



Benjamin Patton/The Gazette

South Point quarterback Desmond Lowery (5) celebrates with teammates Chris Lane (24) and Marcus Duckworth (7) after a big play in the first half against Lincolnton on Friday. Lowery also ran for a 49-yard touchdown in his varsity debut for South Point.

It's Red All Over

Down two TDs at half, Raiders rally for season-opening win

BY PHILLIP GARDNER
Gazette Sports Reporter

BELMONT — Down two touchdowns to Lincolnton and about to take the field for the second half Friday, South Point linebacker John Goodwin reminded his teammates of their rally against Burns last year.

The Red Raiders trailed 21-0 at the break in that game and turned an inspired comeback into a 24-21 overtime win.

Although Lincolnton appeared to have Friday's game under control, South Point was determined not to give up. So the Red Raiders put their de-

fensive clamps on the Wolves and scored three unanswered touchdowns in the fourth quarter for a dramatic 34-27 season-opening win.

"You never count South Point High School out," Goodwin said. "We've proved it time and time again and we're going to keep proving it."

The young Red Raiders (1-0) sure proved it Friday while facing a Lincolnton team that marched to the 2A state championship game last year and was a preseason pick to sweep

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Photos by Benjamin Patton/The Gazette

Lincolnton quarterback Mardriekus Mayfield reaches for extra yardage on Friday against South Point.

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through the Southern Piedmont 1A/2A Conference again this season.

The Wolves (1-1) looked as good as advertised in the first half, cruising to 237 yards of offense, led by Demery Brewer's four catches for 129 yards.

But South Point said "no more" after that.

Aside from a 60-yard touchdown run by C.J. Wilson, South Point held the Wolves' high-powered offense to 20 yards and two first downs after intermission.

"I think a lot of it was we were playing hard-nosed football," said Goodwin, who led the team with eight tackles, including two for loss. "The first half we did not play hard-nosed football."

Stan Wilson added seven tackles and two pass breakups, James Justice had six tackles including two for loss and Thomas Davie came up with a pair of interceptions to lead the way.

The Red Raiders put pressure in the Lincolnton backfield seemingly all night, but Mardriekus Mayfield, the Wolves' speedy quarterback, was able to elude sacks on multiple occasions in the early going. In the second half, Lincolnton finally began to wear down and South Point was able to seize control.

Meanwhile, South Point's triple-option offense that had sputtered after its three-play, 70-yard scoring drive on the opening possession suddenly began to have its way.

Desmond Lowery, making his varsity debut at quarterback, scrambled and connected with a wide-open Chris Lane for a 30-yard scoring strike to make it a 27-20 Lincolnton edge with 9:21 remaining.

After the teams traded possessions, South Point pulled within one point on Lowery's 49-yard option keeper and tied it on Matthew Mitchell's third of four successful extra-point kicks.

South Point then held Lincolnton to a three-and-out on its next possession and took advantage of an 18-yard punt that went out of bounds at the Lincolnton 36.

The Red Raiders needed just four plays to find the end zone again. Fullback Matt Hudspeth took it across the goal line this time, lunging his way in from 12 yards out to put the Red Raiders up for good.

"We didn't do a darn thing different in the second half that we did in the first half except our kids made plays," South Point coach John Devine said. "They believed in each other, had faith in each other, they had the courage to go out there and make a play."

South Point made it a one-touchdown game by scoring on its first possession of the second half but Lincolnton answered with Wilson's 60-yard



Lincolnton's C.J. Wilson celebrates after scoring against South Point on Friday.

lightning dash down the right sideline. That put the Wolves ahead 27-13 with 4:18 left in the third, but they managed only one first down the rest of the way — and that came on the final drive just before Davie's second interception at midfield sealed it with 1:32 remaining.

"We're not in good shape right now. We'll be better down the road," Lincolnton coach Scott Cloninger said. "We're getting there. It's disappointing to be in the position that we were and then let it slip away, but you give South Point a lot of credit. They made things happen."

Lowery led South Point in rushing with 109 yards. Hudspeth added 73 yards on the ground.

Wilson finished with 111 yards on 19 carries and one catch for 11 yards. Brewer finished with five catches for 140 yards.

L	0	21	6	0	- 27
SP	7	0	6	21	- 34

First quarter

SP—Marcus Duckworth 37 run (Matthew Mitchell kick)

Second quarter

L—Mardriekus Mayfield 1 run (John Gilleland kick)

L—C.J. Wilson 6 run (Gilleland kick)

L—Marcus Williams 9 pass from Mayfield (Gilleland kick)

Third quarter

SP—Matt Hudspeth 2 run (kick failed)

L—Wilson 60 run (kick failed)

Fourth quarter

SP—Chris Lane 30 pass from Desmond Lowery (Mitchell kick)

SP—Lowery 49 run (Mitchell kick)

SP—Hudspeth 12 run (Mitchell kick)