

Road Block

Blocked extra point
the difference in,
Crest's narrow win

By RICHARD WALKER
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BELMONT — When the first Big South 3A/4A Conference schedule came out last spring, many expected Friday's Crest at South Point game to determine the league's football champion. After all, the two programs had combined for three state titles in the previous two seasons.

But while Ashbrook beat both earlier this season to wrap up the conference championship, Crest's 21-20 victory over South Point at Lineberger Stadium had a championship atmosphere as the teams prepare for next week's playoffs.

There were hard hits, play so feisty game referees warned both teams to tone it down and late-game, pressure-packed scoring drives by each squad.

In the end, a blocked extra point after South Point's final score proved decisive.

"Any time you come over here, it's a tough place to play," Crest coach Roy Kirby said. "It was again tonight."

The outcome, coupled with Friday's other equally dramatic Big South results, left Crest (6-5, 4-2) tied with Hunter Huss (7-4, 4-2) for second place and South Point (7-4, 3-3) tied with Forestview (5-5, 3-3) for fourth place in the final regular-season standings.

Both Kirby and South Point coach John Devine felt those standings will leave each team hoping for a No. 8 seed (and a first-round home game) when the N.C. High School Athletic Association announces playoff pairings today. Crest will be playing in the Class 4A playoffs, while South Point will be playing in either the Class 3AA or 3A playoffs (Devine thinks it'll be 3AA).

On Friday, Crest dominated first-half statistics by outgaining the Red Raiders 179 to 59, but the teams went into intermission with a 14-all tie.

"I thought in the first half, we gave them their two touchdowns," Kirby said. "But I'm proud of our guys for coming back, especially the big drive there at the end."

That last drive went 11 plays for 78 yards, covering five minutes before Chargers quarterback Jordan connected with Mario Washington for a 17-yard scoring pass on a third-and-six play. It was the third time Robinson completed a third-down pass for a first down on the drive.

Doug Lowery's third extra point made it 21-14 Crest with 3:49 to play.

But before the Chargers could really enjoy their late score, South Point came back quickly as Jason Baker made the Red Raiders' first pass completion of the night a 64-



Gazette photos by Benjamin Patton

Crest's Mario Washington makes a catch over South Point's Cameron McGlenn during the Chargers' 21-20 win on Friday night.



South Point's Jordon Gilmore dives into the end zone for the first of his two touchdowns against Crest on Friday.

yarder to David McMillan to the Crest 2.

Jordon Gilmore's third touchdown of the night on the next play had South Point fans thinking they might be heading for the Red Raiders' fourth overtime game of the season.

Instead, Josh McDowell came fast off the corner to deflect Matthew Mitchell's extra-point try — he'd converted the first two — into the line for a 21-20 Chargers lead with 3:15 to play.

"Our kids played extremely hard," Devine said. "We just made a mistake in the kicking game that cost us."

South Point had one final chance after using its final two timeouts while it forced a three-and-out for Crest.

After Josh Patton's punt rolled dead at the South Point 39, Tyler Lemons' 11-yard pass to Cameron McGlenn had the Red Raiders at midfield with two minutes to play. But a heavy pass rush from the Chargers' Lujack Ridings and Brandon Peterson forced Lemons into an intentional grounding penalty that pushed South Point back into a second-and-26 play from its own 34.

After an incompletion, Crest safety Skip Allen's diving interception of a halfback pass by South Point's Matt

Hudspeth at the Chargers 36 sealed the outcome.

"When I saw him get the ball and not tuck it in, I knew something was going on," Allen said of Hudspeth, who led the Red Raiders' rushing attack with 64 yards on 19 carries.

South Point had scored its two first-half touchdowns on short runs by Gilmore after a 46-yard Cameron McGlenn punt return and the second of Thomas Davie's two pass interceptions, respectively.

Crest, which trailed 7-0 early, went ahead 14-7 on touchdown runs by Tosh Toms and Brandon Spikes.

Toms was the game's leading rusher with 97 yards in 25 carries. And Robinson had 157 yards passing on 11 of 20 accuracy as the Chargers finished with a 275-178 total yardage advantage.

For South Point, McGlenn had nine tackles, Gilmore and Davie seven apiece, Lemons and Joe Hall six apiece and John Goodwin five.

Cr	7	7	0	7	- 21
SP	7	7	0	6	- 20

SP — Jordon Gilmore 2 run (Matthew Mitchell kick)

C — Tosh Toms 5 run (Doug Lowery kick)

C — Brandon Spikes 1 run (Lowery kick)

SP — Gilmore 6 run (Mitchell kick)

C — Mario Washington 17 pass from Jordan Robinson (Lowery kick)

SP — Gilmore 2 run (Kick blocked)