

THE COURIER

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The Woodlands Edges College Park in Final Minute

By Justin Maskulinski
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SHENANDOAH — The Woodlands scored in the final minute to top rival College Park 24-17 on Friday at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

The Highlanders (2-2, 2-0 District 15-6A) trailed 10-0 at the end of the opening quarter, then worked their way back even, took the lead, and later broke a 17-17 tie to top the Cavaliers (3-1, 1-1).

Bryeton Gilford, who unofficially rushed for 165 yards on 29 carries, scored the game-winning 16-yard score with 19 seconds to play.

“It starts up front,” The Woodlands coach Jim Rapp said. “I’ll take our offensive line all day every day over anybody else’s. I’m proud of those guys. They did a great job of getting on bodies. (College Park’s) defense played a heck of a game tonight. Bryeton’s a workhorse. He’ll take the ball as many times as he can and he’ll go. I couldn’t be any prouder of him.”

College Park lost to The Woodlands 58-0 in its season finale last fall. Second-year coach Lonnie Madison says the 51-point improvement is a credit to the effort of his team.

“The kids have been working hard every week,” Madison said. “We think we have a good football team. People have wondered if we could rise up to some of the strong competition that’s in the district. It’s just the second district game, but we know we have a good football team and we’re just getting ready for the next game now.”

College Park opened the scoring with a drive that began in The Woodlands’ territory after Curt Evangelister recovered a fumble. The 9-play drive was capped with Carson Mohr’s 33-yard field goal. After a Highlander three-and-out, D’Majai Bailey returned a punt 40 yards and into The Woodlands territory. A 35-yard pass from Jake Hunnicutt to Peyton Sobosle soon followed and the Cavaliers were on their way to another touchdown.

QuaJon Charles ended the drive with a 1-yard run that gave College Park a 10-0 lead with 13 seconds to play in the first quarter. Charles rushed for 19 yards on 12 carries against a swarming Highlander defense, while Aaron Randle went for 72 on 12 carries.

“They’ve been doing a great job all year,” Madison said of his backs. “Credit to The Woodlands defense. They play good, physical football and they’re disciplined. We knew that it wasn’t going to be easy. Having (Charles and Randle) being able to complement each other has been great for our team.”

The Woodlands got on the board late in the first half. A 49-yard pass from Casey Sunseri to PJ Villarreal - a connection that would’ve gone for a score had the wide receiver not tripped - got the Highlanders into Cavalier territory.

A fourth down conversion had The Woodlands inside College Park’s 10-yard line, but a holding penalty forced the Highlanders to settle for a 22-yard field goal from Fabrizio Pinton with five seconds to play in the half.

Sunseri, one of two quarterbacks The Woodlands has used this season, finished the game 15-of-27 for 158 yards and also rushed for 35 yards.

“Casey kind of has emerged as our guy right now,” Rapp said. “We’re using Ben (Mills) and rotating him in still. We’re going to throw the ball as much as we possibly can to whoever is open.”

The Woodlands tied the game on its first drive of the third quarter after forcing a Cavalier three-and-out. Gilford touched the ball seven times on the 12-play drive and scored a 7-yard touchdown to end the drive with 6:09 to go in the third quarter.

The Highlanders tried for a fourth down conversion on their next drive, but a tackle for loss by Greg Edmunson gave the ball back to the Cavaliers.

The ensuing College Park drive ended with an interception by The Woodlands' Alex Atabong just one play after the Cavs converted on fourth down to get to the Highlanders' 25-yard line.

The Woodlands took its first lead of the game on the next drive. A pass from Sunseri to Matthew Bulovas would've had the Highlanders at the 1-yard line, but it was ruled incomplete after an official's conference. Sunseri later found the end zone on a 20-yard run to put his team ahead 17-10 with 4:04 to play.

College Park tied the game up on the ensuing drive. Hunnicutt found Mark Thompson over the top for a 31-yard touchdown to tie the game with 1:55 to play.

Both teams continue their District 15-6A slate next week. The Cavaliers travel to Klein Collins - Madison's most recent coaching stop before College Park - on Thursday. The Woodlands hosts Klein Oak on Friday.

"We'll watch the video and make our corrections," Madison said. "We've got a short week this week. Yes, we're familiar with Klein Collins, me and my coordinators are from there. We're really familiar with their program and we're going to be excited to play this week."

Scoring

THE WOODLANDS 24, COLLEGE PARK 17

The Woodlands 0 3 7 14--24

College Park 10 0 0 7--17

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

CPHS: Carson Mohr 33 field goal, 2:40.

CPHS: QuaJon Charles 1 run (Mohr kick), 0:13.

Second quarter

TWHS: Fabrizio Pinton 22 field goal, 0:05.

Third quarter

TWHS: Bryeton Gilford 7 run (Pinton kick), 6:09.

Fourth quarter

TWHS: Casey Sunseri 20 run (Pinton kick), 4:04.

CPHS: Jake Hunnicutt 31 pass to Mark Thompson (Mohr kick), 1:55.

TWHS: Gilford 16 run (Pinton kick), 0:19.