

South Point's Josh Hice runs past Burns defenders Darius Ramsey, left, and Tavis Parks, right, during Friday's win.

Mike Gibson/
Special to The
Gazette



South Point 51, Burns 32

Crumbley returns and Red Raiders roll on

By Richard Walker
rwalker@gastongazette.com

BELMONT — It had only been two weeks, but to South Point senior running back Aaron Crumbley, it felt like a year.

"I had butterflies because it felt like a season-opener again," said Crumbley, out the last week's with a sprained ankle. "It's just a great feeling being back out here with my teammates."

Crumbley's return sparked a season-high 470-yard offensive output for the Red Raiders.

Crumbley tallied three touchdowns and picked up 81 yards rushing in 16 carries. Troy Leeper, who had replaced the three-year starter, came off the bench to finish with a game-high 119 yards and two touchdowns in 10 carries.

"It's always good to have the big boy back," South Point coach John Devine said of Crumbley, who had rushed for 1,500 or more yards in each of the previous two seasons.

>> See **CRUMBLEY**/Page 3B

Inside the game

By the numbers: Total of fensive yards: Burns — 302, South Point — 470.

Getting defensive: Burns — Maurice McCleave (four tackles), Travond Ross (four tackles), Darius Ramsey (one interception). South Point — Maurice Falls (eight tackles, one blocked punt), Patrick Truesdale (six tackles), Patrick Horne (six tackles), Denik Dionne (four tackles), Roy Turner (four tackles, one quarterback sack), Jordan Fomey (four tackles, one fumble recovery).

Quoting: "It's tough to learn against teams as good as the four teams we've played" — Burns coach Matt Beam, whose team has played Crest, Kings Mountain, Asheville and South Point.

<< CRUMBLEY

Continued from Page 1B

"And Troy got to get in his reps, too."

South Point took advantage of some key Burns turnovers and special teams mistakes to make the game a runaway — and ruin sophomore quarterback Brandon Littlejohn's 213-yard, three-touchdown effort.

"We're playing so hard, but we're so young," first-year Burns coach Matt Beam said. "We're just so inexperienced that we're making too many mistakes."

That started early for the Bulldogs.

After a third-and-two play on their opening possession became

third-and-seven after a false start, South Point forced an incomplete pass then Maurice Falls blocked Burns' punt out of bounds at the Bulldogs one-foot line.

Crumbley made quick work of the mistake with a one-yard plunge that gave South Point the lead for good with 10:06 left in the opening quarter.

Burns later lost one fumble and one pass interception in addition to ill-timed penalties.

South Point's defense also came up with a key fourth-down stop late in the first half that led to a quick-striking 55-yard scoring drive capped by Josh Justice's second of two touchdown passes — a 25-yarder to Josh Hice — to make it

27-7 at the half.

Justice had earlier completed a 37-yard scoring pass to Ramon Costner.

"It's a good win because everybody got to play and we showed some more efficiency on offense," said Devine, whose 4-1 team hosts Kings Mountain in its Big South 3A Conference opener next week.

For Burns, a challenging non-conference schedule gets tougher as its hosts 3-1 Forestview next Friday.

"We're not that far away," Beam said. "We might be the best 0-4 team in the state of North Carolina. But that doesn't mean much. We're still 0-4. But we're working hard to try and change that."

Burns 7 0 0 14 — 21

South Point 21 6 19 6 — 52

First quarter

SP — Aaron Crumbley 1 run (Josh Justice kick), 10:06

SP — Justice 41 run (Justice kick), 5:45

B — Brandon Whitworth 40 pass from Brandon Littlejohn (Andrew Toney kick), 3:36

SP — Ramon Costner 37 pass from Justice (Justice kick), 1:14

Second quarter

SP — Josh Hice 28 pass from Justice (Kick failed), 0:18.4

Third quarter

SP — Crumbley 1 run (Justice kick), 9:36

SP — Troy Leeper 24 run (Kick failed), 6:18

SP — Crumbley 6 run (Kick blocked), 1:32

Fourth quarter

B — Joe Ross 36 pass from Littlejohn (Toney kick), 5:43

SP — Leeper 15 run (Kick failed), 3:46

B — Jonah Brooks 41 pass from Littlejohn (Toney kick), 0:50.2