

South Point 28, West Rowan 7

GRITTY RED WIN

By Richard Walker

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BELMONT — During its unbeaten regular season, South Point High School's football team rarely fell behind in games. In its playoff opener, visiting West Rowan scored first and South Point's offense sputtered almost until halftime.

Then, the Red Raiders used an old school throwback style of offense and defense to score the final 28 points of a 28-7 victory that advances them into the second round of the N.C. 3A playoffs.

South Point (12-0) hosts longtime rival

Burns (11-1) next Friday in the second round of the postseason.

"It took us awhile to get adjusted," said Red Raiders coach Mickey Lineberger, whose team trailed 7-0 until less than a minute was left in the opening half. "We had been off for a week and we looked a little rusty. In the second half, I thought we played like we were supposed to."

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Tom Ausburne/Special to The Gazette

South Point quarterback Jaquan Brooks (5) is brought down by West Rowan's defense on Friday.



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After playing to a 7-all first half tie, South Point absolutely dominated the second half.

Not only did the Red Raiders score on three of their five offensive possessions — including a 11-play, 76-yard drive to take the lead for good on the initial drive of the half — but they came up with two goal-line defensive stands to keep the Falcons (6-6) out of the end zone.

“It was great to see the defense play that way,” Lineberger said of a unit that limited West Rowan to 259 yards total offense. “They probably played their best game of the year.”

Tyler Bray and Jaquan Brooks again led South Point’s offense, with Bray rushing for 229 yards and three touchdowns and Brooks adding 81 yards and one touchdown rushing and completing one pass for 10 yards.

On defense, senior linebackers Deion Jones and Daishon Davis spearheaded a unit that stopped West Rowan on downs inside the South Point 20 three times in the contest. The first stop, which may actually have been the most important, came with 4:28 left in the opening half.

With South Point trailing 7-0, the Falcons tried to gain control of the contest with a quarterback draw by Harrison Baucom on fourth-and-two from the South Point 15. But Johnny Cates and others stopped Baucom a yard shy of the first down — and the Red Raiders took the football and drove 86 yards in 10 plays to knot the score just before halftime.

The second and third stops came with West Rowan vainly trying to keep the game close — both times when trailing 21-7.

The first one was stopped at the South Point 4 when Baucom again was stopped on a fourth-and-goal play by Davis. The second one was stopped at the South Point 16 when J.T. Star deflected a Baucom pass to end zone on fourth-and-goal from the 16; A penalty had pushed the Falcons back after they had reached the Red Raiders 2.

“That’s what championships are made of,” Lineberger said of his defense, which got 14 solo or first-hit tackles from Jones, eight from Davis and five apiece from Donnie Hunter and Tanner Muse. “The defense was just terrific for us tonight.”

The offense churned for 390 yards total, with all 27 second-half snaps ending in rushing plays for 249 yards.

“Running the football is what we do for a living,” Lineberger said.

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South Point 0 7 14 7 — 28

First quarter

WR—Harrison Baucom 1 run
(Zack Russell kick), 5:43.

Second quarter

SP—Tyler Bray 8 run (Aaron
Camp kick), 0:45.7.

Third quarter

SP—Jaquan Brooks 7 run (bad
snap), 8:28.

SP—Bray 11 run (Bray run),
3:34.

Fourth quarter

SP—Bray 72 run (Camp kick),
2:09.

	WR	SP
First downs	14	15
Rushes-yards	48-184	45-380
Passing yards	75	10
Total yards	259	390
Comp-Att-Int	7-11-0	1-4-0
Fumbles-lost	1-0	2-1
Penalties-yards	6-70	5-45
Punts-avg.	4-44.8	4-26.8

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—West Rowan,
Keyows Weeks 10-28, Daisean
Reddick 23-110, Baucom
14-44, Kacey Otto 1-2. South
Point, Bray 26-229, Brooks
12-81, Diontree King 3-40,
Trey Crenshaw 3-29, Tanner
Muse 1-1.

PASSING—West Rowan,
Baucom 7-11-0 75. South
Point, Brooks 1-4-0 10.

RECEIVING—West Rowan,
Devin Parks 2-22, Shakir
Simmons 1-3, Darius Gabriel
3-44, Chris Patterson 1-6.
South Point, Bray 1-10.