

The Woodlands pulls away from Lufkin 31-13



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By Jon Poorman

SHENANDOAH — In a game that featured three hours and 14 minutes worth of lightning delays, The Woodlands used 21 unanswered second-half points to post a 31-13 victory over Lufkin on Saturday at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

It was another important District 14-5A win for the Highlanders, who defeated A&M Consolidated 24-7 last week in College Station, as they moved one-half game ahead of Oak Ridge for the league's top spot.

"The kids did a really good job of staying focused in the locker room," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "They did a good job, particularly coming out in the second half. The second half was just a great half of football for us."

The Highlanders (5-2, 3-0) did most of their damage on the ground, gaining 338 yards while averaging 6.5 yards per carry. Quarterback Chris Andritsos and running backs Patrick Carr and Sterling Scott ran for 125, 108 and 75 yards, respectively.

"I think we just went back to our bread-and-butter plays," said Andritsos, who scored on runs of 25, nine and four yards. "We just said, 'We're going to line up and run you over.' They couldn't stop it." The Woodlands emerged from the locker room and quickly took the lead on Andritsos' second scoring run. The junior gave the Highlanders a commanding 24-13 lead at the end of the third quarter with his final touchdown.

Andritsos, who completed 7 of 15 passes for 122 yards, connected with Tyler Patrick for a 64-yard touchdown pass down the right sideline in the fourth quarter to cap the scoring.

"On third and 30, I don't know what else to run normally, so we lofted it up down the sideline and it seemed to work," Andritsos said.

In addition to The Woodlands' explosive offense, the Highlanders defense also came up big. The Woodlands held Lufkin (1-5, 0-2) well below its season average of 35.4 points per game, and surrendered 345 yards. The Panthers came in averaging 433 yards per game.

Highlanders senior defensive back T.C. Schneider recorded three takeaways: two interceptions and a fumble recovery. Schneider's two picks leaves him tied with Stephan Johnson of College Park for the district lead with three.

"It's just doing your job," he said. "I'm going to do my job, and I'm going to trust my teammates to do theirs. As a defense, we're really starting to bond together, really starting to gel. Things are just clicking right now, and we're going to keep it up."

The Woodlands jumped on the scoreboard first with Rhett Pruitt's 21-yard field goal late in the opening quarter.

On the ensuing drive, Lufkin answered with a field goal of its own — a 22-yarder by Timmy Martinez. Andritsos scored his first touchdown with just more than four minutes remaining in the half, but the Panthers tied it again on Trey Cumbie's 36-yard touchdown pass to KeKe Coutee.

Andritsos then threw a costly interception to Lufkin's D.J. Alexander, who returned the pick 48 yards to the Highlanders 10-yard line with seven seconds remaining before halftime. That allowed Martinez to boot his second field goal — a 27-yarder — for a 13-10 advantage as time expired.



Highlanders surge over Lufkin



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SHENANDOAH - Junior quarterback Chris Andritsos had 125 yards rushing, 122 yards passing and four total touchdowns to lead The Woodlands Highlanders (5-2, 3-0) to a 31-13 district win over Lufkin (1-5, 0-2), while overcoming two separate lightning delays totaling 3 hours and 14 minutes.

"This is our third lightning or rain delay this football season, it was the longest one with multiple delays, the kids did a great job of staying focused, I was really pleased with the way we came out in the second half," said Highlander Head Coach Mark Schmid.

Trailing 13-10 at the half, The Woodlands scored on their first three possessions of the second half, beginning with the second-half kickoff returned by Senior Jeremy Davis Harper 51 yards to the Panther 40-yard line. The Highlanders went to the ground game with Junior running back Patrick Carr and Andritsos, who capped off the drive with a 9-yard touchdown run to give the Highlanders a 17-13 lead with 10:21 left in the third quarter. Lufkin punted on their next possession and The Woodlands started to take control on the ensuing possession as the Highlander offense went on a 14 play 80-yard drive in just over 5:00 that was capped off when Andritsos scored his third rushing touchdown of the afternoon, from 4 yards out to give The Woodlands a 24-13 lead with 3:39 left in the third quarter.

The Woodlands got the ball back at their own 6-yard line and continued to get a push off of their offensive line led by Senior Tyler Rapp, as the offense went on a 94-yard drive that was capped off on a 3rd down and 25, Chris Andritsos connected with Senior wide receiver Tyler Patrick on a 64-yard touchdown to give the Highlanders a 31-13 lead with 9:04 left in the fourth quarter.

"We went back to the plays that we run best and letting our big lineman run down people," said Chris Andritsos.

The Panthers gained only 121 of their 345 total yards in the second half as the Highlanders defense was more aggressive in the third and fourth quarters. The Highlanders gained 279 of their 460 total yards in the second half. Chris Andritsos combined for 247 yards and four touchdowns to lead the way for the Highlander offense, along with Patrick Carr who had 20 carries for 108 yards rushing.

"It's a team effort, we didn't let the weather get it us, we came out and did our job," said Junior defensive back TC Schneider, who had two interceptions and a fumble recovery to lead the Highlander defense.

Lufkin received the opening kickoff and drove to the Highlander 26 yard line, however the drive stalled and Panther kicker Timmy Martinez missed a 33-yard field goal. The Highlanders went three and out on their initial possession of the game, punting the ball back to Lufkin when the game was suspended only 12 plays into the first quarter and the delay lasted one hour and 31 minutes.

When play resumed Lufkin tried to quickly gain momentum when Panther quarterback Trey Cumbie threw deep for Key'vantanie Coutee in the end-zone, however the pass was intercepted by Highlander Junior TC Schneider.

The Highlanders took momentum from the turnover and drove 76 yards on 11 plays in 3:41 and got a 21-yard field goal from Senior kicker Rhett Pruitt to give The Woodlands a 3-0 lead with 58 seconds left in the first quarter. Play was quickly stopped again for a second lightning delay, lasting one hour and 43 minutes before play resumed again, totaling a first quarter that took three hours and 24 minutes to play.

Lufkin would drive to the Highlander 3-yard line once play resumed, but the Highlander defense stiffened and the Panthers settled for a 21-yard field goal from Timmy Martinez to tie the game 3-3 with 10:26 left in the second quarter. Lufkin and The Woodlands would trade there next possessions, when TC Schneider came up big again for the Highlander defense as he recovered a Lufkin fumble setting up the Highlander offense at the Panther 38 yard line. The Woodlands quickly scored when Andritsos scored on a 25-yard touchdown run up the middle to give the Highlanders a 10-3 lead with 4:12 left in the second quarter.

The Panthers would answer with a 75-yard drive in just under three minutes, when Trey Cumbie connected with Key'vantanie Coutee on a 36-yard touchdown pass to tie the game 10-10 with 1:23 left. Lufkin forced a Highlander turnover as Panther linebacker DJ Alexander intercepted Andritsos' screen pass and returned it 48 yards to the Highlander 10 yard line, setting up a 27-yard Timmy Martinez field goal as the clock expired on the second quarter giving Lufkin a 13-10 halftime lead.