

## Prep football playoffs

South Point 42, Statesville 21



Brian Mayhew/Special to the Gazette

South Point quarterback Diontre King breaks a long run, which set up a touchdown, in the third quarter of Friday's second-round playoff game against Statesville. The Red Raiders won, 42-21, to advance to the third round.

# Still have work to be done

Red Raiders remain  
hungry after big  
second-round win

By Richard Walker

Rwalker@GastonGazette.com

BELMONT — South Point High football coach Mickey Lineberger praised his team after Friday's 42-21 victory over Statesville to advance into third round of the N.C. 3A football playoffs.

ban playoffs.

It had to do with South Point advancing far enough into the season that they have to practice on Thanksgiving week; the Red Raiders (11-2) will host West Rowan, which eliminated West Henderson, 41-19, in their second-round game, next Friday.

"It's really special what you've been able to accomplish," Lineberger said after South Point advanced into the third round of the state playoffs for the fourth straight year and 13th time in school history. "But we all know we still have work to do."

That message reached his team loud and clear.

Senior fullback Ryland Etherton, whose 215 yards rushing and four touchdowns on 38 carries led the victory, was already talking about how much is yet to be accomplished.

"We're playing our best football right now," said Etherton, whose 200-yard game was the second of his career. "But we're doing our work in practice. We've had our best practices and it's carrying over to the games."

Part of that practice preparation was scouting a dangerous Statesville (9-4) team that had blasted an Alexander Central team that runs South Point's triple-option offense by a 77-43 score in late October.

"We watched film of them against Alexander Central and we saw where they tried to take away the quarterback," Etherton said.

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"They did the same thing tonight and with the way our offensive line blocked, that opened up things for me."

South Point's offensive line of right tackle Larry Dowdy, right guard Matt Mellette, center Connor Owensby, left guard James Granson, left tackle Jacob Justice and tight ends J.R. Scipio and Ethan Jackson paved the way for 344 yards on 59 offensive snaps.

Etherton benefited the most, falling just shy of his career-high of 226 he had last season against Hunter Huss.

"I think this was the best effort we've had and we're peaking at the right time," said Lineberger, whose team started the season 1-2 after losses to fellow third-round participants Crest and Shelby.

South Point got the break it needed against the high-powered Statesville offense on the game's second play from scrimmage.

A deep lateral from Greyhounds quarterback Travis Ramseur to



The South Point offensive line opens up a huge hole for fullback Ryland Etherton during the Red Raiders' second-round win Friday night over Statesville.

Brian Mayhew/Special to the Gazette

receiver Tyrek Morrison fell to the ground at the Statesville 32. But while virtually every player from both teams stopped and assumed an incomplete pass, South Point's Nick Farmer scooped up the football and went the distance for the game's first score.

After forcing a three-and-out on Statesville's next possession, Etherton scored the first of his four touchdowns with 5:37 left in the opening quarter as the Red Raiders built a 14-0 lead.

Statesville got no closer than seven the rest of the way.

South Point's only scare came

just before halftime when quarterback Diontrea King bruised his right (throwing) shoulder on a 12-yard first-down run.

But King, who finished with 103 yards rushing and one touchdown on 13 carries, stayed away from contact the rest of the way and finished the game at quarterback.

The Red Raiders' defense limited Statesville to 287 yards total offense, led by quarterback Travis Ramseur's 93 yards rushing and 104 yards passing.

Mike Hayes had nine solo or first-hit tackles, Nathan Hamilton eight, Tyler Hall six and Max Mead five.

**SOUTH POINT 42, STATESVILLE 21**

Statesville 0 7 7 7 — 21

South Point 14 7 7 14 — 42

**First quarter****SP** — Nick Farmer 32 fumble return (Thomas Lempereur kick), 11:08.**SP** — Ryland Etherton 13 run (Lempereur kick), 5:37.**Second quarter****S** — Nakendrick Clark 13 pass from Travis Ramsey (Zach Nicholson kick), 10:32.**SP** — Etherton 5 run (Lempereur kick), 2:29.**Third quarter****SP** — Diontrea King 8 run (Lempereur kick), 5:53.**S** — Ramsey 13 run (Nicholson kick), 3:35.**Fourth quarter****SP** — Etherton 1 run (Lempereur kick), 9:14.**S** — Tyrek Morrison 32 pass from Ramsey (Nicholson kick), 6:50.**SP** — Etherton 1 run (Lempereur kick), 4:16.

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First downs	14	20
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Rushes-yards	37-183	57-344
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Passing yards	104	0
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Total yards	287	344
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Comp-Att-Int	8-13-2	0-2-0
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Fumbles-lost	2-1	2-0
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Penalties-yards	3-31	0-0
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Punts-avg.	3-25.7	3-39.0
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**INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS****RUSHING — S:** Nakendrick Clark 16-65, Travis Ramsey 19-93, Tyrek Morrison 2-25.**SP:** Nolan Wilson 2-28, Ryland Etherton 38-215, Diontrea King 16-103, Mario Brandon 1-minus 2.**PASSING — S:** Ramsey 8-13-2 104. **SP:** King 0-2-0 0.**RECEIVING — S:** Kelin Keaton 1-9, Clark 3-14, Morrison 4-81. **SP:** None.