

Katy survives against the Highlanders in defensive slugfest



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By **Jim Mashek**

KATY — The Woodlands promised a physical football game. Second-ranked Katy certainly gave the Highlanders one to remember. And one to lament, too.

Katy scored all of its points in a span of less than five minutes in the first half, and the Tigers used those two touchdowns to slip past The Woodlands 14-7 on a hot, muggy Friday night before an estimated crowd of 10,000 at Rhodes Field.

Katy improved to 3-0 on the season while the Highlanders take a 2-1 record into their final non-district game, a road trip to play the La Porte Bulldogs on Friday night.

The turning point of the game came late in the third quarter, when TWHHS quarterback Eric Schmid scrambled for an apparent first down inside the Tigers' 10-yard line. But two players following the play, a lineman from each team, were engaged in hand-to-hand combat, taking Schmid to the ground as a flag was thrown.

After a quick conference, the officials called a personal foul against The Woodlands, and the Highlanders failed to get back in the red zone.

It was a curious call, to say the least. The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid talked to his team for about five minutes while the Katy sideline seemed to breathe a collective sigh of relief.

"I told the guys if they're not hurting, if they're not disappointed, then something's wrong with them," Mark Schmid said. "You can't make mistakes against a really good football team like Katy. Fortunately for us, Katy made some mistakes, too. Yes, I was really proud of the effort. "We've got to handle this loss the right way. I don't like losing, none of us do. But it is what it is."

The Highlanders had trouble running the football, at least in the first half, while Katy unleashed its 5-foot-11, 200-pound back, Kyle Porter, on The Woodlands defense.

The Highlanders controlled Porter early, and The Woodlands scored first, on Jordan Talford's 3-yard touchdown run with 28 seconds left in the first quarter.

The Tigers' J.R. Blades returned the ensuing kickoff to midfield, and Porter broke through a gaping hole to score on a 50-yard touchdown run with seven seconds left in the first quarter. Kris Perez added the extra point and the game was tied at 7.

Midway through the second quarter, Porter scored on a 1-yard touchdown run, putting his team in front 14-7. The Tigers had a chance to extend that lead in the final moments of the first half, but Porter fumbled just before reaching the goal line, and the Highlanders' A.J. Mason came up with an alert fumble recovery in the end zone.

The Woodlands defense controlled the flow of the game for most of the second half, but the Tigers found an offensive rhythm they needed to work on the clock in the final five minutes. Veteran Katy coach Gary Joseph was impressed with the Highlanders' defense.

"They play great defense," Joseph said. "We don't play a whole lot of people who play defense like they do. It's kind of what we do. It was a hard-nosed football game."

The Tigers' JoVanni Stewart was allowed to stay in the game in the second quarter after drawing two personal fouls on the same play. Stewart hit Eric Schmid after Schmid was clearly out of bounds, and after some pushing and shoving along the Highlanders' bench, officials walked off two personal foul calls for 30 yards against Katy. Several plays later, Eric Schmid was tackled inside the Katy 10-yard line, only for the Highlanders to draw the personal foul that kept them out of field-goal range.

On a fourth-and-four play in the final minutes, JoVanni Stewart tackled the Highlanders' Christopher Stewart for a 3-yard loss that allowed the Tigers to take the ball over on downs. It was a tough night for The Woodlands offensive line, as Eric Schmid led the Highlanders with 51 yards rushing.

Porter, meanwhile, carried the ball 32 times for 186 yards and both Katy touchdowns.

"It's a starting point, for next week," TWHS offensive tackle Justin Robbennolt said. "We've got to get better as a team. As an offensive line, we need to start to jell and play better as a unit. I've got to give it up to our defense, though. They really brought it tonight."



Katy perseveres in defensive battle against The Woodlands

By Jason McDaniel - Saturday, September 12, 2015

The Woodlands' green-clad Highlanders are Katy's kryptonite in recent years, winning three of five meetings since 2008.

But Kyle Porter, playing Superman, helped the Tigers endure this time.

The senior ran for two first-half touchdowns, including a 50-yarder, and 184 yards and overcame two fumbles to lead Katy to a 14-7 victory over The Woodlands on Friday at Rhodes Stadium.

"We faced a lot of adversity down there," Katy coach Gary Joseph said.

"We fumbled the ball on the goal line, we dropped a pass for a first down, we dropped some (other) balls, we got (60) yards in penalties, and we still persevered.

"We clean those things up and we have a chance to be a good football team."

The Woodlands (2-1) struck first, taking a 7-0 lead late in the first quarter on the first points allowed by Katy (3-0) this season.

Jordan Talford supplied the touchdown on a 4-yard run. But the lead was short-lived. After a long kickoff return, Porter found a huge hole on the first play of the ensuing drive and ran 50 yards for a TD. Then he gave the Tigers a 14-7 lead on their next possession.

The senior, who replaced Oklahoma's Rodney Anderson as lead back this year, broke a 21-yard run on a misdirection play on third-and-13 and provided the payoff with a 2-yard touchdown run.

But he wasn't invincible. Katy's lead stayed at 14-7 at halftime after Porter fumbled into the end zone for a touchback with 32 seconds left. He also lost a fumble on Katy's first second-half series.

But Joseph only praised the 32-carry effort of Porter, who supplied most of the Tigers' 262 total yards.

"He played as hard as he can, and not only that, he exemplified great leadership out there," Joseph said. "He made mistakes, but he put them behind them and told (his teammates), 'Come on, we're going to go get this.'"

"I'm proud of him for doing it."

The Highlanders committed two turnovers and managed only 153 total yards against Katy's defense, which sacked new quarterback Eric Schmid – the coach's son – five times on the evening.

"There were some turnovers, there were some assignment mistakes, and that cost us opportunities to put the ball in the end zone or keep drives alive," The Woodland coach Mark Schmid said.

"Thank goodness for us, Katy made some mistakes, too."

The Highlanders' best plays on offense were runs by Schmid, who scrambled for three first downs. His 20-yard run in the first set up their only score.

"That's the great thing about having a mobile quarterback," Coach Schmid said. "You can turn bad things into good things."



The Woodlands loses tough road game to Katy

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KATY, Texas -- The Woodlands traded punches with the #2 ranked team in Texas 6A Friday night only to come up short 14-7 in a heavy fought game.

"I told our players if you don't feel broken hearted about losing this game than there is something wrong with you as a player," said Mark Schmid, The Highlanders head coach.

"I was really proud of the effort, no doubt about it. This game does not make or break our season and if you handle this loss the right way it could define our season."

The only Highlander score of the game came from Jordan Talford, junior, on a short run. But Katy's Kyle Porter would take control with an immediate score on a 50 yard run to respond and then a short 2 yard run before the half to put them at 14.

Key drops over the middle early in the fourth quarter and a penalty on a long kickoff return in the 2nd quarter hindered The Woodlands scoring efforts against a widely considered top defense.