
VARSITY REPORT

by Jamey Andrews

“Red Raiders Roll...Crush Cavaliers, 55-7”

Superstition holds that Friday the 13th is an unlucky day. The origins of the notion are varied, having roots in history, science, numerology, and mythology. Neither subject offers an account that can claim to be the absolute authority. Yet all provide reason to support a belief or feeling that nothing will “go right” on this day, or something “bad” is bound to happen. The South Point Red Raiders took a giant step toward dispelling the notion that bad things happen on Friday the 13th, while in East Rutherford, the superstition is alive and well! The Cavaliers may have expected good things to happen on the gridiron at Lineberger Stadium on the fateful day, but the Red Raiders had other expectations. And assuming no black cats crossed the paths of the East Rutherford busses en route to Belmont, South Point’s domination on offense, defense, and special teams was all that was needed to make believers of the Cavaliers. The Red Raiders scored early and often to cruise to a 55-7 thrashing of their Southwestern 2A Conference opponent.

East Rutherford won the toss and deferred the option, giving South Point the game’s first offensive possession. It was a lucky call on the coin toss that quickly turned unlucky for the Cavaliers as the Red offense took the opening drive 54 yards for the score. Quarterback Keaton Hale, under center for Scottie Lee engineered a drive that began at the Raiders 46 yardline. Hale had taken the kickoff at the South Point fifteen, so the backup quarterback figured prominently in the drive from the outset. The Red ‘O’ made quick work carving up the East Rutherford defense by controlling the line of scrimmage and picking up positive yards on consecutive plays. From the Cavaliers 24, Hale kept the ball and sped his way to the endzone for the touchdown. Kicker Cade Ratliff drilled the PAT and South Point took the early 7-0 lead with 9:04 showing on the first quarter clock. Asked about the confidence level of the team, especially following his early insertion into the game, Hale said, “I don’t have to build confidence in them, they usually build me up.” The team aspect was evident as the Raiders showed no drop off in performance. The ensuing kickoff pinned East Rutherford deep at their 9 yardline. The Red ‘D’ came out as stout as ever, laying hard hits, gang tackling, and quickly forcing an East Rutherford punt. Ray Grier returned the kick across midfield to set up the Raiders with a short field. Adding to the early success and momentum, fullback Jake Alexander (#24) picked up chunks of yardage moving the ball deeper in to Cavaliers territory. Then for the second consecutive week, an unusual and rarely seen penalty was flagged against South Point. Similar to last week’s hurdling call against a South Point ball carrier that leaped over a would-be tackler, the latest call also involved a running play. Hale picked up an apparent first down on a third and 8 but the Raiders were flagged for “assisting” the runner. The quarterback was running amongst a pile of blockers and defenders when the handkerchief was thrown. The infraction was enforced from the spot of the foul so South Point was backed up to face a third and inches from the East Rutherford 37 yardline. Alexander easily picked up the needed inches and proceeded to carry tacklers ten more yards...without assistance! Two plays later Hale lofted a pass that was grabbed by a leaping Grier for 28 yards and the touchdown. The Raiders had moved to the 14-0 advantage and the

luck of the Cavaliers would continue to get worse! Holding penalties began to mount for the East Rutherford offense as the Red 'D' proved too quick in the matchup. Another Cavalier punt gave South Point the ball and possession that would carry over to the second quarter.

Returning to the game, Scottie Lee took the opening snap of the second stanza, spun around the left side and was untouched 22 yards for the 21-0 lead. East Rutherford began the next drive at their 20 yardline following a Ratliff touchback. On the first down play, linebacker Nate Hamilton stuck the quarterback, jarring the ball loose. Mario Brandon recovered for South Point and the Red 'O' took over at the Cavaliers twenty. Three plays later, Lee tossed a fade that Grier caught in the endzone for a 15 yard score and the 28-0 lead. Halftime was still 10:35 away and even with the great advantage, South Point kept up the pressure. Taking over on downs at their 25 yardline, the Raiders drove to the East Rutherford 45 yardline. From there, Grier got behind his defender, in single coverage, and hauled in a Lee pass for South Point's fifth touchdown of the contest. The PAT moved the Raiders in front by a 35-0 count and left the Cavaliers searching for answers. They could only add to the questions with the first down play of their next drive. Raiders' defensive lineman Khimek Stukes punched the ball out of the grip of a Cavalier ball carrier and teammate Tre Glenn took advantage. The defensive back scooped up the ball and sped to the endzone to put the Raiders up 41-0 at the 5:11 mark of the second quarter. East Rutherford continued to battle and finally put together a drive to the South Point five. But the Red 'D' kept the Cavaliers off the scoreboard allowing the Red 'O' to take a knee to close the half.

With the ball to begin the third, East Rutherford added an aerial attack to the game plan in hopes of putting points on the board. Hamilton made them pay on the initial drive of the second half, picking off a pass at the South Point 31 yardline. For the quarter, the Raiders had settled in with many backups inserted and both teams traded punts after moving the ball between the red zones. The Cavaliers would mount the only scoring drive of the quarter to make the score 41-7, but long before that point, the outcome had likely been decided. The flow of the game continued at the established pace as the final stanza approached.

After trading possessions to begin the fourth, the Red 'O' reclaimed their powerful form and seized momentum. With Hale back under center, the Raiders put together a ground pounding drive that would kill the clock and culminate in points. Backup running back Naseem Jones blazed from the East Rutherford 40 to the Cavaliers one. Penalties moved the ball back, but later in the drive Jones carried over from 7 yards out for the touchdown to put South Point up 48-7 with 7:01 remaining in regulation. After the scoring drive the teams again traded punts. And the special teams of South Point would take one more shot at the Cavaliers. Punter Nick Gange nailed a high, deep kick that forced an attempted fair catch by the East Rutherford returner. The catch was muffed and South Point's Matthew Robinson alertly recovered the ball on the bounce. Robinson was only held from scoring by rule as the ball could not be advanced. His offense did not let his great play go to waste. Hale gave to Jones on consecutive plays and then a pitch to Jacob Alexander (#35) ended with the ball in the endzone! Kicker David O'Hanlon's PAT accounted for the final 55-7.

If the East Rutherford Cavaliers were not a superstitious team coming in to Lineberger Stadium on Friday the 13th, they certainly left Belmont wondering if the notion, of bad things

happening on that day, may have merit. The reality is, the Red Raiders were up to the challenge and took charge in all phases of the game to crush their conference foe. The victory continues to advance a consecutive win streak record for South Point. But in the team huddle at the end of the game, it was obvious their focus is on bigger prizes. And Coach is asking for “a little bit more.”

Go Get ‘Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

The Red Raiders will be challenged by two conference games on the road in the coming weeks. Long drives home can be made longer... Win ‘em, Red!

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