



Thomas J. Turney/The Gazette

Marcus McCollough (41) of South Point barrels over Huskie Yak Armstrong.

THE WITCHER HOUR

Hunter Huss back slices South Point defense

By Darin Gantt

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GASTONIA — It sounds unusual, but Hunter Huss's Shawn Witcher used his size to run over, around and past South

Huss 27
South Point 0

Point defenders.

Though he weighs less than 150 pounds, Witcher dominated South Point, rushing 16 times for 165 yards and three touchdowns in Friday's 27-0 win over the Red Raiders.

"It's easy for me to get lost out there," Witcher said. "I got up in there behind the big boys and they couldn't find me."

When the Red Raiders did find Witcher, they couldn't tackle him, as evidenced on the slippery senior's first scoring run.

Faced with a third-and-3 from the Huss 40 midway through the second quarter, Witcher started running inside. The attempt ended up taking him to the corner, where he broke three tackles on his way to the 60-yard TD.

Witcher's run broke a scoreless tie in a game which was dominated by defense early.

The Red Raiders (1-2) started the game with the bruising running of tailback Marcus McCollough.

McCollough gained 41 yards the first five times he touched the ball, which happened to be South Point's first five plays.

However, Huss then figured out a plan, holding the Red Raiders to 59 yards rushing for the game.

McCollough gained only 17 more yards on his next 13 carries, while quarterback Clint McNabb was dropped for 30 yards worth of losses.

Meanwhile, Huss (2-1) ran at will.

Witcher was the star of the offense, but quarterback James Armstrong and fullback James Baxter also ran free, allowing Huss to grind away at the clock.

South Point's starting middle linebacker and offensive tackle Jason Lineberger missed the game with a shoulder injury sustained in practice.

"It was a big loss, no doubt," South Point coach Phil Tate said. "We missed him on both sides of the ball. But he wouldn't have made 27 points worth of difference."

South Point was limited to running up the middle in the absence of a breakaway runner like Witcher.

But Tate said it wouldn't have mattered who the Red Raiders had in the backfield.

"Nobody breaks out for big plays against Huss," he said. "They've obviously got a terrific defense, but their offense is a lot better than people think."

Baxter added 51 yards on eight carries, including a 19-yard touchdown sprint.

The only problems Huss had was with penalties, piling up seven for 61 yards in the first half.

Huss coach David Bolin said the win was especially sweet since the Huskies had not beaten South Point since 1991.

"This is huge for us since it's been so long since we beat them," Bolin said. "We tried to shoot ourselves in the foot in the first half with penalties, but we got enough big plays out of Shawn and James on offense to carry us through."

South Point
Hunter Huss
0 0 0 0 - 0
0 12 6 9 - 27
HH — Shawn Witcher 60 run (kick blocked)
HH — Witcher 11 run (pass failed)
HH — James Baxter 19 run (run failed)
HH — Blair Orr 38 field goal
HH — Witcher 12 run (kick failed)