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Cavaliers drop rival TW, clinch playoff spot

By: Howard Roden , Assistant Sports Editor



First they broke the bleachers, and then they broke the Highlanders' hearts.

The College Park Cavaliers' 13-7 victory over The Woodlands wasn't attractive by any stretch, but the final score will look pretty in the record books. For a second-year program, the Cavs broke the mold at Buddy Moorhead Memorial Stadium Saturday night by locking down another state playoff berth and evening up their record against their next-door neighbors.

After losing to The Woodlands, 33-7, in their initial meeting, the Cavaliers can maintain bragging rights around their future city for at least the next year.

"It's all about pride," said CP senior wide receiver Trey Diller. "We didn't want to leave College Park without a win over The Woodlands."

In a game filled with missed opportunities, Richard Carson's crew converted one at the end of the game that eventually mattered most. Kept in check most of the night, tailback Djeale Lyons took a pitchout from quarterback Josh Parsons and raced 19 yards around left end for the deciding points with 2:08 left in the game.

The touchdown came immediately after a seven-yard punt by the Highlanders put College Park in business at the TWHS 19.

College Park quarterback Josh Parsons, with help from David Crittenden's block on The Woodlands' Jordan Osborne, rushes for some of his 153 yards Saturday night at Moorhead Stadium. (Staff photo by Jerry Baker)

"I'm proud of our kids," Carson declared. "Not all the plays were pretty, but they believed in themselves. They didn't get down and went out and played hard."

Parsons put in yeoman's work operating College Park's option attack. Taking what The Woodland defense gave him, the senior ran 21 times for a game-high 153 yards.

He scored a 2-yard touchdown on the first play of the second quarter that put the Cavs ahead until Alex Tweedy's 9-yard reception from TWHS quarterback Tyler Eckenrode evened the score with 7:15 to play.

"Some of the plays (by Parsons) were called, but most were what he was getting from the defense," Carson said. "He played well."

Although the 8-1 Cavaliers didn't need a victory over The Woodlands to secure a playoff berth, Carson preferred his team go through the front door. Still tied with Conroe High for second place in District 15-5A at 3-1, the Cavs could end up with a share of the league title if they close out with a win over Oak Ridge and Conroe High pulls the upset over Lufkin.

Meanwhile, The Woodlands (2-7, 1-3) has to win at Magnolia (1-8, 1-3) Friday to earn the district's fourth and final postseason berth.

Otherwise, the Highlanders will end up on the sidelines for the first time since the 1994 season and the Bulldogs advance.

"Our kids played hard, but we have to finish things," said TWHS head coach Mark Schmid.

The Highlanders had the chance to pull off an upset of Lufkin last week. For a time, it looked as if they might complete a comeback over the Cavs. Momentum seemed to shift in the Highlanders' favor when Eckenrode hit Tweedy on a slant route with 7:16 to play.

Tweedy's TD reception completed an eight-play, 68-yard drive.

Having broken for a long gain on the Cavs' ensuing possession, Parsons fumbled when he was tackled from behind. Defensive back Jordan Osborne recovered the football at TWHS 26.

But that's when the College Park defense took control of the game. Linebacker Nick Benditz sacked Eckenrode for a 6-yard loss on second-and-long, then lineman Christian Pederson broke through to drop tailback Logan Rowe (106 yards on 20 carries) for another 6-yard loss back to the Highlander 12.

After Daniel Kemp's punt traveled just seven yards, the Cavs took advantage with Lyons' winning TD. As the Highlander defense closed in on Parsons, he flicked the ball out to Lyons, who played off a downfield block by wide receiver Cham King to reach the end zone.

Starting at its 23, The Woodlands had two minutes to reach the end zone. But Diller, the same guy who fired the winning, last-second pass over Conroe High the week before, had a hand in stopping the Highlanders.

Inserted into the Cavs' secondary as a nickel back, Diller sacked Eckenrode for a 5-yard loss to the College Park 48. On the next play, with time for only a Hail Mary toss by Eckenrode, Diller made a leaping grab for the interception at the CP 10 as time expired.

Both teams had chances for other scores. The Highlanders were at College Park's doorstep in the second quarter, but Eckenrode's pass on third-and-goal at the CP six was tipped into the arms of linebacker Steven Raines.

Another Raines interception earlier in the third quarter enabled the Cavaliers to reach the TWHS 11. But fullback David Crittenden fumbled trying to plow his way up the middle and The Woodlands' Cameron Knight pounced on the loose football.

Prior to kickoff, the CP students jammed into a section of Moorhead Stadium, causing the guardrail fence to collapse.

College Park 13, The Woodlands 7

College Park (8-1, 3-1) 0 7 0 6 - 13

The Woodlands (2-7, 1-3) 0 0 0 7 - 7

Scoring summary

Second Quarter

CP: Josh Parsons 2 run (Michael Smith kick), 11:55

Fourth Quarter

TW: Alex Tweedy 9 pass from Tyler Eckenrode (Daniel Weimer kick), 7:15

CP: Djeale Lyons 19 run (kick failed), 2:08

Team statistics

	CP	TW
First downs	11	18
Rushes-Yards	33-209	42-140
Passing Yards	14	180
Comp.-Att.-Int.	1-5-1	14-28-4
Total Yards	223	320
Punts-Avg.	4-41.7	5-31.6
Fumbles-Lost	4-2	2-0
Penalties-Yards	6-44	8-54

Individual leaders

RUSHING - CP: Parsons 21-153, Lyons 6-35, David Crittenden 6-21. TW: Logan Rowe 20-106, Eckenrode 11-6, Tweedy 1-7, Tracy Milo 4-3, Greg Merchant 3-6, Carey Poarch 3-12,

PASSING - CP: Parsons 1-5-1-14. TW: Eckenrode 12-25-3-177, Poarch 2-3-1-3.

RECEIVING - CP: Trey Diller 1-14. TW: Tweedy 8-71, Randy Knust 2-35, Ryan Demny 2-13, Lance Dozier 1-53, Ryan Eastman 1-8.



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College Park defense shines

13-7 victory over The Woodlands nails playoff spot

By STEVEN THOMSON

For The Chronicle

CONROE — Defense set up and preserved College Park's 13-7 victory over The Woodlands on Saturday at Moorhead Stadium.

The win clinched a playoff spot for the Cavaliers while sending the Highlanders to their third District 15-4A loss.

College Park scored on the first play of the second quarter when quarterback Josh Parsons sprinted 2 yards on an option keeper.

That proved to be the only Cavaliers score until late in the game.

In between, the College Park defense harassed The Woodlands and kept the Highlanders out of the end zone.

Linebacker's big night

Cavaliers linebacker Steven Raines had two of the team's three interceptions. The first came with the Highlanders running a third-and-goal play from the Cavaliers' 6 early in the second quarter.

"The defense gets the game ball," College Park coach Richard Carson said. "We struggled a bit offensively and turned the ball over. I don't know who all made the big plays. All I know is, as a unit, they played hard."

The Woodlands tied it in the fourth quarter. The Highlanders' offense moved 68 yards in seven plays, scoring on a 9-yard pass from Tyler Eckenrode to Alex Tweedy with 7:15 to play

A Cavaliers fumble at the Highlanders' 26 gave The Woodlands another chance with 4:28 left.

It was also another opportunity for the College Park defense to shine. Following a short gain on first down, Nick Benditz came in on a blitz and sacked Eckenrode for a loss of 6 yards. The Cavaliers' defense then rose to the occasion, swarming running back Logan Rowe for an 8-yard loss, forcing a punt from the goal line.

A short punt gave College Park the ball at the Highlanders' 19 with 2:15 left.

The Cavaliers wasted no time, with Djeale Lyons taking a pitch from Parson and sprinting to the end zone.

"You have to make plays when it is time, and we did," Carson said. "It was an option play, probably the first time we pitched it all night. (The Woodlands) did a good job of taking that away from us, but at the end, we executed it well."

Benditz, Raines and Edward Park anchored the Cavaliers' defense, taking advantage of pressure by the line to keep the Highlanders' offense in check. College Park ended the night with four interceptions and several crucial third-down stops.

"This was an important game, so we came out hard," Raines said. "Our defensive coordinator made good calls and we executed them."

Carson praised the College Park secondary.

They broke on the ball and made some plays," he said.