

## **Red Raiders Dominate Opener - Crush Clover 63-0**

August 21, 2011

The 2011 South Point Red Raiders took the field Friday night facing a familiar foe, an opponent who would become a little more familiar following an announcement in March. Former head coach John Devine took over the same position at Clover High School heightening expectations for the season opener at Lineberger Stadium. In spite of efforts by coaches and players on each side to downplay the matchup, the game seemed to mean much more than the participants would admit. And in fact, given the intensity displayed on the field by the Red Raiders, this one meant a lot. South Point immediately put the visiting Blue Eagles on their heels following the opening kickoff. And the Red Raiders never eased up, cruising to a 63-0 annihilation of the Clover squad.

Deferring the option, the Red Raiders elected to go on defense to begin the game, or so it appeared. A perfectly executed onside kick was recovered by South Point's Ramon Costner and the Red Raiders wasted little time finding the endzone. Beginning the drive at the Clover 38 yard line, South Point bull rushed the Blue Eagles defense. Fullback Troy Leeper took a handoff from quarterback Patrick Horne, broke several tackles and raced 29 yards for the initial score. Dayton Rogers added the extra point, one of nine he would drill on the night, and the Red Raiders had the early 7-0 lead. The ensuing pooch kick was covered by Clover at the Blue Eagles 41 yard line, but the visitor's offense could do little with the decent field position. Credit a swarming, hard-hitting South Point defense for what would become perhaps one of Clover's worst offensive outputs. Linebacker Jordan Forney along with defensive backs Josh Allman and Justus Watkins would back up the charge of the defensive line, throwing Blue Eagles ball carriers for numerous losses. Facing a third and fifteen on the second possession of the contest, Clover's quarterback scrambled and collected just enough yards for the first down in what would be the Blue Eagles most productive play of the game. The Red Raiders' defense held fast and forced Clover to punt. An extended official timeout (clock issues) may have cost South Point any momentum they had established as the Red Raiders punted the ball back to Clover. South Point appeared to have sustained the drive on a Leeper carry, but a holding penalty on the Red Raiders negated the gain. The South Point defense reclaimed the momentum. Forney shot through the line, into the backfield, and forced a fumble that was recovered by Allman at the Blue Eagles 23 yard line. The Red Raiders wasted little time advancing their lead as Horne would carry in from 15 yards out to make the score 14-0 with 1:21 remaining in the first quarter.

Clover's next possession would carry over into the second quarter and they were quickly forced to punt. With the ball resting at the South Point 25 yard line and 11:45 showing on the clock before halftime, the Red Raiders took quick advantage. Running back Tyler Bray took the ball

from Horne, broke through the line of scrimmage and covered 75 yards for South Point's third touchdown. Bray made a remarkable cutback deep inside the opponent's territory to elude a would-be tackler. The Red Raiders must have sensed that the rout was on because they continued to pressure and outplay the Blue Eagles. South Point covered a muffed kickoff merely seconds after building the 21 point lead. Taking possession at the Clover 42 was close enough for Leeper to follow Bray's impressive touchdown run. On first down, Leeper broke through a pile at the line of scrimmage, outran everyone to the goal line, and helped build the Red Raiders' commanding advantage to 28-0. Clover fair caught the ensuing kickoff, taking possession with 11:19 remaining before the half. The Blue Eagles crossed midfield but hit the Red wall at the South Point 40 yard line. A couple of plays in which Clover ball carriers were thrown for losses and the South Point offense was again in business at their own 49 yard line. Solid offensive line play by the Red Raiders, picking up positive yards on each play, helped move South Point to the one yard line. From there, Leeper aided his offensive line, pushing in for the score and a 35 point lead. Much to the crowds pleasure (at least half of us), the Red Raiders were not done. On the change of possession, South Point covered yet another inside kick. Horne ran a couple of plays before connecting with Costner on a 17 yard touchdown pass. The four minute drive covered 45 yards, gave South Point a 42-0 cushion, and left the Blue Eagles reeling. Clover sat on the ball to run out the final 23 seconds of the first half, a prudent move in that it kept the Red offense off the field!

After having deferred the option to the second half, South Point took the opening possession of the third quarter with Costner returning the kickoff to the Clover 8 yard line. Horne picked up those final eight yards making the score 49-0 early in the second half. The Red Raiders' defense, as they had all game long, held the Blue Eagles and forced a punt. Derek Perry took over for Horne at quarterback and Bray spelled Leeper for the remainder of the game. The South Point offense ran valuable minutes off the clock before turning the ball over on downs, but Clover could not take advantage. Appropriately, the Red Raiders defense would not allow the Blue Eagles to take advantage! South Point forced another turnover giving the ball back to Perry and Bray. The backups proved capable as they led the team to an eighth touchdown. Bray's 31 yard touchdown run advanced his game high total and gave the Red Raiders a 56-0 lead with a quarter yet to be played.

The teams traded possessions in the final stanza with little to suggest that the Blue Eagles had anything left to garner a somewhat respectful outcome. South Point continued to burn the clock; Clover continued to struggle and turn the ball over. The Red Raiders took final advantage, converting a Blue Eagles fumble into a touchdown on junior Devan Robbins' 16 yard run. The final score read 63-0, a dominating effort for South Point in a game that would have been special if only because it was the opener. But it was much more.

Asked about the overwhelming victory, Coach Lineberger would offer only that "we just came out and played." And indeed, the Red Raiders came out and proved to want the victory more than the Clover Blue Eagles. Among other reasons, an announcement in March made this a special game. And the Red Raiders made it a special night for Coach Lineberger and all of RaiderNation. Next week South Point travels to face a strong Lincolnnton team. Hey Big Red, just

come out and play!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

### **Notable Facts and Thoughts**

Senior defensive back Justus Watkins' value to the team effort was not limited to the defensive side of the ball. Watkins made some outstanding plays (hits) on the kickoff coverage team allowing the Red Raiders to regain several possessions after scores.

### **JV Report by Calvin Craig**

#### **Blue Eagles Strike First But Red Raiders Take Charge**

The Clover Blue Eagles JV team scored all of their points in the first half, but the Red Raiders JV (1-0) took command after the half to win 35 - 17.

The Blue Eagles took their first drive and after stalling in Red Raider territory their kicker booted a 23 yd FG. The Red Raiders responded with Donnie Hunter's 24 yard touchdown which came seconds from ending the 1st quarter. The Blue Eagles immediately responded by taking their next drive and scoring in only 27 seconds as QB Scott Jackson found RB Josh Adams for a 70 yard touchdown pass. Clover scored again in the 2nd quarter on Josh Adams 23 yard touchdown run, but that would end the Blue Eagles scoring for the night.

The Red Raiders were able to get their offense in gear in the second half by taking their first drive the distance and scoring on Donnie Hunter's 1 yard plunge early in the second half and Hunter scored again in the 4th to finish the Red Raiders scoring for the night.

Quarterback Jaquan Brooks guided the Red Raiders all night and scored a touchdown in the 1st half on a 10 yard run.

The Red Raiders defense played exceptionally well in the second half denying Clover scoring opportunities. Jeffrey Pearsall had an interception and Austin Dirks recovered a fumble which was forced from the Clover quarterback by Jacob Hoyle.

The JV Red Raiders take on Lincolnton next Thursday night at Lineberger Stadium.