

# The Woodlands defense shuts out fifth opponent in win over Oak Ridge



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By **Demetrio Teniente**

SHENANDOAH — The Woodlands left Woodforest Bank Stadium on the winning side of a shutout on Friday night. What else is new?

The Highlanders defense was as dominant as ever and their offense had enough pop to stump Oak Ridge 30-0 in District 16-6A play.

The Highlanders (8-1, 5-0) have shut out four opponents over their last six games.

“We are feeling great at this time of the season,” The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. “There are still a couple of games left to play. We’re going to enjoy tonight ... It’s a big win over a really good football team. That win ensures us a spot in the playoffs, but we want to finish this thing right and be district champions.”

In addition to putting the Highlanders into the playoffs, the victory marked Schmid’s 100th career win.

“I said (to the team) this was a big win for me tonight, being my 100th,” Schmid said. “But I want to get to 108 with them (this year).”

That would mean a state championship for the Highlanders.

The loss extended Oak Ridge’s losing streak to three. The War Eagles are 4-5 overall and 1-4 in district play.

The War Eagles’ Bishop Durst got the start at quarterback instead of four-year starter Braden Letney. Durst completed 12 of 18 passes for 169 yards, but he was sacked five times.

The Woodlands’ Conner Barnett, Antoine Winfield Jr., Michael Purcell, and Christian Cargol all had sacks in the game.

While the Woodlands already had a 20-point lead at halftime, it was a third-quarter fumble recovery by Ian Harris that may have put the issue to rest.

“The defense takes a lot of pride in holding teams to no points.” Schmid said. “And that is evident with [Harris’ recovery] and the way they were tackling guys to keep them out of the end zone. I’m happy they’re our defense.”

Jordan Talford led The Woodlands with 125 yards rushing and two touchdowns. One of his scores was a 22-yarder with 7:53 left in the first quarter, while the other score came on a fourth-and-goal play with 6:40 left in the first half.

After playing most of the season as a change of pace kind of back, Talford has been the Highlanders starting tailback the past couple of weeks. His 8.13 yards per carry against Oak Ridge should bring him even more touches as the post season continues to draw near.

The Woodlands quarterback Eric Schmid completed only three passes, but two of them went for long touchdowns. One on a 51-yard bomb to Brandon Stockerl in the first quarter, and the other went 53 yards to Hunter Moore with 5:07 left in the game.

Despite the quarterback change for the War Eagles, their star wideout Kyle Townsend managed to make a couple big grabs and finished the game with 92 yards on three catches.

The Highlander defense held the War Eagles to 245 total yards, well below their season average of 382.9.

“We are just playing hard,” said The Woodlands senior safety Winfield. “The coaches talk to us so much about playing and staying together as a team. We just try to do what we are coached to do.”

TWHS closes its home schedule next week against Summer Creek, while Oak Ridge has a bye.



## Highlanders celebrate fourth shutout of the season against Oak Ridge, 30-0

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SHENANDOAH, Texas — The Woodlands Highlanders had much to celebrate after their fourth shutout of the season and Head Coach Mark Schmid’s 100th win with the team.

The Highlanders were all smiles after their 30-0 victory, which guaranteed the team a spot in the playoffs after the end of their district matches.

“We’re feeling great. At this time of the season with a couple of games left to play we’ve got some business we have to finish, so we’re going to enjoy tonight,”

Schmid said. “It was a big win over a really good football team—a talented football team. That victory assures us a spot in the playoffs which is definitely a big goal of ours. These guys, they want to finish this thing right by being the undisputed district champions.”

The Woodlands set the tone of the game in the first quarter when junior quarterback Eric Schmid found a gap to senior wide receiver Brandon Stockerl for a 51-yard touchdown. Nearing the end of the game, Schmid threw another big pass to senior wide receiver Hunter Moore for a touchdown reception, finalizing their 30-0 score.

"It does great things for [Eric's] confidence," Schmid said. "Every game he plays out here he builds on being the junior quarterback, so that was a big pass for him."

Establishing the Highlanders' running game was sophomore running back and Player of the Game, Jordan Talford.

"That's an important thing for us to do," Schmid said. "We want to run the football because a lot of good things happen when you run the football, and to be able to have a Ramos, and a Talford and a Trauffler and get some runs out of the quarterback, that's big for our recipe."

Coach Schmid said the Highlander defense takes great pride in holding their opponent to no points, but he wants them to remember that they still have games down the road before they can start thinking about their playoff matches.

"This is a great win for us, but we've got two more games to play in district before we start on a playoff run," Schmid said. "We made the playoffs, but we can't think about this right now. We have to think about Summer Creek."

The Highlanders will play at Woodforest Bank Stadium against Summer Creek on Thursday, October 29, at 7 p.m. The game will be broadcast live on Woodlands Online.