

## The Woodlands beats Clear Lake

By JASON MCDANIEL for the Chronicle

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Thomas Shea for The Chronicle

Woodlands running back Daniel Lasco runs for a 74-yard touchdown while Clear Lake cornerback Brock Groves tries to make the tackle.

LEAGUE CITY — Clear Lake didn't let The Woodlands see the ball much Saturday. But then again, it only needed a peek.

The Highlanders used big plays — especially in the first half — to overcome the Falcons' ball-control option attack in a 35-27 non-district victory.

"The big plays were great because when you're playing a team like this, that runs the ball a lot, you want to put points on the board quickly," said quarterback Trent Eckel, who threw for 206 yards and three touchdowns.

"We also wanted to give our defense a break, but it's good that we scored."

The Woodlands (3-0) erased any fear of a letdown after last week's win over defending Class 5A, Division II champion Katy with its fourth play of the game — a 74-yard TD run by Daniel Lasco.

The Falcons answered with a nine-play drive capped by Randall Hollimon's 20-yard scoring reception, but the Highlanders had more huge plays up Randy Knust's sleeves.

Knust caught a 62-yard TD pass in stride on The Woodlands' second possession, then turned a short pass into a 76-yard score on its third for a 21-7 lead.

The two scoring drives were three and four plays and took just three minutes combined.

“We’re young defensively,” Clear Lake coach Troy Aduddell said. “We’ve got some guys that are out of position right now as far as learning it.

“They’re new to it. So it’s going to take us these three non-district games and a week off to get them right and make them understand where they fit.”

Perry Cooper blocked Jordan Tyrna’s first field goal attempt for Clear Lake (1-2), but Tyrna later converted a 20-yarder for a 21-10 The Woodlands lead at halftime.

The Falcons continued pounding the ball in the second half and pulled to within four, 21-17, after Hollimon finished another time-consuming drive with a 30-yard TD run.

But the Highlanders turned to Lasco (18 rushes, 187 yards) for a little pounding of their own.

The bruising junior answered with an 8-yard TD run, pushing The Woodlands’ lead back to 28-17 with 4:35 left in the third. The lead climbed to 35-17 early in the fourth on Eckel’s TD pass to Jonathan Wilcher.

After cutting the deficit to 35-24, the Falcons had one last chance after Lasco fumbled, but their drive stalled and they settled for a 28-yard FG. The Woodlands then ran out the clock.

The Woodlands finished with 456 total yards (250 on 29 rushes) and 18 first downs to 447 (395 on 58 rushes) and 24 for Clear Lake.

QB Steven Hanley led the Falcons with 148 yards on 21 rushes, and Sean McCraney added 118 yards and a score on 20 carries.

“I was proud of our kids tonight because we had the huge win last week and one of our concerns as a staff was, ‘Would this be one of those games where we had the high last week, and this might be the low?’” The Woodlands head coach Mark Schmid said. “And we were able to fight through that and come out with the win.”

## Highlanders hold off Clear Lake



The Woodlands quarterback Trent Eckel looks for yardage against Clear Lake at Veterans Memorial Stadium in League City Saturday night.

**By Keith MacPherson**

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LEAGUE CITY – After knocking off No. 1 Katy last week it took all The Woodlands had to squeak by the Clear Lake Falcons Saturday at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Woodlands' wide receiver Randy Knust scored on receptions of 62 and 72 yards in the first half as the Highlander would go on to beat Clear Lake 35-27.

"Some aspects we played really well," TWHS coach Mark Schmid said. "Defensively we could have been better and we are definitely work to be better."

Knust scored in the first quarter on a deep pass from Trent Eckel that went for 62 yards and midway through the second quarter, Eckel found Knust again on a bubble screen to help the Highlanders go on to victory. Knust would finish the game with 138 yards on two receptions both were his two touchdowns.

The Woodlands had trouble stopping the Clear Lake option attack all night as the Falcons would pile up 397 yards on the ground. Clear Lake's leading rusher was Steven Hanley who ran 22 times for 144 yards.

"Clear Lake does a good job with their triple option offense," Schmid said. "I have to give them credit, they are very good at what they do. We had our hands full tonight."

Highlander running back Daniel Lasco picked up where he left off against Katy with a 74-yard touchdown run on the third play of the game to put The Woodlands up 7-0 early.

Lasco would finish the game with 177 yards on 17 carries and two touchdowns while catching two passes for 47 yards.

"After the game we had last week I was hoping for a better game than I had," Lasco said. "There was definitely room for some improvement. I just took what they gave me tonight and next week is another week. We'll celebrate on this one but there is room for improvement."

Clear Lake answered back on the following possession with a 20-yard touchdown pass from Steven Hanley to Randall Hollimon.

Knust scored his two long touchdown receptions on the two following Woodlands possessions and put The Woodlands up 21-7 at the time.

The Falcons would narrow the gap with 1:56 left in the half on a Jordan Tryna 20-yard field goal to make the score 21-10.

Clear Lake got briefly got back into the game after a 20 yard touchdown run by Hollimon to cap off a eight play 70-yard drive.

Lasco would score from eight yards out on the Highlanders next possession to put them back up by 11.

Jonathan Wilcher put the Highlanders up 35-17 on a 12-yard touchdown pass from Eckel with 7:34 left in the game.

Clear Lake scored on the their next possession on a 6 yard run from Sean McCray to cut the score to 35-24.

The Woodlands recovered the onside kick but Lasco turned the ball over on a fumble on the Highlanders first play of their possession.

The Falcons drove down to The Woodlands' ten-yard line before settling for the field goal to bring the score to 35-27

The Highlanders recovered another onside kick and ran the clock down to hold on to victory.

Eckel led the Highlanders in passing with 219 yards while completing six of his nine attempts.

After the big win against Katy, the Highlanders were hoping not to have a let down against Clear Lake but Schmid said they will take a win any way they can get it.

"Collectively we did a good job in this game," Schmid said. "We made some mistakes on both sides of the ball but I'm proud of our kids for coming out with the win."