until the final seconds with a frenzied comeback attempt.

Gerard Hardy scored on a 10-yard burst to cap a 70-yard drive, then threw a two-point conversion pass to Rachon Stowe to cut the gap to 24-16 with 7:56 left.

The Red Raiders forced a punt, then marched from their own 27 to midfield in the final 3:51. But they were stopped when

Hardy's halfback pass was picked off by Myron Black at the Brown 24 with 19 seconds left, letting the Wonders run out the clock.

"They gave us everything we wanted and maybe a little bit more. My stomach was in knots until Myron went up and took that ball away," said Wonders coach Bruce Hardin, whose 12-0 club hosts North Rowan next week.

The Red Raiders got themselves in trouble with a poor tackling effort in the second quarter.

After handing the Wonders a first down by jumping offside on a fourth-and-1, the Red Raiders watched the Wonders jump to a 7-0 lead on a 10-yard jaunt by Johnson.

On their next drive, the Wonders again befuddled the Red Raiders, working down to the 6.

But the Wonders suddenly self-destructed with penalties and were forced to kick a 29-yard

field goal.

The defensive stand appeared to pump some life into the Red Raiders, who had just two first downs in the game to that point.

Taking the ball at its own 27, South Point steadily marched back into contention. Derek Bowen's 34-yard gallop up the middle of the Brown defense moved the ball to the 11. Two plays later, Stowe slashed around right end on a 7-yard gain, setting up his 1-yard TD plunge.

The Red Raiders cut the lead to 10-8 when Hardy found Stowe in for the conversion pass after Armstrong lined up at quarterback.

"Our kids played hard, but I don't know how well we played," said Tate. "We're still not over the hump yet. We've got to do a little bit better next time."

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A.L. Brown 24

## South Point 16

South Point	0	8	0	8	—	16
A.L. Brown	0	10	14	0	—	24

ALB — Tarus Johnson 10 run (Tim Hyman kick)

ALB — Hyman FG 29

SPT — Rachen Stowe 1 run (Stowe pass from Gerard Hardy)

ALB — Johnson 18 run (Hymian kick)

ALB — Keenan Lott 7 run (Hymian kick)

SPl — Hardy 10 run (Stowe pass from Hardy)

1 Insoluble 22