

Raiders cap conference sweep again

Quick start spells doom for Mustangs

By **PHILLIP GARDNER**
Gazette Sports Reporter

BELMONT — Any thoughts that South Point might look ahead to the playoffs before playing its final regular-season game dissolved in a hurry Friday night.

Brandon Reid returned the opening kickoff 73 yards for a touchdown and the Red Raiders routed visiting East Lincoln, 62-7 at Lineberger Stadium.

The Red Raiders (10-1, 7-0 Big South 3A) clinched the outright conference title — their fifth straight league championship — and even though they crave a state championship, they wouldn't dare be caught looking ahead to the ultimate prize.

"Our focus is the next game," said Reid, echoing the words his coach preaches every day. "It's a big game every week."

South Point looked in state championship form, however, scoring by kickoff return (twice), run and pass. The Red Raiders reached the end zone on all but two of its nine possessions. The only time they didn't score was when time expired at halftime and the end of the game.

South Point led 21-0 by the end of the first quarter and 49-0 at halftime. Officials began the second half clock before play actually began, and time ran continuously in the second half because the game was out of hand. The teams combined for only 25 second-half plays.

"I hate to jinx them, but if they're not playing in Chapel Hill (for the 3A state championship), I'm glad whoever's there is not in our conference," East Lincoln coach Matt Rikard said. "Coach Devine and his staff have done an outstanding job and my hat's off to them."

South Point outgained the Mustangs 458-118, but no single player reached the 100-yard mark.

Tyler Gorton had two carries for 89 yards, including an 80-yard touchdown scamper. Javar Williams added 80 yards and a score, Jamar Crawford 66 yards and freshman backup quarterback Wes Carroll 59 yards and a touchdown. Fullback Joe Brown had only 29 yards but carried just six times and reached the end zone twice.

Williams scored on a 30-yard run and hooked up with Ivey Watson through the air for a 47-yard scoring strike. Josh Robinson added an interception and a kickoff return for touchdown.

East Lincoln didn't score until the third play of the fourth quarter when senior quarterback Dennis Hickman connected with Thomas Huntley on a 38-yard pass against South Point's reserves.

South Point has outscored its opponents 503-75 for the season and has given up only two first-half touchdowns all season (one to Northwestern and one to Crest). Due to the lopsided scores, South Point has been forced to pull its starters early in games, which concerns head coach John Devine heading into the playoffs.

"You've got to stay sharp," Devine said as he distributed "five-peat" conference championship T-shirts to his players. "All you can do is play and you've got to do what's right. We've been criticized — people think we're running up the score, but we haven't. We've played our second-team quarterback in the second quarter for three games in a row. I don't know what else to do."

EL 0 0 0 7 — 7

SP 21 28 3 7 — 62

SP—Brandon Reid 73 kickoff return (Andrew Rinehart kick)

SP—Javar Williams 30 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Joe Brown 1 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Joe Brown 17 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Tyler Gorton 80 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Ivey Watson 47 pass from Williams (Rinehart kick)

SP—Wes Carroll 26 run (Rinehart kick)

SP—Brian Jennings 2 run (kick blocked)

EL—Thomas Huntley 38 pass from Dennis Hickman (Ellis Dunston kick)

SP—Josh Robinson 75 kickoff return (Rinehart kick)