

THE COURIER

OF MONTGOMERY  COUNTY

Highlanders soar past Clear Lake



The Woodlands' Ryan Eastman dives for extra yards in the first quarter against the Clear Lake Falcons at Woodforest Bank Stadium Friday night.

By Mike Taylor

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SHENANDOAH – The Woodlands scored on an 80-yard pass on the opening play of the game and won its third contest of the season, 31-13 over Clear Lake Friday night at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

For the third time in three games, The Woodlands defense turned in a stifling effort, forcing five turnovers in the form of four fumbles and one interception.

“These kids love to play defense,” Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. “They run to the ball well, they love contact. Whenever you’re going hard to the football and you’re making hard contact, you’re going to create some turnovers.”

Clear Lake racked up 355 yards rushing, but threw the ball only twice. The Falcons were in an early hole after quarterback Andy McCloud hooked up with Logan Rowe to open the scoring nine seconds into the game.

But Clear Lake (2-1) answered The Woodlands’ opening score with a four-play, 72-yard drive, capped by Jarred Mack’s 31-yard run.

After the Highlanders punted and Clear Lake fumbled, Ben Pruitt kicked a 36-yard field goal in the second quarter to give the Highlanders a 10-7 edge.

The Falcons also fumbled away their next two possessions, finishing the first half with three consecutive turnovers.

McCloud connected with Matt Pettitt on a wide receiver screen for a 16-yard touchdown to put the Highlanders up 17-7 midway through the second. Clear Lake then chewed up six-plus minutes with a 12-play, 73-yard drive. But Falcons quarterback Eric Canas fumbled the ball on fourth and one from the Highlanders' four-yard line with less than a minute to go before halftime.

McCloud finished 9-of-17 for 249 yards and three touchdowns to three different receivers. It's the senior's first year as the starting varsity quarterback.

"We knew he had the potential to be really good in there," Schmid said. "He's living up to his billing right now. He's done a good job of throwing the football and putting it where it needs to be. Our receivers have done a great job of catching the ball and the offensive line is giving him time to throw."

Woodlands defensive back Chase Maires picked off a pass by Clear Lake's Eric Canas on the second play of the third quarter to set up the Highlanders at the Falcons' 27-yard line. After a false start penalty, McCloud found Randy Knust in the right corner of the endzone for a 24-7 lead.

Clear Lake did pull within 24-13 after Mack scored his second touchdown, a 10-yard run, but the Highlanders forced a punt, stopped two fourth down attempts and recovered another fumble on the Falcons' next four possessions.

Daniel Lasco sealed the win for the Highlanders late in the fourth with a 27-yard touchdown run.

The Woodlands runs through Clear Lake 31-13

Highlanders make Falcons pay for turnovers

By JENNY DIAL Copyright 2008 Houston Chronicle

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SHENANDOAH — Clear Lake had the speed to keep up with The Woodlands on Friday night, but the Falcons turned the ball over ... over and over.

The Highlanders took advantage of five Clear Lake turnovers on their way to a 31-13 victory at Woodforest Stadium.

Clear Lake (2-1) racked up 385 rushing yards in the game, but struggled to take care of the football; The Woodlands (3-0) picked up where it left off two weeks ago in a 47-0 win over Katy.

“It was hard to get practices in with no power and everything, but we did and we didn’t want to lose our momentum,” The Woodlands defensive back Chase Maires said. “So we worked hard, and we came out tonight and were able to get the win.”

The Woodlands, once again, was well-rounded. Although the defense allowed a couple of big Clear Lake plays early, it adjusted to the Falcons’ offense. On offense, The Woodlands quarterback Andy McCloud was on top of his game, completing 11 of 17 passes for 250 yards to lead the Highlanders’ offense.

Rescheduled after Ike

The teams were supposed to meet two weeks ago before Hurricane Ike hit the area and forced rescheduling and cancellations.

The Woodlands and Clear Lake were both undefeated with offenses that were on fire when the season was halted two weeks ago.

“We just had to remember everything we were doing two weeks ago and keep it up,” McCloud said.

Offense carries the day

It was clear that the offenses remembered. Both teams scored touchdowns in the first 1:23 of the game.

The Woodlands started it off when McCloud hit Logan Rowe for an 80-yard strike just nine seconds into the game. Clear Lake responded with 10:37 left in the first when Jarred Mack ran up the middle for a 37-yard score.

Clear Lake’s offense racked up yards — all 385 of its total yards came on the ground — but once The Woodlands defense adjusted, the Clear Lake offense just didn’t have enough power to muscle into the end zone. Mack had 22 carries for 138 yards and the only two Falcons touchdowns.

“They are the fastest team we have seen and probably the fastest team we will see,” Maires said. “I am glad we were able to just follow our assignments and contain them.”

The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said that although Clear Lake was able to gain so many rushing yards, he was still pleased with his defensive performance.

“That is a hard offense to duplicate in practice, so all things considered I am really proud of them,” Schmid said.

Highlanders march

McCloud found three difference receivers, and sophomore running back Daniel Lasco had 85 yards on the ground. The Woodlands will have last year's star receiver, Alex Tweedy, to add fuel to the fire in two weeks when they open district play against College Park at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 10 at Woodforest Stadium. Tweedy broke his leg over the summer but will be cleared to play for district.

"We will be even better then," McCloud said. "This team has a lot of weapons this year and we have a ton of potential to do great things."

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