

SOUTH POINT 35, CREST 28

A Raider instant classic

South Point keeps the faith to pull out huge victory

BY ALAN FORD
Freedom News Service

SHELBY — It had all the usual trappings of a championship football game — momentum shifts, long-scoring plays, penalties at crucial moments and miles and miles of heart.

In the end it was the confidence factor that may have powered South Point to a 35-28 triumph over Crest at Sid Bryson Stadium

Friday night to win the Big South 3A/4A Conference title.

The Chargers had exactly the kind of game they wanted midway in the third period, taking advantage of several Red Raider turnovers and establishing a 21-7 lead. That's when South Point went to work. Operating its 'Redbone' option attack at peak efficiency, South Point (10-1) scored on four consecutive possessions to take control against the 7-4 Chargers.

"When we were down two touchdowns, no one panicked," South Point head coach John Devine said. "They went back out and went to work and did what they had to. They had to have faith in them-

selves and faith in our system."

The result was a 162-yard rushing day by quarterback Desmond Lowery and 125 more by pile-driving fullback Aaron Crumbley.

Crest coach Roy Kirby was happy with his young squad's effort but said it was a simple adjustment by South Point's blocking that gave the Chargers fits in the second half.

"They started blocking our strong side guys to the outside and Lowery started keeping in and cutting it back to the middle behind them," Kirby said. "Their fullback (Crumbley) was doubling up on our middle linebacker.

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Brittany Randolph/Freedom News Service

South Point's Aaron Crumbley tries to get past Crest defender Akeem Boyce during Friday's game. Crumbley scored three touchdowns in the win.

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"We tried a couple of things with our linebackers but it was an effective adjustment by them."

The Chargers had built their lead largely due to South Point's miscues. Charger defensive tackle Martavis Burris picked up a fumble and went 30 yards for the first score of the game with 5:32 left in the first period.

South Point went to work on a 65-yard, 11-play maneuver and Crumbley plowed in from the two with 52 seconds left in the opening period.

Both teams were stymied in the second quarter and Crest was backed to its own 15 facing second-and-11 with less than two minutes to go. Sophomore Neil Chambers took a pitch going run, cut back along the hash mark and left everyone in his wake on an 85-yard touchdown romp to put Crest in front, 14-7, going to the half.

The Chargers' lead grew to 21-7 after South Point fumbled on the first series of the second half. Freshman Quortez Wright had a 10-yard touchdown run with 8:39 left in the third quarter.

South Point though was just getting wound up. In successive series the Red Raiders moved 80, 75, 51 and 24 yards for scores, throwing only one pass in the process.

"Our kids played hard, I'm proud of them," Kirby said of his Crest squad, which will be the Big South's No. 1 4A

seed when the playoffs are announced today. "We just stayed on the field so long defensively. We wanted some of those guys to play on offense (line) and pass protect, but we couldn't because we had to keep them on the field so long on defense."

South Point enters the postseason as the Big South champion and No. 1 3A seed.

"When we started hanging onto the ball, we did what we were supposed to do," Devine said of his Red Raiders. "If you didn't enjoy this game, you don't like football. It was a great high

school football team in a great atmosphere."

**South Point 7 0 6 22 - 35
Crest 7 7 7 7 - 28**

Cr - Martavis Burris 30 fumble return (Trevor Austin kick)
SP - Aaron Crumbley 2 run (James Justice kick)
Cr - Neil Chambers 85 run (Austin kick)
Cr - Quortez Wright 10 run (Austin kick)
SP - Crumbley 17 run (kick blocked)
SP - Jesse McGaha 16 run (Desmond Lowery run)
SP - Crumbley 3 run (Justice kick)
SP - Lowery 3 run (Justice kick)
Cr - Kendall Kee 70 pass from Wilkins (Austin kick)

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