

Game Recap

Defining Victory – Raiders Pummel Warriors, 48-6

Black Friday – (blāk, frī 'dē, dā) *n.* Annual event marked by a gridiron competition, the result of which is a thorough thrashing of the East Gaston Warriors by their arch rival, and supreme champion, South Point Red Raiders.

The year was 1972. Two teams took to the field to do battle in what would become one of the greatest rivalries of all time. (Well, at least as far as the east side of Gaston County is concerned.) South Point and East Gaston squared off in a football battle that on that particular evening would end in a 0-0 tie. The outcome proved unacceptable, in fact EXTREMELY unacceptable, to the Red Raiders and so they followed up that mediocre showing with three consecutive shutout thrashings, 62-0, 54-0, and 36-0! Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the rivalry, participants from that first game were recognized during halftime. The look in their eyes suggested a heartfelt desire to spend a few more minutes in the locker room and on the field. It was a fitting tribute, allowing them to relive the moment in history they established the South Point and East Gaston rivalry at Lineberger Stadium. The origins of the rivalry (Gaston County's oldest) actually date back to 1923 when Belmont High met Mt. Holly High. And on this night the Red faithful were treated to another defining victory!

South Point won the toss and deferred their option to the second half. East Gaston would receive and have the first crack to put points on the board. The Warriors kept the Red 'D' honest with some positive yardage picked up on short passes out in the flats. But the Raiders stopped the penetration and forced the game's first punt. Barreling in from the outside, DL Aiden Ramirez deflected the punt and then raced to the ball for the recovery. South Point's offense took the field and went to work. From their 39 yardline, the ground-pounding attack took 4:19 off the clock and ended with FB Cam Medlock touchdown from nine yards out. The Raiders had the early 7-0 advantage on K Charlie Birtwistle's PAT, and were looking to give themselves another chance before the quarters' end. FS Will Ross set a tone for the defense on the ensuing East Gaston possession. His hit behind the line on the first down play backed the Warriors up five yards and the Red 'D' maintained the line. The Warriors punted for the second time and South Point was again ready to roll. Consecutive pickups of 12, 11, and 14 yards by Medlock helped move the Raiders to the East Gaston twenty-one. From there, QB Patrick Blee kept around the left side and sped to the endzone for six. With 0:11 remaining in the quarter, South Point had taken control 14-0.

The Red Raiders kept the pressure on the Warriors as the second stanza began. Forcing a third punt in as many possessions, South Point started play from their 46 yardline. One play, two slipped tackles, and 54 yards later, Blee had his second touchdown of the game. The Raiders lead had grown to 21-0 with 10:36 to go before the half. East Gaston tried to muster some momentum, managing a drive that took them across midfield down to the South Point nineteen.

But a fourth-and-nine pass was deflected by Ramirez and the ball went over on downs. Medlock picked up big yardage on the Raiders first down play, carrying to the Warriors forty-six. From there, Blee hit SE Aaron Chaney in stride with a strike for six. Chaney sped past defenders, hauled in the pass, and raced to the endzone. With 3:38 remaining, South Point had taken total control 27-0. The Warriors used the remaining time for stats but no points and the teams headed to the lockerrooms for the intermission.

The Raiders' opening drive of the third quarter began at midfield. Moving downfield the Red 'O' put more points on the board after a run of 5 yards by Medlock. South Point had the 34-0 advantage within the first minute of the new half of play. Yet another defensive stand and East Gaston punt gave the Raiders another opportunity. South Point took advantage of the scoreboard to get more players onto the field. QB Ashton Green took over under center and the offense continued to click. His forty-one yard toss to TE Colby Hamilton increased the Big Red lead. South Point was up 41-0 with 7:44 to go in the third. The Raiders defense allowed the Warriors another 4 downs and 1:32 of possession time before once again padding their advantage. FB Gavin Smith was a key to the next South Point drive, picking up 47 yards on a run to the East Gaston one yardline. For his effort, Smith was awarded the ball from one yard out and he dove in for the score. Noah Gosnell notched the extra point and the rout continued. The Raiders had built a 48-0 lead heading into the final stanza.

Miscues mounted in the fourth quarter with both sides plagued by fumbles. The Warriors were able to find the endzone to save the shutout, but the outcome had long since been decided. South Point claimed the emphatic 48-6 Black Friday victory!

Dating back to 1972 and the first tie in South Point - East Gaston history, either a win or loss on Black Friday could be considered a defining moment for the squads that take the field. The victor builds on the win with confidence going forward through the season. While the losing team can grasp the opportunity to determine how they'll respond for the remainder of the year and look forward to the next rivalry meeting. For now, Black Friday belongs to the Red Raiders!

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

A debt of gratitude is owed the former players/coaches that took the field to be recognized for having participated in the first "Black Friday" contest. We should further be grateful to all the coaches, players, and fans that, through the years, have made this one of the most passionate rivalries in all of North Carolina High School sports. Thank you Red Raiders and Warriors!