

Game Recap

South Point Rolls in Patriotism Bowl - Tame Tigers, 32-7

Patriotism is simply defined as a devotion to one's nation, a feeling of pride in one's home country. This sense of pride seems to rise and fall according to specific events throughout a nation's history. With roots dating to the American Revolution, our United States have been sustained through the continued protection provided by truly patriotic individuals. And among the rights provided by our Constitution, we citizens express our patriotism by casting votes in elections. The importance of promoting patriotism was not lost on our major sports entities. The first recorded playing of the Star-Spangled Banner was at a 1918 World Series game between the Boston Red Sox and the Chicago Cubs. Thirteen years later (1931) the song became recognized as our national anthem. In the 1940s the national anthem was played only on occasion at certain NFL games. Following WWII, then commissioner, Elmer Layden, ordered it to be played at every NFL game. The significance of this practice cannot be overstated. Patriotic reflection is a necessary practice for a great nation. Calling upon a quality possessed by true patriots, the Red Raiders exhibited a devotion to team that carried them to a decisive 32-7 Patriotism Bowl victory over the Mount Pleasant Tigers last Friday night at Lineberger Stadium. Head Coach Tom Coughlin of the New York Giants once said, "Championships are won by teams who love one another, who enjoy and respect one another and play for and support one another." His message carried the Giants to wins in two Super Bowls. And South Point put his comment on display en route to their third consecutive win.

South Point won the toss and elected to receive the opening kickoff of the second half, giving Mount Pleasant the first possession of the night. The Tigers were held short on three plays to open the contest. Facing a 4th and 1 at their thirty-two yard line, the offense remained on the field to attempt to move the chains. The effort did not go well. A muffed shotgun snap was covered by DB Jeremiah Holt giving the Raiders their initial possession deep in Tigers' territory. QB Cayden Rumph led the South Point offense onto the field. Working quickly with the potent ground attack, the Red 'O' moved to the 13-yard line. From there, Rumph kept around the left side and spun into the endzone. K Wilson London notched the PAT, and the Raiders claimed the early 7-0 advantage. Mount Pleasant proved not to be a one-dimensional opponent. Inside and misdirection handoffs were highlighted. And at times the ball would be reversed on the same play. But the Red 'D' was equal to the task. A three-and-out series forced a Tigers punt to give the ball to South Point at the 6:00 mark of the first quarter. The punt was shanked giving the Raiders good field position once again at the Tigers 45-yard line. Desperation set in for the Mount Pleasant defense and they began to fly to the ball. South Point's drive was sustained by an overly aggressive Tigers defense with an offsides penalty on the 4th and 2. The new set of downs went for naught as an interception stalled the drive and Mount Pleasant avoided an early

two score deficit. Taking over at their 9-yard line, the Tigers carried the ensuing possession over into the second stanza.

Aided by the shift in momentum caused by the turnover, Mount Pleasant moved out to midfield with their early threat of the second quarter. The South Point defense flexed but stood firm when necessary. The Raiders forced a 4th and 11 play that the Tigers needed to keep the drive alive. Good coverage downfield caused a sideline pass to sail too wide, and the South Point took over on downs. The Raiders offense wasted no time erasing the mistake that cost them points late in the first quarter. A hard-charging, ground-pounding attack, typical of Big Red football, moved the Raiders to the Mount Pleasant 6-yardline over a nearly five-minute drive. FB Kaveaun Pless bulled through the gut behind his O-line, easily punching through for the score. With 3:24 remaining in the half South Point moved out to a 13-0 lead. A defensive stand by the Raiders ended the final drive for points for the Tigers and the teams headed to the intermission with South Point in control.

With the ball to begin the third quarter, the Raiders set off and running to set the tone for the half. It would take one play! A handoff to Pless at the South Point 35-yard line was the only play needed. Pless burst through the left side of the line and was off to the races. The FB was caught from behind near the Mount Pleasant fifteen but continued to churn out the yardage eventually carrying three defenders across the goal line. The Raiders advanced to a 19-0 advantage and were in firm control of the contest. Mount Pleasant moved to near midfield on their following possession and with the field position decided to test the air. Yet again an errant shotgun snap thwarted their attempt and, facing a 4th and 20, the Tigers were forced to punt. RS Kham Crawford fielded the moonshot punt, and the speedy back set South Point up at the Raiders' 41-yardline. Once again, a single play was all the Red 'O' needed! Rumph took the snap, stepped back and then bolted through the line on a quarterback draw. Fifty-nine yards later the South Point lead was pushed further! Asked later about starting under center in a game of such significance as the Patriotism Bowl, Rumph immediately directed his comments toward those who exhibit an elevated level of patriotism every day. "I've had family members who've served in the military and a bother currently serving, so my thoughts were with him," said Rumph. The QB went on to express his appreciation for his team and especially the offensive line saying that he congratulated them on every play. His score put South Point in front 25-0 with less than three minutes gone in the quarter. Mount Pleasant finally found some success on offense with their next drive. Starting with good field position near their forty-five, the Tigers moved downfield on a nearly six-minute drive that ended with a 1-yard touchdown run on a third and goal. South Point maintained the 25-7 advantage as the third stanza ended.

On a drive that carried over from the third quarter, Raiders DB Zeke Pruitt made a diving pick of a Mount Pleasant pass that had deflected off the receiver. South Point went into clock control

mode, pounding out yardage on the ground to keep the ball out of the hands of the Tigers. A fourth quarter South Point punt was followed by a Mount Pleasant punt as the teams continued to battle. With the ball at the South Point 35-yard line, and with time winding down, Rumph once again kept the ball and burst off the left side. The speedy QB covered the sixty-five yards in quick order to answer the previous Mount Pleasant touchdown. K Mason Hovis added the PAT to complete the exclamation point and enabled South Point to close in on the Patriotism Bowl trophy. The clock ran out on the Tigers with their next possession and the Big Red claimed the victory.

A devotion to a nation is the mark of patriotism. And there are qualities of patriotism that are on display in all aspects of life. On a football field it is seen in the devotion to the team and the never-ending support of teammates. Super Bowl winning coaches have proven success by emphasizing these qualities in their teams. And on Friday night in Belmont, the Big Red flexed the muscle of a true patriot.

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

And now it begins! The Raiders conference schedule kicks off in Gastonia next week with a visit to rival Ashbrook. The Greenwave managed a pair of 3-point victories over the Raiders last year, in both the regular season and playoffs. The debt is OWED. Time to collect. Go Big Red!