

THE COURIER

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After two-hour delay due to lightning, Highlanders fall to Lufkin on ESPN2

By: Mike Jones , Sports Editor



The Woodlands High School varsity football team had all the momentum after scoring early in the third quarter Thursday night at Buddy Moorhead Memorial Stadium against nationally ranked Lufkin on ESPN2.

Brett Parsons' 1-yard QB sneak and Derek Depasquale's PAT pulled the Highlanders within 9-7 with 8:14 left in the quarter. However, lightning in the area, which cancelled the halftime show as well, would then delay the game for two hours.

The Woodlands receiver Derek Wyatt races to the one-yard line to set up the Highlanders' lone score on Thursday night at Buddy Moorhead Memorial Stadium. (Staff photo by JERRY BAKER)

Trevon Lewis.

Box Score

Woodlands 7, Lufkin 31

Woodlands 0 0 7 0 - 7

Lufkin 6 3 15 7 - 31

Game Statistics

Woodlands Lufkin

Total Yards 166 297

First Downs 8 12

Rushes - Yards 34-49 22-52

Average Rush 1.44 2.36

Comp - Att - Int 7-21-0 19-28-1

Pass Yards 117 245

Average Pass 16.71 12.89

Punts 8 4

Punt Yards 238 144

When the teams went back to the field, the Panthers rolled to a 31-7 victory.

Dez Bryant scored Lufkin's first TD on a 26-yard pass from Jeremy Claybon and the Panthers added TDs on a pass from Claybon to Ralph Thomas, on a pass from Thomas to Bryant and a 14-yard run

Average Punt 29.75 36.00

Fumbles - Lost 2-0 1-0

Penalties - Yards 5-46 6-55

Highlights

Lufkin's Dez Bryant caught 8 passes for 70 yards and 2 touchdowns. Highlander receiver Derek Wyatt pulled down 2 passes for 65 yards in a defensive battle.

Notables

Lufkin outscored The Woodlands 22-0 after a 2-hour lightning delay early in the third quarter.

Scoring Summary

LUF-Dez Bryant 26 pass from Jeremy Claybon (kick failed) 7:52, 1st

LUF-Jaime Fernandez 35 FG 8:04, 2nd

TWHS-Brett Parsons 1 run (Derek Depasquale kick) 8:14, 3rd

LUF-Ralph Thomas 7 pass from Jeremy Claybon (Ja Corey Turner run) 2:23, 3rd

LUF-Dez Bryant 51 pass from Ralph Thomas (Jaime Fernandez kick) :12, 3rd

LUF-TreVon Lewis 14 run (Jaime Fernandez kick) 2:44, 4th

Leading Rushers

LUF Ja Corey Turner 15 - 52

LUF TreVon Lewis 2 - 15

TWHS Tracy Milo 22 - 71

TWHS Brett Parsons 8 - -37

Leading Passers

LUF Jeremy Claybon 18-27-1 - 194 yards

LUF Ralph Thomas 1-1-0 - 51 yards

TWHS Brett Parsons 7-21-0 - 117 yards

Leading Receivers

LUF Dez Bryant 8 - 70

LUF Ralph Thomas 1 - 7

TWHS Derek Wyatt 2 - 65

Interceptions

TWHS Zach Carpenter 1

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Lufkin whips Woodlands to stay unbeaten

Panthers outlast rain, lightning, Highlanders' tough defense

By SAM KHAN JR.

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- [Game stats](#)

CONROE - Lufkin was waiting to throw the knockout punch.

The Panthers, who have one of the most explosive offenses in the state, were contained by rain, lightning and The Woodlands' defense for the better part of four hours.

To throw the devastating blow, the Panthers used some sleight-of-hand. Receiver Ralph Thomas threw a pass off a reverse to Dez Bryant for a 51-yard touchdown to propel Lufkin to a 31-7 win over The Woodlands on Thursday at Moorhead Stadium.

"It was a great play," Lufkin quarterback Jeremy Claybon said. "I didn't think we were going to run it. Finally we did, and I'm glad because Dez broke about 18 tackles and scored."

Woodlands defensive back Taylor Charbonnet said the call caught the secondary by surprise.

"We were in cover three, and me and the safety both bit on the reverse (to Thomas)," the senior said. "I knew something was up when I didn't try to get blocked by the receiver. I turned around, and it was too late."

Lufkin (8-0, 3-0 District 15-5A), the No. 2 team in the state and No. 3 team in the nation according to USA Today, appeared destined for another 50-point offensive performance, which the Panthers have done three times this season.

Early score

Lufkin marched downfield with ease on its first drive, taking less than two minutes to score as Claybon

(18-of-27 passing, 194 yards) connected with Bryant for a 26-yard score to give the Panthers a 6-0 lead with 7:52 remaining in the first quarter.

The Woodlands (4-4, 2-1), though struggling offensively throughout the first half, was aided by its defense, which held the Panthers to just a field goal for the next 23:38. The Highlanders' secondary, led by Charbonnet, Zach Carpenter, Chris Lake and Taylor Skaufel, held Bryant (eight receptions, 70 yards) in check after his three first-quarter catches until late in the third quarter.

The Highlanders gained momentum as they finally put together a scoring drive to start the second half. After Carpenter picked off a dropped pass by Bryant on Lufkin's second-half opening drive, the Highlanders drove 49 yards in seven plays.

Trimming the lead

Some tough running by Tracy Milo (22 carries, 71 yards) and a 26-yard pass from Brett Parsons to Derek Wyatt set the Highlanders up at the 1, and Parsons snuck in on the next play for a touchdown to cut the Panthers' lead to 9-7 with 8:14 left in the third quarter.

If ESPN's cameras and television timeouts weren't enough to throw the players and coaches out of a regular game routine, a lightning delay was. The players were pulled off the field at 7:42 p.m., and the delay lasted two hours, four minutes. According to University Interscholastic League rules, if lightning strikes within an eight-mile radius, teams must wait 30 minutes before retaking the field. The Highlanders said that delay affected them negatively.

"That was a big deal," Woodlands coach Mark Schimd said. "We tried hard to keep the kids up and keep the momentum, but we sat in there for (two hours). We had to try and come out and establish some momentum.

"We thought we did when we came out and shut them out in three (plays) on their first drive, but then they shut us down in three, we had a short punt and they came down and scored."

The Panthers' second drive after resuming went 46 yards in five plays and took just 1:42 as Claybon found Thomas to give Lufkin a 17-7 lead with 2:23 remaining in the third.

Deft defense

Lufkin's defense also impressed, holding The Woodlands to 166 yards of offense and sacking Parsons six times.

The Panthers defeated the Highlanders for the third consecutive year and are on their way to winning their fourth consecutive district title.

"Basically, we won the district championship tonight because this was what (this win) really was," Thomas said. "This is the third (win) in a row (over The Woodlands). I guess we'll celebrate tomorrow night."

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Panthers slip, slide to victory

Lufkin beats The Woodlands, 31-7, after long weather delay

By JOSH HAVARD
The Lufkin Daily News

Thursday, October 26, 2006

CONROE — With the district title on the line and the Lufkin Panthers struggling, a lightning delay stopped the game for almost two hours. When the delay finally ended, it was Lufkin's offense that provided the lightning strikes.

After holding only a 9-7 lead when the delay started with 8:14 left in the third quarter, the big plays came fast and furious for the Panthers in a 31-7 win over The Woodlands Highlanders Thursday night at Moorhead Stadium.



Joel Andrews/The Lufkin Daily News
(ENLARGE)

Lufkin cornerback Darrius Terry delivers a hit to The Woodlands' tight end Colton McKey during District 15-5A action at Conroe's Moorhead Stadium Thursday night.

Shortly after the teams came back from the delay, Ralph Thomas scored on a 6-yard run then connected with Dez Bryant for a 51-yard touchdown on a trick play as the Panthers turned a nailbiter into a laugher.

"I guess we just wanted to wait until a little later in the night to play some good football," Lufkin head coach John Outlaw said. "Honestly, we're not a very good in the wet weather, and that's not making excuses. But we started throwing and catching the ball, and that's how we're going to have to make a living this year."

Bryant was at his best on the ESPN2 stage as he hauled in 10 passes for 152 yards and two touchdowns to lead Lufkin to the win.

Thomas, who spent half the night on the defensive side, was at his best in another televised game. He had four touchdowns against Longview on Fox Sports Net earlier in the season.

On Thursday night, he caught a touchdown, threw for another and had an outstanding game shutting down The Woodlands' talented receivers

"Dez probably could have had even more catches, but it's hard to catch a wet ball," Outlaw said. "Ralph had a great football game. Besides those touchdowns, he covered a very good receiver and did an outstanding job in shutting him down."

The win virtually locks up a district title for the Panthers, even though there are still two weeks remaining in the season. Lufkin wraps up the season with a trip to Magnolia and a home game against Conroe, two teams the Panthers will be heavily favored against.

"We probably won the district title tonight, but we've got to win one more before we can claim it," Outlaw said.

While Lufkin's offense was struggling before the rain delay, the Panthers' defense was the key.

The Panthers allowed The Woodlands to score a touchdown after a turnover, but shut them down for the rest of the game.

The Woodlands finished the night with 48 yards on 36 carries and also threw for 117 for a total of 165.

"Our defense dominated them just about the entire night," Outlaw said. "If our offense hadn't of slipped up, then I don't think they would have ever been able to score on us."

While Lufkin was able to get the key win, it didn't look like the game would be able to be finished.

Just after The Woodlands scored on a 1-yard sneak for a touchdown by Brett Parsons, the game was delayed due to severe lightning in the area.

After the teams waited around for two hours, the Panthers came out of the break like a different team. After the teams exchanged punts, Lufkin finally got its offense going.

After taking over at The Woodlands 46, the Panthers took five plays to get in the end zone.

Jeremy Claybon, who finished with 160 yards and two touchdowns on 16-of-24 passing, hit Thomas on a swing pass. Thomas did the work from there as he eluded a defender and got in for the 6-yard score that extended Lufkin's lead to 15-7.

Ja'Corey Turner, who finished with 52 yards on 15 carries, scored the two-point conversion to extend the lead to 10.

Following another Highlander punt, Lufkin went to its bag of tricks to put the game away. Thomas got the ball on a reverse and threw the ball just before being hit by a Highlander defender. Bryant made an adjustment on the ball to catch the underthrown pass before running in for the 51-yard score that made it 24-7.

Tre'Von Lewis scored on a 14-yard run with 2:44 left in the fourth quarter to make the final 31-7.

Before the rain came, Lufkin got off to a quick start as Bryant made a 26-yard touchdown catch to give Lufkin a quick 6-0 lead.

Jaime Fernandez added a 35-yard field goal midway through the second quarter to make it 9-0.

Lufkin (8-0, 3-0) will travel to face Magnolia next week.