



Brad Coville/Special to The Gazette

South Point's Jesse McGaha gets sandwiched by Charlotte Latin's Ross Cockrell, front, and Ben Ashcraft during the Hawks' win in Belmont on Friday night.

Bombs Away

Heels recruit burns Raiders with five touchdown passes

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BELMONT — South Point coach John Devine sat back in his office chair after his team's 42-20 loss to Charlotte Latin on Friday, clearly not in a good mood.

The game video was already playing on the wall-mounted flat-screen TV as he burned DVD copies.

"I'm trying not to look at it," Devine said. It was that bad.

Braden Hanson passed for 244 yards and five touchdowns, but the score didn't reflect how dominant Latin (9-0) truly was in handing South Point (8-1) its first loss.

Latin opened a 42-7 lead midway through the fourth quarter before South Point added two late scores in the final two minutes.

Hanson, a 6-foot-6, 200-pound senior and North Carolina recruit, picked apart South Point's secondary with pinpoint accuracy not common on the high school level. He completed 15 of 18 passes and tossed TD passes of 8, 63, 46, 8 and 37.

"He was on the money every time," South Point defensive back Stan Wilson said. "He was better than some college quarterbacks."

Hanson also managed the clock well, sneaking in two quick scores before halftime for a 28-7 lead. Two plays after Jesse McGaha put South Point on the board with a 6-yard run to make it 14-7, Hanson hit Brenton Bersin in stride on an out route for a 63-yard scoring play 2 minutes, 6 seconds before halftime.

Latin gave itself another chance to score by forcing South Point to a three-and-out. The Hawks took over at their own 23 with 1:09 remaining and Hanson went back to work.

On the eighth play of the drive, Hanson threw a perfect fade to Ross Cockrell over two defenders for a 46-yard scoring play with 8 seconds remaining. Latin took a 28-7 lead into the lockerroom and never looked back.

"I just held onto the ball for a second and I saw Ross break even with the corner and I just threw it as far as I could," Hanson said. "Their crowd was pretty quiet after that. Going into halftime, that really pumped us up a lot."

South Point's triple-option offense moved

the ball well at times but the Red Raiders hurt themselves with three turnovers, including a fumble at midfield that Bersin returned 46 yards for a 14-0 first-quarter lead.

South Point's defense came out solid in the second half, forcing two consecutive three-and-outs, but Hanson led a 8-play, 84-yard scoring drive early in the fourth quarter to put Latin in firm control.

"That was one of our better games," Latin coach Larry McNulty said. "We probably haven't played a whole game offensive and defensively the way we did tonight. We were pretty doggone nervous about this game, to be honest with you."

Aaron Crumbley rushed for 104 yards and a TD for South Point. But 72 of his yards came in the final four minutes.

The Red Raiders now prepare to face North Gaston in Dallas next week in a game that will likely settle the Big South 3A/4A Conference title.

South Point encountered a scare midway through the fourth quarter when quarterback Desmond Lowery was horse collared at the end of a 4-yard run. He slowly hobbled off the field on his own power and Josh Justice took the remainder of the snaps.

Lowery said he felt better after the game but Devine said he would know more about his status today.

A Latin player was also injured. Leading rusher Greg Mittl, who gained 116 yards Friday, hurt his knee in the fourth quarter. McNulty feared Mittl could be lost for the season.

CL	14	14	0	14	— 42
SP	0	7	0	13	— 20

First quarter

CL — Andrew Tanneberger 8 pass from Braden Hanson (Sam Myers kick), 10:21.

CL — Brenton Bersin 46 fumble return (Myers kick), 1:06.

Second quarter

SP — Jesse McGaha 6 run (Josh Justice kick), 2:34.

CL — Bersin 63 pass from Hanson (Myers kick), 2:06.

CL — Ross Cockrell 46 pass from Hanson (Myers kick), 0:08.

Fourth quarter

CL — Tanneberger 8 pass from Hanson (Myers kick), 10:14.

CL — Cockrell 37 pass from Hanson (Myers kick), 9:26.

SP — Aaron Crumbley 15 run (Josh Justice kick), 2:02.

SP — Nathan Hall 1 run (kick blocked), 0:42.0.