

The Woodlands rolls past Lamar for first win

Angel Verdejo Sep. 6, 2019



It's non-district play and the outcome won't determine a district championship or playoff run, but for The Woodlands, picking up that first win feels a lot better than remaining winless.

For Lamar, the Texans will still be considered a favorite to add another golden trophy to their case, but it will have to come with at least two losses on the team's record heading into league play. The Woodlands scoring touchdowns on offense, defense and special teams ensured just that in a 31-10 win Friday night at Delmar.

"The team last year was about building," The Woodlands head coach Jim Rapp said of the 2018 Highlanders who started 0-2 with a loss at home to Lamar before running off six consecutive wins. "This team is different. I thought we played better in our first game than we did a season before and I thought we played pretty well tonight."

Lamar (0-2) didn't help itself, finishing with five turnovers and nearly adding another. Compounding the problem was the timing – the Texans turned the ball over on their first offensive snap of each half. They held The Woodlands on the first miscue, but an interception returned for a score 17 seconds into the third quarter gave The Highlanders (1-1) enough cushion to control the game.

"You can't start a game any worse for us," Lamar head coach Michael Lindsey said.

The Woodlands took control 15 seconds into the game, as senior Peyton Janeczek returned the opening kickoff 88 yards through the middle of Lamar's coverage unit for the touchdown.

Then, on Lamar's first snap, quarterback Troy Tisdale lost control of the football on a keeper and the Highlanders recovered at the Lamar 27. The drive stalled however, and Fabrizio Pinton's 39-yard field goal sailed wide left.

Lamar's defense forced consecutive punts, with the Texans offense finally capitalizing midway through the second quarter. Blake Bernhard capped an eight-play, 49-yard drive with a 32-yard field goal, cutting the deficit to four points.

But The Woodlands answered with Janecek under center after starting quarterback Ben Mills and the offense couldn't muster a first down in two possessions. Five different Highlanders carried on the ensuing drive, including Janecek escaping pressure on a third and 15 at midfield to convert the first down.

Four plays later, Jack Calhoun took the misdirection handoff from Janecek and ran in from 7 yards out to extend the lead.

It was more of the same in the second half. Dawson Shepherd stepped in front of Tisdale's first-down pass to open the third quarter. The senior linebacker returned the interception 30 yards for the touchdown 17 seconds into the half.

The Texans answered on their ensuing drive but couldn't get any closer as The Woodlands scored the game's final 10 points.

"Those three plays to me were the game," Lindsey said of the opening kickoff return and turnovers to start each half. "Everything else, we hung in there. We moved the ball, we got three-and-outs and we stopped them. We're close but we just have to clean it up."

The Woodlands finished with 208 yards on the ground. Mills added a touchdown pass to Cole Dodson late in the game.

Tisdale threw for 131 yards on 9-of-20 passing, but was picked off three times in the second half – Abb Acuff accounted for two.

The Highlanders now enter District 15-6A play, while Lamar's remaining non-district slate includes last season's Division II-6A runner-up Beaumont West Brook next week.

"We have to turn around quick and we have to get better," Lindsey said. "But the most important thing is we have to be playing our best ball in November. That's what our goal is and this doesn't take away from our goal."