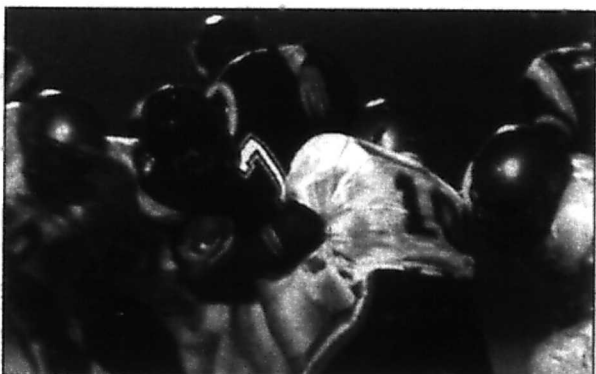




John Derrick/Freedom News Service

South Point's Josh Robinson tries to break free from a Chase defender Monday night. Robinson had a 90-yard kickoff return in the loss.

Red streak ends



Amy Wright/The Gazette

KM is bowled over

Shelby's Demorris Brooks tackles Kings Mountain quarterback Josh Gilbert on Monday night at Kings Mountain. KM lost 52-20. **More, 3C.**

Raiders outgunned in matchup of defending state champions

By RICHARD WALKER
Gazette Sports Reporter

BOILING SPRINGS — When a battle between the state's defending Class 3A state champions turned into an offensive shootout, the key is having the most ammunition.

On Monday, that team was Crest, as the Chargers used power-running, crisp passing and even some trickery in downing South Point 35-21 to end the Red Raiders' winning streak at 17 games.

Playing in front of a capacity crowd at Crest Stadium, the Chargers got more than 100 yards of offensive production each from running backs Martray Littlejohn and Travis Padgett, and quarterback Maurice Gullatte.

"We've got a lot of choices in our offense," said Padgett, whose 86-yard second-quarter burst was one of the game's two biggest plays. "Coach (Roy Kirby) wants to put all of

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us in different situations. Sometimes, we have two running backs. Sometimes there's one. There's no set alignment, which means the defense doesn't know what we're going to do."

Kirby, a longtime defensive coach, says he knows that a team that has the running of Littlejohn and Padgett and the passing of Gullatte isn't easy to defend.

"We start Martray in the backfield in a one-back set and we pound him up in there, pound him up in there," Kirby said. "Then we can bring Travis in there who's a little bit faster. We can also play both of them at the same time. And we still have Maurice who can pass. I know as a defensive coordinator that if you have that many looks, it can be tough to defend."

It certainly was for South Point Monday night.

After Littlejohn softened the middle of the Red Raiders' defense of a scoreless opening quarter, Padgett's 86-yard run early in the second quarter changed the game's field position and set up its first score.

Crest's defense had stopped South Point moments earlier at its own 14 and forced a punt. But Andrew Rinehart's 46-yard punt, a muff on the return and two of Crest's 12 penalties had the Chargers facing first-and-34 from their own 12.

That's when Padgett took a handoff from Gullatte and sprinted to the left sideline where he roared untouched until South Point's Josh Robinson tripped him up at the Red Raiders 2.

"We just got caught up inside and they got outside with their speed," South Point coach John Devine said.

Padgett would score the game's first touchdown two plays later. The teams later traded touchdowns to leave Crest ahead 14-6 before the



South Point's Andrew Reinhardt is tackled by Crest defenders Lujack Ridings, left, and Andrew Allen.

John Derrick/
Freedom
News Service

Chargers used trickery for the game's second biggest play.

Crest took over at its own 20 with 1:35 to play in the half after a South Point touchback on the kickoff following its touchdown.

Gullatte quickly moved the Chargers up field with six completions covering 47 yards that left Crest facing third-and-10 at the South Point 33 with 17 seconds left.

That's when backup Crest quarterback Jordan Robinson entered the game as a wide receiver and took a reverse handoff before finding Gullatte, the quarterback, wide open on the right side of the field. The 33-yard scoring pass sent the Chargers into halftime ahead 21-6 and with all the game's momentum.

"We just didn't play smart on a couple of plays," Devine said. "And you can't do that against a good team like Crest."

A third quarter in which South Point ran seven plays from scrimmage further ensured Crest's dominance before the teams engaged in some late-game offensive fireworks.

South Point cut the lead to 28-13 with 4:25 to play on Bryan Jennings' 23-yard touchdown run before Padgett's two-yard touchdown run with 20.2 seconds left had Crest ahead, 35-13. The Red Raiders' Josh Robinson then ran back the ensuing kickoff 90 yards, running through several Crest tacklers along the way, to account for the final margin.

Crest finished with 400 yards total offense to 229 for South Point but was hampered by 12 penalties for 109 yards.

It was the first meeting between the teams since South Point won 35-7 at home last September in a season that saw the Red Raiders win the Class 3A title and the Charg-

ers win the 3AA title.

"I'm glad this one's out of the way," said Kirby, whose 3-1 team opens its Southwestern Foothills 3A Conference schedule Friday at Hickory before an off week. "Now we can start the conference and then get a week off to get everybody healed."

Linebacker Curtis Young (ankle) and defensive end Parrish Jackson (shoulder) didn't play Monday night and defensive end Chris Tate (groin), cornerback Brandon Mauney (shoulder), defensive tackle Shawn Tate (hand) and offensive tackle Tripp Smith (hand) are playing with nagging injuries.

South Point is in a similar situation, as the Red Raiders look to extend their streak of consecutive conference titles to six this year. South Point's Big South 3A Conference opener is Friday at East Gaston.

"We obviously have taken a lot of giant steps since the first ballgame," said Devine, whose team fell to 2-1. "But we like what we're doing and where we're at right now. The kids played hard and that's what you like to see. It showed there at the end when we're out there still battling."

South Point was without starting offensive lineman Dereck Meeler (ankle) and wingback Brandon Spencer. Spencer missed practice Saturday and his status will officially be determined in the next few days.

SP 0 6 0 15 - 21

C 0 21 7 14 - 35

C - Travis Padgett 2 run (Doug Lowery kick)

C - Padgett 7 run (Lowery kick)

SP - Andrew Rinehart 1 run (Kick failed)

C - Maurice Gullatte 33 pass from Jordan Robinson (Lowery kick)

C - Martray Littlejohn 30 run (Lowery kick)

SP - Bryan Jennings 23 run (Rinehart kick)

C - Padgett 2 run (Lowery kick)

SP - Josh Robinson 90 kickoff return (Jennings run)