

South Point rallies past E. Rutherford 35-24

6-2 Red Raiders hand Cavaliers first loss of the season

By Doug Powell
Special to The Gazette

BOSTIC — Visiting South Point overcame a 10-point, third quarter deficit and finished with 275 rushing yards to beat previously unbeaten East Rutherford 35-24 on Friday night at Bryan Harrill Stadium.

The Red Raiders, 6-2 overall, with wins over East Gaston and East Rutherford, move to 2-0 in the conference while East Rutherford falls to 1-1, 7-1 overall.

Turning point: Outside of giving up a garbage-time touchdown with 17 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, South Point outscored East Rutherford 28-7 in the second half including 28

straight after falling down 17-7 with 7 minutes, 20 seconds left in the third quarter. The Red Raiders' triple-option attack took awhile to get going, but in the second half it wore down the Cavaliers' defense as they gave up touchdown runs of 23, 1 and 14. But it was actually a Keaton Hale 54-yard heave and a prayer down the left sideline which was caught by receiver Ray Grier that was effectively the back-breaker. Grier pulled down the jump ball and raced for 6, putting South Point up 28-17 with 5:25 left in the game.

Star of the game: South Point running back Naseem Jones was held under his 144 rushing yards per game mark but the junior was still able to rush for 117 yards and scored all three of his touchdowns in the second half. Jones has now recorded five 100-plus yard rushing

performances on the season and has 16 rushing scores.

Notes: South Point quarterback Keaton Hale passed for just 85 yards on 4 of 10 passing but he added 91 yards with his legs on 19 carries...

Cavaliers running back Demetrius Mauney rushed for 107 yards on 14 carries. He scored on touchdown runs of 7 (in the second quarter) and 30 (in the third quarter). Mauney now has six 100-plus yard games this year...

South Point receiver Ray Grier has hauled in 15 of the Red Raiders' 29 completions this season for 295 yards. He has also caught four of South Point's six TD passes...

East Rutherford quarterback Cameron Simmons has passed for 13 touchdowns this season and has yet to throw an interception on 104 pass attempts...

Simmons passed for 227

yards and attempted 25 passes, the most passing yards and attempts he's had this season since a 34-14 win over South Stanley in the season opener...

Of East Rutherford's 49 offensive touchdowns, 36 of them have been scored via the ground. Leading rusher Demetrius Mauney has scored 14 rushing touchdowns...

In last year's 55-7 South Point win, the Red Raiders had seven players receive carries and rushed for 304 yards and four touchdowns. South Point attempted just four passes total but three of them went for touchdowns and Grier was on the receiving end of all three...

What's next: South Point will return to its home field in Belmont as it hosts visiting R-S Central next Friday. East Rutherford will make the short trip over to its neighbor Chase to play the Trojans.

South Point sends a message

It had been weeks since South Point experienced any form of adversity.

Down 17-7 in a key conference clash at East Rutherford, the Red Raiders had an opportunity to either bow up or tuck their tails and surrender.

And if anyone knows South Point football, surrender is no option at all.

A second half explosion in which it scored 28 points

helped turn a 10-point deficit into a double-digit lead, helping the Red Raiders hand East Rutherford its first loss of the season.

Anchored by the backfield combo of quarterback Keaton Hale and fullback Naseem Jones, the vaunted "Redbone" offense cranked into high gear in the second half.

Jones finished with 117 rushing yards, going for three touchdowns in the final 24 minutes. Hale rushed for 91 yards on 19 carries, but was just as effective with his arm. He threw for 85 yards, with 54 of them coming on a touchdown pass to wideout Ray Grier.

With favorable matchups against R-S Central and Chase looming, the Red Raiders have likely put themselves in a position to play for a South-western 2A title in their season finale at Shelby.

South Point 35, East Rutherford 24
First quarter
ER - Austin Roderick 26 field goal 0:54
Second quarter
ER - Demetrius Mauney 7 run (Roderick kick) 7:20
SP - Jamani Leeper 7 run (Cade Ratliff kick) 0:59
Third quarter
ER - Mauney 30 run (Roderick kick) 9:41
SP - Naseem Jones 23 run (Ratliff kick) 7:12
SP - Jones 1 run (Ratliff kick) 0:15
Fourth quarter
SP - Ray Grier 54 pass from Keaton Hale (Ratliff kick) 5:25
SP - Jones 14 run (Ratliff kick) 1:56
ER - Simmons 1 run (Roderick kick) 0:17

SP - ER
19 First downs 18
59-275 Rushes-yards 28-166
85 Passing yards 227
360 Total yards 393
4-10-1 Comp-Att-Int 11-25-0
2-0 Fumbles-lost 3-0
4-25 Penalties-yards 6-35

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Individual statistics

South Point

RUSHING: Naseem Jones 22-117, Keaton Hale 19-91, Caleb Gibson 9-42, Jamani Leeper 7-19, Ray Grier 2-6.

PASSING: Hale 4-10-1, 85.

RECEIVING: Grier 2-66, Leeper 1-18, Gibson 1-1.

East Rutherford

RUSHING: Demetrius Mauney 14-107, Cameron Simmons 10-44, Jordan Harris 2-17, Jayden Waddell 2-minus 2.

PASSING: Simmons 11-25-0, 227.

RECEIVING: Waddell 5-85, Calvin Jones 3-73, Harris 3-69.