

Ehlinger, Westlake dismantle The Woodlands in 6A area playoffs



Saturday, November 21, 2015

By Jim Mashek

BRYAN — Austin Westlake's Sam Ehlinger had all the answers on Saturday afternoon at Bryan High School's Merrill Green Stadium. And The Woodlands Highlanders could only tip their hat in his direction and call it a day. And a season to remember.

Westlake pummeled The Woodlands in the second half, on both offense and defense, to trample the Highlanders 28-3 on a cool, blustery day, when nightfall brought the curtain down on a splendid TWHS football season.

The Highlanders finished the season 10-2 after earning an outright District 16-6A championship and avenging last year's bi-district loss to Klein Oak. Westlake (11-1) advances to face either Killeen Shoemaker or North Mesquite in the Region II-6A quarterfinals on Saturday afternoon in Waco.

"Offensively, we were never able to string anything together," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "Coming into the year, I think if you'd said, 'You go 10-2, you're the undefeated district champs,' you take it.

"But you see what these kids have done, and you get hungry. You want more. These juniors and sophomores, they know this feeling. Hopefully we can use that to motivate them for down the road."

The Woodlands trailed just 7-3 at halftime and had the option to take the ball or defend a certain goal to start the second half.

"It was anybody's game, at halftime," The Woodlands safety Antoine Winfield, Jr., said when it was over.

Schmid chose to play with the wind at his back, which meant the Highlanders had 12 minutes to turn the game in their favor and upset the Chaparrals.

Westlake is loaded on defense and Ehlinger usually controls the flow of the game calling the signals for the Chaparrals. And that's exactly what happened.

"Defensively, we told our guys we should be able to win 7-3," Westlake coach Todd Dodge said. "But offensively, we stepped up."

TWHS defenders Ian Harris and Christian Cargol joined forces for a sack on Westlake's first offensive series of the third quarter. But The Woodlands offense got the ball at its own 13-yard line and managed just 1 yard before punting the ball away.

By the time the Highlanders got it back, it was 14-3. And getting worse by the minute.

Ehlinger, who is committed to play college football at his hometown school, the University of Texas, carried the ball 26 times for 97 yards and the Chaparrals' first three touchdowns. His 8-yard scoring run put Westlake in front 14-7 midway through the third quarter.

The Woodlands managed just three first downs after halftime.

"(Ehlinger) is very physical, a downhill runner," TWHS junior linebacker Zach La Canfora said.

The Highlanders' offense opened the game on the wrong foot, taking the opening kickoff and going three and out before Ehlinger needed just five plays to cover 41 yards for Westlake's first touchdown.

Ehlinger scored on a 1-yard run with 8:19 left in the first half and was poised to get the Chaparrals in the end zone again, after converting a fourth-and-five play with a 9-yard run. But TWHS linebacker Matt Mahoney came up with an interception of a poorly thrown pass, and the Highlanders' offense began to show some signs of life. They just didn't last.

Lucas Vieth accounted for all of the Highlanders' points with a 31-yard field goal early in the second quarter. TWHS junior quarterback Eric Schmid, playing in his second game since returning from an injury to his left elbow, completed just 8 of 19 passes for 49 yards while adding 60 yards on the ground. "Everything (physically) with Eric was 100 percent except his left elbow," Mark Schmid said.

Carlos Ramos led The Woodlands with 66 yards on 12 carries. Several of the Highlanders receivers had trouble coming up with the ball in the 20- to 25-mph winds whipping across the field.

"We just needed to execute in the second half," Eric Schmid said. "I missed a few big plays ... I don't think I played up to my capabilities."

Truth be told, the Highlanders were thoroughly outplayed. As a team. The Woodlands relied on defense all season, recording four shutouts while going unbeaten in 16-6A play, but Westlake simply had too much offensive firepower in this game.

"I'm proud of our guys, and the leadership of our senior class has been extraordinary," Mark Schmid said. "Westlake was the better team and will be a team to watch in the playoffs the rest of the way."



Highlanders end their season after falling 28-3 to Westlake

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BRYAN, Texas — The Woodlands Highlanders (10-2) faced the end of their season as they fell to Westlake High School (11-1) 28-3.

Receiving the ball at the start of the game, the Highlanders saw a quick four downs, where at the punt return, the wind would work to their disadvantage and put the ball in their own territory for Westlake. A one-yard run into the end zone gave Westlake the 7-0 lead early in the quarter.

Things turned up for the Highlanders with senior offensive linebacker Matt Mahoney's interception and a Westlake fumble on a quarterback sneak that was

recovered by The Woodlands. Senior kicker, Lucas Veith capitalized on Westlake's mistakes with a field goal, bringing the Highlanders to their 7-3 halftime score.

With several setbacks for the Highlanders in the second half, including the loss of the advantage of having the wind to their backs, Westlake brought in three touchdowns and solidified their 28-3 victory.

Although the district champions swallowed a tough loss, the optimistic Head Coach Mark Schmid said that he was extremely proud of his team for playing with great integrity and tenacity.

"Whenever you get to this point the sting of the defeat and the finality that it's over, it's hard to put into words how you feel and what you want to say," Schmid said. "They played the game right away, and that'll go a long way to them. I was proud of the way they played all year long. They believed in each other, they believed in the team up until the very last minute. It was a great season, and it never ends the way you want it to end unless you win the state championship."

Knowing that there is nowhere else to go but forward for the Highlanders, Schmid said that the team will open their off season by reviewing film of their game against Westlake. With an experienced, underclassmen-heavy team, the Highlanders look forward to much success in their future seasons.

"I'm proud of our effort, and I'm proud of the way our seniors lead us," Schmid said. "Just looking from our underclassmen, the future looks bright."

Westlake smothers The Woodlands, moves to regional round

Saturday, Nov. 21, 2015 | by Michael Adams



BRYAN — The Westlake Chaparrals have a little something more to give thanks for this holiday season. Westlake (11-1) put on its best defensive effort of the season to defeat The Woodlands 28-3 Saturday afternoon in a Class 6A, Division 1 area playoff game at Merrill Green Stadium. Westlake's 28 points was the most given up all season by The Highlanders defense.

When Todd Dodge was introduced as Westlake's new football coach in the spring of 2014, he said in his introductory press conference that one of his goals was to practice on Thanksgiving. Dodge's Chaps will realize that goal this week.



"The kids have been so unbelievable," the second-year coach said. "They've bought into let's go practice on Thanksgiving. We want to invite the entire community to come out and watch us practice on Thanksgiving morning."

The goal was realized when junior defensive back Barrett Chambers sacked The Woodlands quarterback Eric Schmid on fourth down in the fourth quarter with the Chaps holding a 21-3 lead.

Three plays later, Westlake junior quarterback Sam Ehlinger found a wide open Chase Cokley for a 37-yard touchdown pass while being tackled. "There's something special about this team. We don't know exactly what it is, but we are feeling it every week," Chambers said.

Westlake struck on its first possession when Ehlinger scored on a 1-yard run to cap a six-play, 41 yard drive.

The Woodlands (10-2), playing into the wind, relied on its running game, but to no avail against a Westlake defense that held the Highlanders to 49 total yards in the second half.

The Highlanders' only scoring drive came after an Ehlinger fumble on the Chaparral 28-yard-line on the first play of the second quarter. The Woodlands didn't have a play of more than 8 yards on its 7-play, 27 yard drive that ended with a 32-yard field goal from Lucas Vieth.

Both teams struggled to find the end zone for the remainder of the half as Westlake took a 7-3 lead into the locker room. The Woodlands outgained the Chaparrals 127-117 in the first half.

Westlake scored on its second possession of the second half on an 8-yard run by Ehlinger. Ehlinger rushed for 100 yards on 27 carries and completed 13 of 22 pass attempts for 160 yards and four touchdowns.

Westlake took a 21-3 lead to open the fourth quarter on Ehlinger's third rushing touchdown of the game – a 2-yard run.

Four plays into The Woodlands' fourth possession of the half, Chambers made his game-sealing sack.