

Bridgeland hands The Woodlands its first loss of year



Jason McDaniel, Contributing Writer
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Bridgeland quarterback Conner Weigman knows how to throw touchdowns. He tossed 39 last season, and has 11 already this year. He's also proving adept at hauling them in.

The Texas A&M verbal commit secured his second receiving score of the season Friday on a trick play near the goal line, helping the Bears stay undefeated with a 39-35 win over The Woodlands at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

"It was in the gameplan," Bridgeland coach David Raffield said. "I was shocked when Coach (Cole) Kristynik called it, but it's a lot of fun. To be able watch (Weigman) do his thing on the field, and see the players rally around him, it's a cool deal."

Bridgeland, No. 5 in the 6A area media poll, improved to 3-0 with the win.

No. 19 The Woodlands tried to keep pace, and looked good doing it, but ultimately fell to 2-1, victims of another stellar showing by Weigman, who supplied 452 yards and four scores through the air, and 103 yards on 19 rushes.

Andrew Maleski had three TDs and 116 yards on four receptions. Jonathan Nelson — who threw his second TD pass to Weigman — had nine catches for 144 yards.

The first quarter set the tone for an offensive onslaught, with 38 combined points.

Maleski caught two touchdown passes from Weigman in the first four minutes of the game. The first was a 67-yard score on the first play of the game. The second was a 9-yarder for a 14-7 lead.

Bridgeland pushed its advantage to 17-7 on a 24-yard Fisher Pratt field goal. But The Woodlands wasn't rattled.

It responded with a TD only a minute later, with running back JoBarre Reed carrying on three consecutive plays, including a 42-yard run to paydirt in which he refused to go down, shaking off several would-be tacklers to cut the deficit to 17-14 with 4 seconds left in the first quarter — which was too much for Weigman.

Instead of letting the final ticks run out, Weigman dropped back and delivered a strike to Oscar Nnanna, who slid into the end zone in style for a 75-yard touchdown with no time left, giving Bridgeland a 24-14 lead.

“We’re going to keep our foot on the gas and get as many points as we can,” Raffield said. “You never know when you’re going to need them, and we needed them late in the game.”

Bridgeland led 32-21 at halftime. Its last score of the first half came with the trickery. Weigman handed off to Maleski, who reversed it to Nelson as Weigman rolled to the end zone to secure Nelson’s 2-yard TD pass. That wild play was followed by an equally wild 2-point pass from Nicholas Cordova to Chase Witthaus on a busted extra-point attempt.

And sure enough, the Bears needed all those points to hold on. They scored only once in the second half on Maleski’s 12-yard TD reception.

The Highlanders’ rally included a six-minute drive to start the third that featured a 27-yard run on fourth-and-18 by punter Nick Sims on a botched punt attempt, keeping the drive alive, and QB Mabrey Mettauer’s 1-yard touchdown run.

Mettauer also scored on a 4-yard run to pull within 39-35 with 9:47 remaining. But The Woodlands turned the ball over on downs on its last two possessions.

“It was individual kids learning to rise up, get down, dig deep, and make plays that maybe they couldn’t have made before,” Raffield said about his defense’s clutch play. “Now they have a little more belief that they can.”

Bridgeland finished with 563 yards and 20 first downs.

Mettauer, a sophomore, threw for 173 yards and two TDs, and rushed for two scores. He also threw a costly interception to Graham Gillespie.

The Woodlands finished with 473 yards and 23 first downs.

“It was two good football teams slugging it out and both of us have a lot of ‘W’s in our futures,” Raffield said.



Woodlands Highlanders fall to the Bridgeland Bears

By: **Julio Varguez**

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THE WOODLANDS – The Highlanders have a stacked schedule before district even starts. Tonight, was the powerhouse out of Cypress, Texas, Bridgeland High School and their nationally ranked quarterback, Conner Weigman. The Woodlands is not afraid of a little competition and is known for huge plays and comebacks when they are down.

The first half was electrifying with both teams scoring within minutes and showing what they were here to do. Bridgeland came out firing with back-to-back touchdowns and a field goal holding the Highlanders to just 7 with seconds left in the 1st quarter. Again the 2 teams showcased their throwing abilities and flexed their offense but this time the Highlanders were able to score making it a 1 touchdown game going into the half.

Head Coach Rapp of the Woodlands High School Highlanders, reflected on past weeks saying, “We are a better team this week that we were last week and the week before that.”

Coming into the second half the mood had changed between the football team. Both teams once again showed very well offensive dominance and threw some huge receptions over the center for the receivers with pin point accuracy.

“I thought we really did some good things in the second half. We rushed the pass really well in the second half and put a lot of pressure on him [Conner Weigman].” Said Coach Rapp about the second half of the game.

He continued “we just gotta be able to finish drives.”

This was the only downfall to the Highlanders against the Bridgeland Bears. Someone who is nationally ranked will spot those mistakes and take advantage. The Woodlands did a great job containing the powerful quarterback and forcing them to make mistakes. Unfortunately there were some questionable calls, not in favor of the Woodlands but they fought hard through the officiating.

We caught up with the Woodlands running back JoBarre Reed for some comments on the game. With a big smile on his face he said, “It’s just the beginning! We’re not done. We’re coming!”

He cut through Bridgeland’s defensive line many times and racked up huge rushing yards. When asked how that felt against such a highly ranked team he said, “We’re dogs! That’s what a Highlander is, a dog...a fighter.”

The Woodlands is set to face another powerhouse once again next week. With 9 state championships under their belt, Katy High School will be a force the Highlanders will have to stop. They will be on the road but family and fans will show their support to root on their team.