

South Point 70, North Gaston 14

Undefeated Red Raiders keep clicking in victory

By Larry Dawalt

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DALLAS — Could undefeated South Point actually be getting better?

After watching his team dismantle North Gaston 70-14, Red Raider coach Mickey Lineberger thinks his team is peaking at the right time heading into the last game of the season next week against Crest.

"We took advantage of our week off with some good practices and it showed tonight," Lineberger said. "I think we're getting better in every phase of the game, and that's what it's all about. We're a lot better than we were at the first of the season."

South Point (9-0, 5-0) was expected to handle the winless Wildcats handily. But Lineberger didn't want his team to take North Gaston (0-10, 0-6) for granted.

"We needed to stay hungry," Lineberger said. "We've kept the focus on playing one game at a time and getting better."

The most important game of the season is always your next game."

The Red Raiders were on a mission from the beginning, scoring 35 points in the first quarter on 225 yards of total offense in the period. Troy Leeper, who led the South Point rushing attack with 13 carries for 157 yards, scored first from 10 yards out with 9:13 left to play.

After the Wildcats fumbled on their first play from scrimmage, Leeper found the end zone again from the 10 to push the lead to 14-0 with 8:55 left in the opening quarter. Only 2:04 expired off the clock before Tyler Bray scored on a 13-yard run, then the South Point defense held again to give quarterback Patrick Horne a chance to score from nine yards out to push the lead to 28-0.

That looked to be the way the quarter would end, but the Red Raiders got the ball back with less than a minute left in the first

and Leeper sprinted right up the middle from 45 yards out for his third score of the evening. North Gaston got on the board early in the second quarter as Daquan Mintz scored on a 40-yard pass from Nate Potter.

Leeper answered back with a 10-yard scoring run before running back Corey Staley got what turned out to be the final score of the night for the Wildcats on a two-yard run that cut the lead to 42-14. It was all South Point the rest of the way as Bray caught a 32 yard pass from Horne with less than a minute left in the first half and Leeper and Bray both scored again in the third quarter before Devin Robbins rounded out the Red Raider barrage with an 80-yard run with eight minutes left.

"It was a total team effort on offense, defense and in our kicking game," Lineberger said. "Our coaches did an excellent job getting our team ready."

While Lineberger was basking in victory, first-year North

Gaston coach Mike Patton was visibly shaken at the outcome.

"You hate to go out this way," Patton said. "But I'm proud of our team. We've got a lot of kids coming back. We've got a foundation. We've just got to keep working hard and get better."

SP 35 34 34 7 - 70
NG 0 14 0 0 - 14

First quarter

SP — Troy Leeper 10 run (Dayton Rogers kick), 9:13

SP — Leeper 10 run (Rogers kick), 8:55

SP — Tyler Bray 13 run (Rogers kick), 8:41

SP — Patrick Horne 9 run (Rogers kick), 2:23

SP — Leeper 45 run (Rogers kick), 0:28

Second quarter

NG — Daquan Mintz 40 pass from Nate Potter (Matt McBee kick), 8:13

SP — Leeper 10 run (Rogers kick), 8:13

NG — Corey Staley 2 run (McBee kick), 1:32

SP — Bray 32 pass from Horne (Rogers kick), 0:41.8

Third quarter

SP — Leeper 9 run (Rogers kick), 5:28

SP — Bray 12 run (Rogers kick), 4:04

Fourth quarter

SP — Devin Robbins 80 run (Rogers kick), 8:00



Tamara Moody/Special to The Gazette

North Gaston's Devan Costner (52) and Tyler Brooks (54) try to bring down South Point's Troy Leeper on Friday. Leeper scored five TDs.