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The Woodlands falls to Cy-Fair in season opener

By Al Montaña
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HOUSTON — Cy Fair, coming off a state title last season, was counting on its 30 returners to lead the way in Friday's season opener against The Woodlands. The defense brought back just three starters, but the formula wasn't projected to alter much, according to head coach Ed Pustejovsky.

The Bobcats were carried by wide receiver Christian Richmond's 183 all-purpose yards, then used their strong defense to claim a 27-7 win over the Highlanders at Pridgeon Stadium.

"We played extremely hard," Pustejovsky said. "We did some good things of course, [and] we got some things we got to fix, but for the first game coming out against an opponent like The Woodlands, I think ours kids did a great job."

The Highlanders were looking start the year with a bang under new leader Jim Rapp. The Bobcats defense was too much, however, as they forced The Woodlands to punt eight times.

"Awfully proud of our defense — got a bunch of young kids out there, and the coaches did a great job with them," Pustejovsky said. "They play with maximum effort and get to the football."

The difference early in the game was Cy Fair's playmaker. After both teams punted to start the game,

Richmond scored on a 79-yard punt return, the only score of the quarter.

The Bobcat defense started the second quarter by sacking The Woodlands quarterback Casey Sunseri on back-to-back plays to force a punt.

Richmond continued carrying the Cy-Fair offense with back-to-back catches for 73 yards from quarterback Ryan Nelub, which put them in scoring position.

“Christian’s very dynamic. We find ways to get him the ball,” Pustejovsky said.

Jake Ruiz connected on a 32-yard field goal to put Cy Fair up 10-0 with less than four minutes to go in the first half. Following another Highlanders punt, Jaelon Woods scored on 67-yard touchdown to extend the lead once again.

The Cy-Fair defense shut out the Highlanders in the first-half and held them to just 30 rushing yards.

“We didn’t execute very well offensively. Cy Fair does a great job,” Rapp said. “They made it really tough to put points on the board and to sustain drives. They do a wonderful job with that.”

Cy-Fair forced a fumble to start the third quarter, and Ruiz took care of the rest with a 43-yard field goal. That put Cy-Fair up 20-0 with just under eight minutes remaining on the clock.

Woods later scored again on a 4-yard touchdown run to make the lead 27-0. He finished the game with 140 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 17 carries.

Highlanders running back Bryeton Gilford scored on a 3-yard touchdown run with less than four minutes to go in fourth for his team’s only score.

Cy Fair finished with 318 total yards to The Woodlands’ 239. The Bobcats finished with 227 rushing yards. “It’s always good to start with a win, but we need to build on that,” Pustejovsky said.