

THE COURIER

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Green and Red Roll: TWHS tops Conroe



The Woodlands running back Cory Michalak (21) is tackled by Conroe High's Mario McArthur (23) and Mark Stansel (28) during third-quarter play at Woodforest Stadium Friday night.

By Howard Roden

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SHENANDOAH -- Their lead whittled to four points right before halftime, the Highlanders stayed the course Friday night.

Scoring on three of their first possessions in the second half, the state's No. 6-ranked Class 5A pulled away from rival Conroe High for a 34-10 victory in front of a near-capacity crowd at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

With the win, The Woodlands (7-0, 3-0) moves into sole control of the District 14-5A race. The Highlanders can clinch their first league title since 2003 with a victory over defending champion Lufkin here Saturday.

Conroe High (5-2, 2-1) came into the showdown sharing the 14-5A top spot with the Highlanders. The Tigers, who managed just 190 total yards on offense, had their win streak stopped at five.

"We're not going to get our heads down," Tigers head coach Roger Holtkamp said. "We're going to keep working."

Outside of a two-minute span when the Tigers turned a pair of Woodlands miscues into 10 points late in the second

quarter, the Highlanders were in control. Of Conroe High's 12 possessions, its offense worked in TWHS territory on only three of them.

"I told the kids we were better off at halftime than when we started," Highlanders head coach Mark Schmid said, referring to his team's 14-10 lead at intermission. "Our defense played exceptional all night. We just had to make a few adjustments on offense and we were going to be all right."

It appeared TWHS was headed for a two-touchdown lead when Conroe High's Scott Rice kicked a 28-yard field goal with 1:25 before the half. Then, after the Tigers recovered the ensuing kickoff, quarterback Ryan Glaspie launched a perfect rainbow to Desmond Jones for a 45-yard touchdown 13 seconds later.

"I felt like we had the momentum," Holtkamp said. "But they (The Woodlands) have a real good defense. They made some big plays."

The Highlanders started making those plays at the start of the third quarter. Quarterback Andy McCloud, who was 0-for-4 with an interception in the first half, capped seven-play, 66-yard drive with his 10-yard touchdown pass to Ryan Eastman.

Eastman padded TWHS' lead to 27-10 late in the third quarter on a five-yard keeper right after Chase Maires pounced on a Conroe High fumble.

The Highlanders sealed the victory on their next drive with McCloud's spectacular 45-yard run around left end at the 9:33 mark of the fourth quarter.

"I'll take it," Schmid said of the final score. "I was concerned about Conroe's speed and quickness, but I felt good about our defense after I saw what our kids were capable of."

Despite spending the first 12 minutes in Conroe High's end of the field, the Highlanders could not capitalize. Not since its season-opening win over Cy-Fair had The Woodlands failed to score in the first quarter.

But a 3-yard keeper by Eastman and Daniel Lasco's 78-yard sprint gave the Highlanders a seemingly comfortable 14-0 lead just minutes before halftime.

But The Woodlands finally got rolling when it started its third drive of the night at the CHS 40-yard line. McCloud scrambled for 13 yards and Lasco followed with a 23-yard gain.

Eastman scored off left tackle at 10:23 of the second quarter.

The next time The Woodlands got the ball, Lasco raced through the heart of the Tiger defense for his lone touchdown at 9:01 of the quarter.

The sophomore running back left the game on the third play of the third quarter with a deep abrasion on the right calf. He did not return to action, although he was able to play, Schmid said. Lasco finished with 128 yards on 11 carries.

"He was able to play some more, but by the time we would put him back it we already had a good-sized lead," Schmid said.

Conroe High's first break came when Chris Parks intercepted a pass at the Tigers 38 and returned it to the Highlanders 26. The Tigers had first down at the TWHS seven, but D.D. Johnson (16 carries for 100 yards) and Glaspie were dropped for losses and Rice came on the kick the field goal, his second of the season.

Rice's squibbed the ensuing kickoff and teammate Mark Stansel recovered at TWHS 45. Glaspie delivered his bomb to Jones at the five-yard line and the junior receiver trotted into the end zone, bringing the Tigers to within 14-10.

The Tigers other scoring threat came right after Eastman's touchdown catch in the third quarter. Johnson started the drive with a 48-yard game.

The Tigers had first down at the Highlanders' 11. Rice's 33-yard field goal that would have trimmed TWHS' lead to a touchdown was blocked by Zach Hohman. The junior returned the football 27 yards to midfield.



Highlanders rip Tigers

Second-half onslaught keeps season rolling

By SAM KHAN JR. Copyright 2008 Houston Chronicle

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SHENANDOAH — As The Woodlands Highlanders celebrated their latest victory, a few fans dotting the field could be seen with T-shirts that said, "We're back" on the back.

That statement is ringing as true as ever.

The Highlanders continued their winning ways this season, using a 20-point second half and a strong defensive effort to cruise by Conroe 34-10 on Friday at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

"We feel real good about where we are," Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "The kids came into the season with a bit of a quiet confidence, and each week they go out and they prove it — and tonight was another night to do that."

Take over first in district

The Highlanders (7-0, 3-0 District 14-5A), who are the area's third-ranked team and No. 6 in the state, took sole possession of first in District 14-5A. They're off to their best start since 2003, when they went 14-1.

After dominating their rivalry with Conroe for 10 consecutive seasons from 1997-2006, the Highlanders were caught a bit off-guard when the Tigers ended the streak with a 21-point victory in the teams' 2007 meeting. But The Woodlands made it clear early in the second quarter that there would be no such repeat this time around.

Sophomore running back Daniel Lasco darted for a 23-yard run to set up a 3-yard touchdown run by Ryan Eastman, capping off a five-play 40-yard drive and giving The Woodlands a 7-0 lead at the 10:23 mark. It was the first of three Eastman touchdowns on the night.

On their next drive, Lasco needed just one play to get to the end zone, breaking loose for a 78-yard touchdown run for a 14-0 lead with 9:01 to go in the second quarter.

"I have to thank the offensive linemen for that one," said Lasco, who went untouched despite starting the run between the tackles. "I just made a couple of cuts and it was off to the races."

It looked like the Highlanders were in position to add on to that lead after forcing the Tigers (5-2, 2-1) to punt on their ensuing drive, but an interception and 36-yard return by Chris Parks set up a 28-yard Scott Rice field goal to give the Tigers their first points and cut the deficit to 14-3.

The Highlanders muffed the ensuing kickoff, and Conroe recovered at The Woodlands' 45. One play later, quarterback Ryan Glaspie hit receiver Desmond Jones for a 45-yard touchdown pass to pull the Tigers within 14-10 with 1:21 to go in the half.

Dominating time

But in what has become typical fashion this season, the Highlanders dominated the second half, even though Lasco (11 carries, 129 yards) left with a rib injury early in the third.

The Highlanders regained the momentum on an eight-play, 66-yard drive as quarterback Andy McCloud (63 yards passing, 57 yards rushing) hit Eastman for a 10-yard TD pass and a 20-10 lead.

The Tigers tried to respond but errors — a blocked punt and a fumble — killed their next two drives. The fumble occurred at the Conroe 5 and led to a 5-yard touchdown run by Eastman to make it 27-10 with 39 seconds left in the third quarter.

With 9:33 left in the game, McCloud did some scoring with his feet, breaking free for a 45-yard touchdown run and a 34-10 lead.

The defense was dominant, allowing just 193 yards on the night. The unit was physical, coming up with several big hits and allowed just two big plays — Glaspie's touchdown pass to Jones and a 48-yard run by D.D. Johnson (14 carries, 97 yards).

"We were ready to play, and we wanted to make a big impression," defensive back Chase Maires said.

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