



Ben Gott/The Gazette

South Point running back Tyler Bray runs the ball into the end zone during the game against Crest on Friday at South Point.

# GREAT RAID

## Red Raiders pull away from Chargers for Big South title

By Phillip Gardner

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BELMONT — After Crest gave South Point all it wanted in the first half, the Red Raiders showed why they're the top-ranked 3A team in the state.

South Point pulled away from a one-point halftime deficit to beat the Chargers 42-21 and win the Big South 3A Conference championship Friday at Lineberger Stadium.

"It was good for our ball team to face some adversity," Red Raiders coach Mickey Lineberger said. "We were down at halftime by one and I got to see what we were made of. I was real pleased with what I saw."

Troy Leeper rushed for 193 yards and four touchdowns — 112 yards and three TDs in the second half — for the Red Raiders (10-0, 6-0 Big South), who secured their 11th league title in 13 years. Now, South Point can look ahead to the playoffs, where it will enter the 3AA bracket and could have the No. 1 overall seed in its pod. The N.C. High School Athletic Association plans to

### EXTRA POINTS

**Get your gear:** South Point had already printed conference championship T-shirts and announced their availability with 2:00 remaining and leading 42-21. It might have been a jinx as the Red Raiders fumbled on the next play, but it was too late to make a difference.

**In the record books:** South Point FB Troy Leeper's 193 yards and four TDs gave him 1,844 rushing yards this season, a total that ranks seventh in county history and second in school history behind Josh Justice (1,910 yards in the 2009 state championship season).

release the pairings by 4 p.m. today.

South Point gained 388 yards, representing the highest total against the Big South's top-ranked defense all season. The Chargers entered the night giving up 221.8 yards per game.

Crest (8-3, 5-1 Big South) looked just as impressive offensively on its way to a 21-20 halftime lead but managed only five first downs and turned the ball over twice the rest of the way.

They're good, and you have to play close to perfect to have a chance to beat them," Crest coach Mark Barnes said. "We did that early in the game and then the second half after those two drives, they got excited and we lost some of our enthusiasm."

The Chargers had a pair of 100-yard running backs in Rhaheim Ledbetter (107 yards, 2 TDs) and Jerry Currence (105 yards). Ledbetter, the Florida commitment as a safety, scored twice in the second quarter to give the Chargers a 21-14 lead. And after South Point botched the snap on its next extra point, Crest was able to maintain a 21-20 lead at halftime knowing it would start the second half on offense.

But after the Chargers reached the South Point 15 on its first drive after the break, Jordan Forney brought down Ledbetter for a five-yard loss on third and one and Crest wound up turning the ball over on downs.

>> See RAIDERS/Page 4C





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## << RAIDERS

Continued from Page 1C

After a South Point and Crest fumble, the Red Raiders took the lead for good with a 10-play, 38-yard scoring drive capped by Leeper's 1-yard TD run. South Point scored on its next two possessions to pull away as conditions got progressively messier with the falling rain.

"We're going to be excited tonight but come Monday we've got to get ready for the first round," said quarterback Patrick Horne, who rushed for 60 yards and completed 2-of-4 passes for 30 yards with one interception. "We can't dwell on what we've already done. We've got to look forward to the next game."

Tyler Bray added 55 yards

and one TD on the ground while Devan Robbins rushed for 50 yards for South Point.

Josh Allman recovered two fumbles (forced by Tristin Fogarty and Jordan Fomey) and Jeremy Sanders intercepted a pass to spark the South Point defense, which also got big plays from Fomey and Deion Jones.

"They were pushing our defensive line off and the linebackers couldn't make plays (in the first half)," said Allman, a senior outside linebacker. "We just started playing more downhill instead of sitting back and waiting on them to come to us."

While South Point has a shot at a No. 1 seed in the playoffs, Crest will be seeded in the second tier as the Big South's No. 2 representative.

And due to the pod system that groups teams geographically, these two teams could meet again by the third round of the playoffs.

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**Crest 7 14 0 0 - 21**  
**South Point 14 6 8 14 - 42**  
**First quarter**

SP—Tyler Bray 20 run (Dayton Rogers kick), 10:02.

C—Michael Gullatte II 15 run (Alex Trejo kick), 7:52.

SP—Patrick Horne 10 run (Rogers kick), 5:24.

### **Second quarter**

C—Rhaheim Ledbetter 2 run (Trejo kick), 9:38.

C—Ledbetter 2 run (Trejo kick), 4:37.  
 SP—Troy Leeper 8 run (botched snap), 1:11.

### **Third quarter**

SP—Leeper 1 run (Leeper run), 2:16.

### **Fourth quarter**

SP—Leeper 16 run (Rogers kick), 9:46.

SP—Leeper 5 run (Rogers kick), 4:13.