

Game Recap

“South Point Battles...Come Up Short Against Crest, 28-11”

South Point kicked off their 2018 campaign hosting Crest in what is known to be a highly anticipated and extremely physical contest between perennial powers in NCHSAA football. Neither the Red Raiders nor the Chargers lacked confidence entering the new season, but South Point recognizes the need to fill holes vacated following last year's solid showing. One game does not make or break a season. Unless that one game proves to be the contest that deflates the program for the remainder of the year. In spite of a scoreboard that tilted heavily in the direction of the visitors at the end of both halves, the Big Red fought to give themselves a chance to pull out a late victory. The positive taken from the disappointing loss is that this team has, after a single game, proven themselves to possess the same character that previous championship squads have displayed. Forty-eight minutes into the 2018 effort, South Point has shown a determination to fight to the end and that “next man up” is more than a motivational maxim, but rather a way of life for Red Raiders football.

With the opening kick, South Point set an early tone by taking advantage of a drive engineered by Senior Quarterback Keaton Hale. The six-minute possession culminated with a 26 yard field goal by Senior Kicker Cade Ratliff and a 3-0 Red Raiders lead. The Red ‘D’ flexed some muscle on the ensuing Crest drive by forcing a punt by the Chargers. Just over three minutes remained on the first quarter clock and South Point's season appeared to be off to a good start. But, like the Red Raiders, Crest doesn't come by their hard-nosed reputation simply by chance. Rather the Chargers give tireless effort and have the ability to take advantage of momentum shifts. Following a South Point punt on their second drive, Crest drove to the Raiders 15 yardline where play would begin in the second stanza.

Five seconds in to the quarter, a fifteen yard touchdown pass put the Chargers ahead 7-3. The momentum swing was not yet clearly apparent as South Point continued to battle on both sides of the ball. Unable to muster another scoring chance in the half, the Raiders traded punts with the Chargers and time wound down. As halftime approached, Crest displayed a big play capability. The Chargers quickly drove deep into Red Raiders' territory and advanced their advantage with an eleven yard touchdown pass and leaving a scant six seconds on the clock before the break. The 14-3 lead was disappointing as South Point had, throughout the opening half, seemed to be going toe-to-toe with Crest. The scenario of big leads on quick strikes is not foreign to the series. So, the Red Raiders had every reason to believe in themselves and prove capable of the comeback. The team was eager to get through the intermission and get back on the field to set things straight.

Long drives and lengthy possessions marked the third quarter. The Chargers took the opening kick of the second half and drove from their seven to the South Point 24 yardline. A 31 yard field goal attempt drifted wide left and with 4:17 on the clock the Raiders offense took to the field. From their twenty, South Point drove eighty yards with the last 23 picked up by a Hale run to cut the lead. Junior Fullback Naseem Jones bulled through for the 2-point conversion and the scoreboard read a more respectable 14-11 in the Chargers' favor. With under two minutes

left on the clock, Crest would carry their second possession of the quarter into the final 12 minutes of regulation.

Holding the Chargers to a punt on the initial drive of the fourth gave South Point the ball and some hope to take the lead. But a costly interception halted a drive for points and swung momentum back to Crest. The Red 'D' covered a muffed snap to give the offense yet another chance with 4:33 remaining. Unfortunately, although starting in Chargers' territory at the Crest 45, the Raiders could not muster the needed yardage to sustain the go ahead drive and were forced to punt. Having successfully dodged the Raiders onslaught, the Chargers once again used a big play offense to close the book on the contest. A four yard quarterback touchdown run pushed the Crest lead to 21-11 with just over a minute remaining. A final pick six did little more than make the contest appear more lopsided than the effort on the field proved. South Point fell 28-11 and will look to turn things around against the Lincolnton Wolves in week two.

The kickoff to the 2018 NCHSAA football season did not swing in favor of South Point. But this year's team of Red Raiders gave the expected, admirable account of themselves, proving that they are capable of continuing the proud tradition. Coach Hodge encouraged his charges by acknowledging their will to "fight when backed into a corner." The effort out of the halftime break did not come as a surprise. Rather it displayed the heart of a team that can control their own destiny. Questions will be answered and holes will be filled as the next few challenges are met. Next up, the Red Raiders will host the Lincolnton Wolves, a team in search of a first victory of the season following an embarrassing loss to the Stuart Cramer Storm. The Big Red will not take the Wolves lightly, neither will they expect Lincolnton to come in making the mistakes that plagued them in week one. South Point rather, will come out swinging and take control. Tame the Wolves!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

Week in and week out we, as a community of South Point supporters, witness and are a part of a very special athletic program, the success of which is never lost on those whose contributions exceed reasonable expectations. These contributions also, and properly so, extend beyond the field of athletics into the area of academics. We thus recognize that first and foremost we are connected to a school and school system dedicated to education and enhanced life opportunities. We often recognize the sacrifices of those whom have given of their time, talents, and indeed their hearts to education and efforts to improve the lives of our students and student athletes. Unfortunately, many times, such recognition comes when those valued souls may no longer walk our halls, pace our sidelines, or call out our names for jobs well done. In the stadium, Friday night, a moment of silence was held to remember three such positive influences, Dr. Ed Sadler, Coach Earl Lingfeldt, and Mr. Kenny Williams. One mark of a life well lived is that those left behind have at least one memorable story to share related to a positive impact or encounter, however brief, of the one who gave so much of themselves to help us realize our potential. The devotion of each of these men to their respective areas of expertise leaves no doubt that each

answered a calling to serve. And living as examples they poured every ounce of their being into making the part of the world they could influence, a better place in which to live. Dr. Sadler's belief that we all have an ability to learn, Coach Lingafeldt's urging us to achieve, and Kenny Williams' acknowledgement of our accomplishments will henceforth resound in our hearts. May they be remembered forever.

Jamey Andrews