

Game Recap

“Un-Pleasant’...Red Raiders Advance With Victory Over Tigers, 28-7”

MOUNT PLEASANT – The first ever meeting between South Point and Mount Pleasant would result in great reward for the victor. The contest kicked off the opening round of the 2018 NCHSAA 2AA Playoffs with the seventh seeded Tigers hosting the tenth seeded Red Raiders. Both squads experienced some rust at the outset. Perhaps it was due to the week off, or maybe the tense nature of playoff football where a single loss ends a season. Whatever the reason, the teams got off to slow starts with neither mounting much of an early charge. Former NFL Coach and current Arizona State Sun Devils Head Coach Herm Edwards once urged his team, “Stay focused. How you start does not determine how you’re going to finish.” The Big Red took such a message to heart as the Raiders offense grabbed control in the second quarter, and the Red ‘D’ turned back every second half challenge, to claim the total team victory.

Mount Pleasant won the toss and deferred their option to the second half. South Point took the first possession and managed some positive yardage but would not mount a scoring threat. The Tigers gained an equal number of yards with their initial drive but were stalled by the Raiders defense. The uneventful first quarter closed with both teams having traded two punts each, and zeroes on the scoreboard. South Point carried their third possession of the game into the second quarter.

Facing third and four to begin the second, and the ball resting on the Mount Pleasant 41 yardline, RB Naseem Jones burst through to the 35 for a new set of downs. The Red ‘O’ would need only one of those downs. QB Keaton Hale kept the ball and raced around the right side, untouched, for the initial score. K Cade Ratliff punched the PAT through for the 7-0 advantage. The Tigers answered on the ensuing possession, benefitting from a third and eight pass play that carried them to the South Point ten. Three plays later Mount Pleasant had the equalizer to knot the score at seven. The Raiders didn’t back down. RB Jamani Leeper returned a short kick to the South Point forty-six to set up the Red offense. One play and 54 yards later, Jones took a pitch around the left side to put the Raiders back on top with a dive into the endzone. After the Red ‘D’ forced a turnover on downs, South Point took the 14-7 lead into the half.

With the ball to begin the third quarter, Mount Pleasant ran in to a Red wall! A three-and-out series to start for the Tigers put the Raiders in position to take further control. Driving from their thirty-six to the Mount Pleasant thirty-eight in five plays, South Point was poised to strike. Jones did just that! Bursting through a hole created by OL Larry Dowdy and Leeper, who stepped up into the TE position, Jones rushed 38 yards for the touchdown. The Red Raiders were in command at 21-7 with 7:19 remaining in the quarter. Jones would later go beyond giving credit to his line for the lanes they created. Calling his linemen by name, the running back credited his teammates with his success, “that’s all because of them” he said. Jones added, “We struggled in the first two possessions, but we never gave up.” Such an attitude is a recipe for success in playoff football. Building off the good work of the offense, the Red ‘D’ stepped up and slammed the door on the Tigers on the next possession! With an outstanding defensive play, DB Tre Glen blanketed a receiver and tipped a pass into the air. Without giving up on the play, Glen then grabbed the ball before letting it hit the ground to complete the interception. He

returned the ball to the Mount Pleasant 40 where the Red 'O' would again take over. Mixing runs and passes, South Point kept the Tigers on their heels. A twenty-seven yard connection from Hale to SE Ray Grier accounted for the Raiders fourth touchdown and the 28-7 advantage. Mount Pleasant finished off the last 2:44 of the third quarter and would carry their possession into the final stanza.

South Point had taken control of the contest with outstanding effort in the 2nd and 3rd quarters. Arguably their most impressive showing was yet to come in the final twelve minutes! With the ball at the Raiders twenty-six to begin the quarter, the Tigers ran two plays. A four yard run and a pass attempt. From his DB position, Grier intercepted the pass and managed to stay in bounds at the Raiders eleven. The clock read 11:10 to go in regulation. Mount Pleasant would NOT possess the ball again in the 2018 season! The Raiders used 19 plays to drive the length of the field and advance to round two!

In the opening round of the 2018 NCHSAA 2AA Playoffs, South Point focused on the task at hand while facing Mount Pleasant. In the teams' first meeting, the Raiders proved to be 'Un-pleasant' visitors, taking apart the Tigers and ending their season. The Big Red will now face the highly touted Hibriten Panthers on the road in round two. The goal of a state title remains intact.

Go Get 'Em, Red!

Notable Facts and Thoughts

A prolific offense and a stingy defense would be apt descriptions of Hibriten this season. Come to think of it...the same could be said of the Red Raiders!

Jamey Andrews