

THE COURIER

OF MONTGOMERY  COUNTY

Highlanders pull away from Cavs



College Park's Seth Jensen (24) and Keenan Cook (5) tackle The Woodlands running back Daniel Lasco during first-quarter action at Woodforest Bank Stadium Friday night.

By Mike Taylor

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SHENANDOAH – It was close for two quarters, and then The Woodlands played like it has all season.

The No. 7 state-ranked Highlanders were in a dogfight with rival College Park, but a 21-17 halftime edge turned into a 42-17 blowout at Woodforest Bank Stadium Friday night.

The Woodlands began the second half by fumbling the opening kickoff, but the Cavaliers returned the favor four plays later with a fumble of their own.

On the next snap, Highlanders running back Daniel Lasco took a handoff, found a gaping hole, cut right and raced untouched down the sideline on his way to a 79-yard touchdown and 28-17 lead.

"That was the turning point in the game," College Park coach Richard Carson said. "We gave it back and we had a chance to go right there. Good teams don't give you many opportunities. They gave us one and we did not take advantage of it."

College Park punted when a false start stalled its next possession. The Woodlands then marched 91 yards in seven plays and Ryan Eastman put the game away, 35-17, with a one-yard scoring run.

The Cavs had cut the Highlanders' lead to 21-17 only 16 seconds before halftime, when tailback Aaron Osborne scored on an eight-yard run.

"The last thing we wanted to have happen right before the first half ended was have them score," Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "That was a momentum boost for them and it kind of deflated our bubble for a little while.

"We came out and, with the turnover right on the kickoff, we thought, 'Holy cow.' But we got the turnover right back and went down and scored and we never looked back."

College Park put The Woodlands behind for the first time all season when quarterback Taylor Parsons found tight end Kirk Clark wide open in the middle of the endzone for a 23-yard score and a 10-7 lead early in the second quarter.

The Highlanders responded with a 10-play, 70-yard drive, capped by Eastman's six-yard quarterback draw.

The Woodlands had opened the scoring on its second play from scrimmage. Quarterback Andy McCloud hit Logan Rowe, who had gotten behind two defensive backs, for a 77-yard touchdown.

McCloud finished 10-of-17 for 249 yards and two touchdowns, the other a 31-yarder to Randy Knust that gave the Highlanders a 21-10 lead.

The Cavs answered the McCloud-to-Rowe bomb with Zach Ammar's 30-yard field goal.

College Park was forced to punt on the game's opening possession, and the Cavs recovered punter Parsons' kick after it rolled into a Highlanders blocker. But the play was not ruled a fumble and McCloud hit Rowe two snaps later.

Lasco put the last points on the board on the first play of the fourth after he took a direct snap and scampered 32 yards. He finished with 192 yards on 14 carries.



No. 7 The Woodlands tops College Park 42-17

By TODD HVEEM For the Chronicle

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SHENANDOAH -- The annual "War of the Woods" turned into a lopsided battle Friday night at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

But not before the College Park Cavaliers made The Woodlands Highlanders work hard for the first time this season.

Quarterback Andy McCloud, who has verbally committed to UTEP, passed for 241 yards and two touchdowns, and Daniel Lasco rushed for 196 yards and two scores to lead The Woodlands to a closer-than-the-score-indicated 42-17 victory over College Park.

The victory improved the state's seventh-ranked Highlanders to 5-0 overall and 1-0 in District 14-5A play.

College Park, which has dropped three straight, fell to 2-3 overall and 0-1 in the league.

After failing to move the ball on its first possession, College Park got a bad break when its punt appeared to hit a Woodlands player on the foot at the Highlanders' 21-yard line.

The Cavaliers' offense already was running on the field when the referee finally ruled that it was The Woodlands' ball.

Two plays later, McCloud, who had all day to throw the football, hit Logan Rowe with a 77-yard bomb to give the Highlanders a quick 7-0 lead.

College Park, however, would not quit.

Zack Ammar capped off a Cavalier drive with a 30-yard field goal with 5:51 left in the first quarter, and quarterback Taylor Parsons found a wide open Kirk Clark with a 23-yard scoring strike with 10:27 left in the half to give College Park a 10-7 lead.

It was the first time The Woodlands, which is ranked No. 3 in the Houston area, had trailed all year. But it didn't seem to rattle the Highlanders.

Ryan Eastman scored on a 6-yard run to give The Woodlands a 14-10 lead with 5:57 left in the half, and McCloud found Randy Knust with a 31-yard scoring strike to up the ante to 21-10 with 2:12 to play.

College Park looked like it would make it a last-team-with-the-ball-wins contest when Aaron Osborne scored on an 8-yard run with only 16 seconds left in the half to cut the lead to 21-17.

But the Cavs suffered another devastating blow to open the second half.

After Ammar recovered Rowe's fumble on the second-half kickoff, the Cavaliers would fumble the ball back to The Woodlands on the Highlanders' 21-yard line a couple of plays later.

Lasco put the lid on the game with a 79-yard run on the very next play. The sensational sophomore also would add a 32-yard scoring jaunt in the fourth quarter.

College Park managed only two first downs in the second half.

Parsons, who missed last week's 38-24 loss to Morton Ranch because of an ankle injury, rushed for 119 yards and passed for 105 for College Park, which finished with 329 yards of total offense.

The Woodlands finished with exactly 500 yards of total offense -- 259 on the ground and 241 in the air.