

"South Point...Big South 3A Champs! - Dominating 2nd Half Slams Crest, 42-21"

October 30, 2011

The weather wasn't the only thing that turned nasty Friday night at Lineberger Stadium; the Red Raiders did likewise in an outstanding effort to claim the outright Big South 3A title! The Crest Chargers came in looking to knock South Point from the unbeaten ranks and their initial burst seem to put them in a fair position to do so. But South Point was the only team on this night that would play a full four quarters of football and in the end the Chargers were no match for the powerful Red Raiders, champions of the Big South 3A!

Crest won the toss and deferred the option to the second half, electing to give the South Point offense the contest's first possession. The Red Raiders obliged the offer and immediately proceeded to march quickly downfield to open the scoring. Beginning play at their own twenty-one yard line, South Point chipped away at the Chargers' defense. Keeping the ball on the ground, the running quartet of Horne, Leeper, Bray, and Robbins would prove equal to the task. Outstanding blocking from the offensive line, and receivers downfield, opened holes that would lead to a Bray twenty yard scoring run and a 7-0 early advantage. The Chargers, as they would throughout the first two quarters, would keep pace and even pressure the Red defense. The speed of the Crest backfield would force South Point defenders to take different and quicker angles to the ball to make tackles. Running plays for the Chargers would start up the middle but would quickly, very quickly, break to the outside for big gains. Crest answered the Red Raiders touchdown with a drive, aided by a facemask penalty on South Point, which would knot the score at seven apiece. On the ensuing kickoff, South Point picked up where they left off by taking advantage of what the Chargers defense allowed. During the drive, the Chargers' faithful were ignited by a clothesline blow that would knock Bray back for no gain. Bray sprang to his feet, smiled at the defender and returned to his huddle unscathed. The next play was a pitch to Robbins who followed Bray around the end. One play removed from a crushing blow and Bray had an opportunity to return the favor. Lashing into that same Charger, Bray sent the defender head over heels, springing Robbins for a 30 yard gain to the Crest thirty-one and a new set of downs. After working the ball into the Crest redzone, Horne put South Point back on top with a ten yard run. The Dayton Rogers PAT pushed the lead back to seven at 14-7 with just under six minutes to go in the first.

The early flow of the game suggested that the eventual victor would need a defensive stop to gain control and give one team the chance needed to be crowned champion. Enter the Big Red 'D'! The Red Raiders made their presence known with Crest's next possession. The Chargers were mounting a drive and had moved the ball to near midfield when hard contact jarred the ball loose from a Crest running back. Josh Allman scooped up the fumble and raced deep into Chargers territory. Unfortunately, an unpopular block in the back call went against South Point and the ball was moved back to the Crest forty. The Red Raiders could not advance and were forced to punt, but notice had been served that South Point came to play hard and create their own opportunities. With possession of the ball, Crest's drive extended into the second quarter.

The Chargers fought hard against the South Point defense and mustered some success. Crest tied the score, 14-14, with just less than three minutes gone in the second quarter. The Red Raiders were eager to recapture momentum but a Horne pass was picked off and the Chargers took over at the South Point twenty-eight. In spite of the good fortune, nothing came easy for Crest. The Chargers needed six plays and one timeout to cover the needed twenty-eight yards for the touchdown. Leading 21-14, Crest had proven capable of putting the Red Raiders on their heels. But 4:30 remained before halftime and Troy Leeper was anxious. The weather had turned from "cold" to "cold and rainy" and canopies were erected to keep equipment dry. Sitting beneath the cover while awaiting his chance to return to the field, the power back worked off nervous energy by bouncing his legs up and down as if running in place. His chance would come as the South Point drive would begin at the Red Raiders' thirty-eight. South Point picked up positive yardage on each play and frustrated the Chargers defense to the point of coaxing a personal foul penalty. Leeper drew the Red Raiders close with an eight yard touchdown run, his first score of the game. Wet conditions were costly to South Point after the touchdown as the PAT snap slipped past Horne. The Red Raiders trailed by one, 21-20, as the first half ended.

Crest began the third quarter on offense. More appropriately, the South Point defense would begin the second half with an opportunity to slam the door on the Chargers. The title of Champion was being held up by a single point deficit and this was unacceptable to the Red Raiders! Linebacker Jordan Forney put a stop to Crest's opening drive by throwing Charger ball carriers for losses on consecutive third and fourth down plays deep in South Point territory. "We had to go get it," Forney said, when asked about the defensive adjustments after halftime that would eventually keep the Chargers from scoring again. "They were running right at us and we knew what we had to do," he added. The momentum had been established and maintained by the Red Raiders defense. A forced fumble on the Chargers second possession of the third quarter gave South Point the ball at the Crest thirty-eight. The short field aided the Red Raiders and a Leeper one yard run would reclaim the lead for South Point. The two point conversion made the score 28-21, and with the final

stanza approaching, the home team never looked back!

The Red Raiders forced a Crest punt early in the fourth and immediately the offense went to work. A sixteen yard Leeper burst up the middle put South Point further in control. Leading 35-21, the Red Raiders were about to reach one of their seasonal goals but were not ready to let up on the Chargers! Crest attempted to mount a drive that would draw them close on the next possession. But defensive back Jeremy Sanders stepped up by diving in front of a Charger pass and wrestling the ball away from the receiver. The interception put an exclamation point on the defensive effort by South Point in the second half! Sanders echoed Forney's comments about the ability of the defense to shut down the Chargers in the second half, saying simply, "we fixed it." With the ball back in the capable hands of the Red 'O', South Point needed only to burn the clock. Facing a fourth and long, a possession down, Horne lofted a pass for Bray down the right side of the field. Bray made an athletic catch to keep the drive alive and the clock rolling. Downplaying his own effort, Bray turned attention to Horne saying that the quarterback did a great job throwing the ball a little behind him because of the defender being draped over his shoulder. The play sustained the drive and allowed South Point to add an "insurance" score. Leeper collected his third touchdown of the half, and fourth total, for the 42-21 lead. The teams then traded possessions before the final horn sounded, ending the regular season.

On a cold, rainy night in Belmont, the South Point Red Raiders had emphatically left their mark on the Big South 3A Conference. Crowned champions of the Big South 3A for the fifth consecutive season, South Point finished with a 6-0 mark in the conference and 10-0 overall. Crest came to town with something to gain but left with a lesson. The Red Raiders have had lofty expectations since before the season began. They were determined not to be denied a conference championship. Neither do they expect to be denied a state title! Sorry, Weddington...

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

The path to Chapel Hill will be lined with formidable foes in the 3AA bracket. South Point could potentially face two undefeated opponents along the way. Coach Lineberger has emphasized to his players, "We want to play twenty more quarters!" "We want to win twenty more quarters!"

JV Report by Calvin Craig

Moore and Crest end JV Red Raiders season

Crest running back Jalen Moore scored 5 touchdowns to lead the JV Chargers past the South Point JV team in the season finale, 34-15. □

Both teams got off to a rocky start in the 1st quarter turning the ball over three times collectively before Crest was able to cap a drive with Jalen Moore's one yard touchdown early in the second quarter .

South Point answered immediately with a three play drive capped with a Tanner Muse 51 yard touchdown run and two point conversion run to tie the game at 8-8.

Moore and company were able to score again before the half leading 14-8.

The Red Raiders took the lead early in the third quarter on a drive that was spurred by quarterback Jaquan Brooks 45 yard run and Muse scored on the next play. An Aaron Camp extra point kick gave South Point the lead over the Chargers 15-14.

But, Moore was not done.

Jalen Moore and company scored three more rushing touchdowns and the 9-1 Chargers were victorious.

The JV Red Raiders will now turn their attention to the playoffs as many of them will be called up to play with the varsity. The South Point junior varsity team ends their season, (7-3, 4-2).