

Highlanders surge in fourth quarter, edge Katy

Woodlands responds, moves to 2-0 record

By JENNY DIAL Copyright 2009 Houston Chronicle

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The Woodlands' Daniel Lasco (1) celebrates with teammate Michael Skaufel (5) following the Highlanders' 31-27 victory over Katy at Rhodes Stadium on Friday.

KATY – The score wasn't as ugly as it was last year, but the 'L' in the win/loss column hurt Katy just as bad and the 'W' in that column for The Woodlands felt even better.

For the second straight season, Katy suffered the wrath of The Woodlands as the Highlanders traveled to Rhodes Stadium and defeated the Tigers 31-27.

Last year, Katy (1-1) lost to The Woodlands (2-0) 47-0 and started the season 0-2. This year, Katy was coming off a 9-7 win over North Shore and all signs pointed to Katy obtaining a 2-0 start this year.

"They were ranked No. 1 and everyone has been talking on the radio about how they wanted revenge, but we really felt like we had what it took to win," The Woodlands offensive lineman Chad Lindsay said.

Katy struck first when running back Will Jeffery took off for 65 yards and a touchdown on the first play from scrimmage.

The Woodlands would respond shortly after though, after Katy fumbled the ball on its own 3-yard line. On the next play, the Highlanders' running back Daniel Lasco took the ball in for 3 yards and a score. Late in the first quarter, Lasco struck again, this time taking off for 44 yards and a touchdown. Just before halftime, The Woodlands extended its lead to 17-7 when Ben Pruitt kicked a 25-yard field goal.

“We weren’t pleased that we started the game with the ball and didn’t do anything,” The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. “Then they scored right away and I knew we really had to respond or Katy would hold on tight to that momentum. Luckily we did.”

Right after the break, Katy came back out with much improved passing and scored on its first possession courtesy of a 31-yard pass from Michael Stojkovic to Ryan Jones. On its next possession, Katy kicker Quentin Garrison missed a 25-yard field goal that would have tied the game.

Jeffery gave Katy a 27-24 lead with a 37-yard scoring run with just under eight minutes to play, but Garrison missed the extra point.

Katy would hold that lead for 19 seconds, before Lasco came back with a 77-yard touchdown run.

Lasco finished the game with 17 carries for 261 yards and four touchdowns.

“I was really feeling it tonight because our offensive line did an amazing job getting me room to go,” Lasco said. “We knew that we had to bring everything we had tonight because Katy has a great team, a phenomenal defense and we had to be ready.”

Katy was led by running back Will Jeffery , who carried the ball 19 times for 227 yards and two touchdowns.

“They did a great job running the ball tonight,” Schmid said. “They have an excellent team and we had a hard time chasing their running backs around, but we had some good stops and our offense just responded well all night.”

Katy will host Washington Bellevue next Saturday at 7 p.m. The Woodlands will play at Clear Lake next Saturday at 7 p.m.

“The key now is to be ready for next week,” Lasco said. “We got overconfident after beating Katy last year. This wasn’t the state championship game, it was the second game of the season. We would like to play 14 more.”

THE COURIER

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Highlanders down state champion Katy Tigers again



The Woodlands' Daniel Lasco, who had 263 yards, runs for one of his four touchdowns against Katy Friday night

By Mike Taylor

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KATY – No. 2 HSgridiron.com ranked The Woodlands held off a furious fourth-quarter rally by No. 1 Katy to win 31-27 at Rhodes Stadium Friday night.

Highlanders star junior running back Daniel Lasco carried his team to victory with 261 yards rushing and four touchdowns on 17 carries.

"I love my (offensive) line, they're like my brothers," Lasco said. "They're family to me and I knew they could go out there and do the right job. They opened the biggest holes I've ever seen in my life."

Trailing 24-21, the Tigers seized a brief 27-24 lead when Will Jeffery broke off a 37-yard run four minutes into the fourth quarter.

On the next play from scrimmage, though, Lasco bounced off a tackle at the line of scrimmage and raced 77 yards to the endzone for the winning touchdown.

"We knew we had to go down and score," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "You have to think, 'Let's put the ball in one of our big playmaker's hands.' We did, and Daniel took it to the house."

Lasco had scoring sprints of 44, 51 and 77 yards in addition to a three-yard run that tied the game 7-7 midway through the first quarter. That touchdown, on a direct snap, came a play after the Tigers turned the ball over on a fumble.

Jeffery had given Katy an early 7-0 lead with a 65-yard run down the right sideline on the Tigers' first play from scrimmage.

Lasco scored on his 44-yard run late in the first and Ben Pruitt added a 25-yard field goal 1:26 before halftime for a 17-7 lead.

Katy took the second-half kickoff and quickly marched 80 yards in six plays to cut the gap to 17-14 on Michael Stojkovic's 32-yard pass to Ryan Jones.

Three possessions later, Lasco's 51-yarder put the Highlanders on top by 10 again, with 1:09 to go in the third.

"Katy is a great football team," Schmid said. "They have a great tradition and to beat them in their own backyard is tough. So, we feel fortunate."

Jeffery piled up 222 yards on 19 carries and Katy's Vernon Jeffries added 101 on 18, including an 11-yard run with 9:57 left in the fourth to pull the Tigers within 24-21.

Katy kicker Quentin Garrison, who'd missed a 28-yard field goal in the third quarter that would have tied the game 17-17, missed the extra point to leave the score 27-24 after Jeffery's second touchdown.

Woodlands quarterback Trent Eckel finished 10-of-20 passing for 200 yards and no interceptions. Brett Felton reeled in four catches for 109 yards, while Randy Knust had two catches for 59 yards.

"It was crazy. This is their house, this is their house," a jubilant Lasco said after the game. "We came in here and we beat them again. We beat them again."

"It's amazing. There's no better feeling in the world. No better feeling."