

THE COURIER

OF MONTGOMERY  COUNTY

Highlanders remain unbeaten, win 42-13



The Woodlands Daniel Lasco (1) tries to escape Port Arthur players Adrien Cross (27) and Mark Washington (69) during the Highlanders' 42-13 win Thursday.

By Mike Taylor

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SHENANDOAH – When the lights come on, it's lights out for The Woodlands' opponents.

The No. 8 state-ranked Highlanders stayed in top form Thursday night with a 42-13 defeat of Port Arthur Memorial at Woodforest Bank Stadium. The win sealed a 4-0 non-district record for The Woodlands, which opens 14-5A play next week against crosstown rival College Park.

"It was a great non-district season," Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "We won all the games decisively and that's a good feeling. It makes you feel like heading into district play that we're in a good place with our kids."

The Woodlands passing game struggled for the first time all year, but sophomore running back Daniel Lasco had his best game of the season to pick up the slack.

"I told Daniel, I said, 'This is going to be a big week for you,'" Schmid said. "Last week, in the second half, he started running differently. He started running with more confidence. He felt good about what we were doing and he just built on that tonight. He had a great night tonight."

Lasco finished with 157 yards on only 11 carries, including scores of 52 yards in the first quarter and 18 in the second. His first touchdown gave the Highlanders a 7-0 lead after Ben Pruitt's extra point. His second run put the Highlanders up 35-0 with just under five minutes remaining until halftime.

In between Lasco's dashes, defensive back Chase Maires intercepted a pass and returned it 44 yards for a touchdown and Woodlands quarterback Andy McCloud ran 30 yards for a 21-0 lead. McCloud drug a Titans defender the last 12 yards of that run as he fought to stay on his feet before he reached the goal line. McCloud connected with Ryan Eastman for an eight-yard score and a 28-0 lead at the 8:41 mark of the second.

Port Arthur Memorial scored just before the half, when quarterback Jarael Alexander ran in from four yards out. But the Titans running game was stuffed all night and they averaged less than 2.7 yards on 47 carries.



The Woodlands strikes early, routs Titans

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This one became a blowout in a hurry, with the Highlanders roaring out to a 21-0 lead in the first eight minutes and stretching their advantage to 35-0 with 4:47 left in the opening half.

Memorial dropped to 1-2 and must face No. 4 ranked North Shore next week.

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Alexander was effective throwing the ball and finished 15-of-25 for 88 yards. He hit Solomon Jones (seven catches for 55 yards) for a 12-yard score in the third quarter to cut the deficit to 35-13, but also threw two interceptions in the first quarter, the second a pass that was tipped by three Highlanders defenders.

McCloud had his first off night in what has been a spectacular season to date, finishing 5-of-13 for 98 yards and one interception. He did connect on two scores, however, the first to Eastman and the second a 37-yarder to Rob Irvin for the final margin.

"We struggled tonight throwing the ball a little bit," Schmid said. "But you have to give them credit because they did some things to create some problems for us. That's why we play non-district, so that we can learn and so that when we get to district play we're ready."

The Woodlands defense forced at least four turnovers for the fourth consecutive game.