

Raiders survive aerial assault

Lowery continues to run Red Bone to near perfection

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BELMONT — South Point gave up over 300 yards in the air, but had enough ground power to make up for it in a Friday night football war in Belmont.

The Red Raiders countered a brilliant passing performance by Alexander Central quarterback Josh Russell with 466 rushing yards to defeat the Cougars 48-21 in a non-conference football tilt at Lineberger Stadium.

Russell completed 26 of 40 passes for 317 yards and three touchdowns. But it was much ado about nothing in the end as South Point used a big-play offense and a stingy rushing defense to run its record to 3-0.

"That Russell kid is a great player," said South Point coach John Devine. "I wish we'd had a long drive or two to keep him off the field. But we kept putting points on the board and that was enough."

Devine said he knew the Cougars would be ready from the opening whistle.

"(Alexander Central coach) Tommy Harper's teams always play hard," Devine said. "They're always well-prepared."

But the Red Raiders were prepared as well. Quarterback Desmond Lowery read the Alexander defense like a book, executing the Red Bone offense to perfection.

"We did a good job reading the defense," Devine said. "Desmond took some licks, but that's part of the game."

Lowery was brilliant on the ground and in the air, rushing 15 times for 220 yards and completing five of six passes for 90 yards. He scored on touchdown runs of 94 and 68 yards and made several brilliant pitches to wingback Chris Lane, helping the 6-foot, 175-pound senior running back to a 106-yard performance for the night.

"We're 3-0 with a long way to go," Devine said. "The objective is to win them all, but we've got a lot to work on."

The Red Raiders came out strong, scoring twice in the first quarter on a one-yard run by Aaron Crumley and a 94-yard run by Lowery, who ducked in behind a brilliant block by right guard Will Gullledge and sprinted across the field to put South Point up 14-0. Alexander Central roared back in the second quarter as Russell found wide receiver Ralph Adams



Brad Coville/Special to The Gazette
South Point's Chris Lane is tackled after a short gain Friday night. Lane rushed for 106 yards.

on a 15-yard scoring strike.

South Point kicker James Justice pushed the lead to 17-7 with a 33-yard field goal with 1:19 left in the half, but the Cougars responded quickly as Russell connected with Byron Mayes on an 11-yard touchdown pass to cut the lead to 17-14. Alexander Central looked to be headed to a halftime lead on the last play of the half as defensive lineman A.J. Hopke hit Lowery from behind as he was trying to pass, scooped up the fumble and dashed toward the end zone. But Lowery caught him from behind at the two-yard line to preserve the halftime lead.

The second half was all South Point as the Red Raiders scored on their first two possessions and made the necessary defensive tweaks to contain Russell.

"In the first half, we didn't do a good job containing," Devine said. "We had to put him in the pocket more and get some pressure on him. I thought we made the right adjustments. They got a lot of yards but they didn't get a lot of points."

AC	0	14	7	0	-21
SP	14	3	14	17	-48

First quarter

SP — Aaron Crumley one run (James Justice kick) 7:02

SP — Desmond Lowery 94 run (James Justice kick) 1:40

Second quarter

AC — Ralph Adams 15 pass from Josh Russell (Kendall Keever kick) 6:47

SP — James Justice 33 FG 1:19

AC — Byron Mayes 11 pass from Russell (Keever kick) 0:25.5

Third quarter

SP — Crumley 3 run (James Justice kick) 9:43

AC — Adams 17 pass from Russell (Keever kick) 6:48

SP — Lowery 68 run (James Justice kick) 5:39

Fourth quarter

SP — Chris Lane 33 run (James Justice kick) 11:19

SP — James Justice 40 FG 6:20

SP — Josh Justice 57 run (James Justice kick) 3:59



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South Point quarterback Desmond Lowery, left, congratulates Josh Justice after Justice ran for a touchdown Friday Night.