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North Shore halts The Woodlands

Strong defense in second half nets Mustangs win

By SAM KHAN JR.

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CONROE — North Shore head coach David Aymond had been waiting to see if his Mustangs could put together two strong halves of football together on the same night.

They weren't able to do it in their first two games, but they played 48 minutes of solid football against The Woodlands on Saturday.

The Mustangs came back from an 10-point first-half deficit to take down the Highlanders 35-17 at Moorhead Stadium.

The victory extended North Shore's regular-season win streak to 63 games.

The No. 8 state-ranked Mustangs (3-0) got a strong second-half effort from their defense, shutting down The Woodlands (0-3) in the final 24 minutes.

"We made a few mistakes in the first half and our defense had to make some adjustments at halftime," Aymond said.

The Highlanders had a 17-7 lead with less than a minute to go in the first half, but North Shore got big plays from senior quarterback **Jeremiah McGinty**.

After a 36-yard kickoff return from receiver **Matthew Tolbert** set up North Shore at its 48-yard line, it took the Mustangs just three plays to score, as McGinty strolled into the end zone with a 23-yard run to cut the lead to 17-14 with 23 seconds left.

North Shore received the ball first in the second half and quickly marched downfield, covering 68 yards in seven plays before McGinty scored again on a 1-yard sneak to give North Shore a 21-17 lead.

"That was a big swing in the momentum," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said.

McGinty finished 11-of-20 passing for 181 yards and had 69 rushing yards and three touchdowns on 11 carries.

After a short Woodlands punt and a personal foul penalty early in the fourth quarter, the Mustangs took over at the Highlanders 25, and running back **DeAundre Jones** (12 carries, 66 yards) scored on a 12-yard run to extend the lead to 28-17.

The Woodlands quarterback **Tyler Eckenrode** connected with sophomore receiver **Randy Knust** for a 70-yard pass play on the first play from scrimmage that set the Highlanders up at the North Shore 1. Running back **Tracy Milo** punched it in a play later to give The Woodlands a 7-0 lead just 43 seconds into the game.

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North Shore tops Highlanders

By: Howard Roden , Assistant Sports Editor



Josh Faw (56) celebrates with Tracy Milo after Milo's touchdown run in the first quarter of Saturday night's game. (Staff photo by Jerry Baker)

It was fun while it lasted.

Electrifying the crowd with a touchdown in the game's opening minute, The Woodlands Highlanders led No. 8-ranked North Shore for a half Saturday night. But the Highlanders were unable to maintain that momentum.

Holding TWHS to only 63 total yards in the second half, the Mustangs roared back to claim a 35-17 victory at Buddy Moorhead Memorial Stadium that left the Highlanders with an 0-3 start for the second consecutive season.

North Shore quarterback Jeremiah McGinty ran for 69 yards and touchdowns of 13, 23 and 1 yards. The Woodlands' Tyler Eckenrode finished with 17-of-32 passes for 212 yards, including a 70-yard strike to speedy sophomore Randy Knust on the first play of the game. But after completing 8-of-12 passes for 147 yards in the first half, the senior quarterback struggled against a North Shore defense that turned up the heat down the stretch.

After a 41-point loss at Katy last week, the Highlanders were the team that came out fired up. Taking the opening snap, Eckenrode stunned everyone - especially the visiting Mustangs - by lofting a perfect spiral to Knust.

The 6-foot-4 receiver caught Eckenrode's toss on the dead run and would have scored if not dragged down at the North Shore 1-yard-line. But tailback Tracy Milo completed the drive on the next play just 43 seconds into the contest.

Eckenrode's bomb to Knust wasn't the only bit of offensive trickery the Highlanders deployed in the first half. They started their second touchdown drive by putting Logan Rowe at quarterback and moving Eckenrode out to wide receiver.

Rowe took advantage of the Mustangs' confused defense by racing 21 yards around right end to the North Shore 37.

TWHS got a break two plays later when the Mustangs were flagged for a late hit, moving the football to the 18.

A holding call left the Highlanders facing third-and-nine at the 15, but senior receiver Lance Dozier made a kneeling catch at the one for a first down. With Milo lined up in a power I backfield, Eckenrode had no problem finding junior tight end Erik Wolfe alone in the end zone for the touchdown with 6:23 left before halftime.

The Highlanders received another sign that this just might be their night on North Shore's ensuing possession. Running back Tracy Woods seemingly had a first down inside the TWHS 24-yard-line when he was popped by senior defensive back Jordan Osborne. The collision called the football to pop into the grasp of junior defender Nick Adamo.

From there, the Highlanders launched an 82-yard drive that ended with Danny Weimer's 22-yard field goal with 58 seconds left.

But The Woodlands' 17-7 lead didn't last very long. After a 36-yard kickoff return by Matthew Tolbert, the Mustangs needed only three plays to cover the 52 yards.

McGinty rambled the final 23 yards untouched around left end with 23 seconds left to trim the Highlanders' margin to 17-14.

The Mustangs picked up where they left off by opening the second half with a seven-play, 68-yard drive. McGinty capped the possession with his 1-yard sneak at 9:16 of the third quarter.

The Highlanders had a chance to retake the lead later in the quarter when McGinty, attempting a quick kick, booted the ball only 14 yards and out of bounds at the North Shore 31. But that opportunity died with an incomplete pass by Eckenrode on fourth-and-12 at the Mustangs' 33.<

North Shore 35, The Woodlands 17 North Shore (3-0) 7 7 7 14 - 35 The Woodlands (0-3) 7 10 0 0 - 17 Scoring summary First Quarter TW: Tracy Mile 1 run (Danny Weimer kick), 11:17 NS: Jeremiah McGinty 13 run (Miguel Prudencio), 3:56 Second Quarter TW: Erik Wolfe 1 pass from Tyler Eckenrode (Weimer kick), 6:23 TW: Weimer 22 FG, 0:58. NS: McGinty 23 run (Prudencio kick), 0:23. Third Quarter NS: McGinty 1 run (Prudencio kick), 9:16 Fourth Quarter NS: Deaundrea Jones 12 run (Prudencio kick), 9:40 N: Tracy Woods 11 run (Prudencio kick), 5:37 Team statistics NS TW First downs 20 12 Rushes-Yards 33-193 25-80 Passing Yards 181 212 Comp.-Att.-Int. 11-20-0 33-17-0 Total Yards 374 292 Punts-Avg. 5-28.2 6-40.1 Fumbles-Lost 2-2 0-0 Penalties-Yards 7-50 50-35 Individual Statistics RUSHING - NS: Jones 12-66, McGinty 11-69, Woods 5-45. TW: Milo 14-42, Logan Rowe 4-41, Eckenrode 7-(-3). PASSING - NS: McGinty 11-20-0-181. TW: Eckenrode 17-32-0-212, Milo 0-1-0-0. RECEIVING - NS: Matthew Tolbert 6-85. TW: Randy Knust 3-80, Alex Tweedy 4-48, Mile 3-35, Lance Dozier 4-38, Greg Merchant 1-7, Rowe 1-3, Wolfe 1-1.

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