

## The Woodlands tops College Park for fourth straight win



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SHENANDOAH — The 17th edition of the War of the Woods went to a red-hot Highlanders team Friday night. Both teams entered with one loss in District 13-6A, but the Cavaliers were a little banged up on offense and the Highlanders have been torching opponents since a Sept. 16 loss to New Caney.

The Highlanders defense stood up for a fourth straight game and the offense was efficient for a 34-3 win Friday night at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

The Woodlands (6-2, 5-1) has won four straight games with just 10 points allowed. A 12-quarter scoreless streak came to an end when College Park (3-4, 3-2) made a field goal as time expired in the second quarter. It hadn't allowed points since the first quarter against Conroe back on Sept. 23.

The Highlanders had four sacks and allowed just 148 yards of total offense.

“They’ve done a phenomenal job,” The Woodlands coach Jim Rapp said of the defense. “They’ve really come together and they fly around. They love playing football with each other. They’re good tacklers and they’re physical. They do their job. Coach (Emory Bartolazzi) and his group do a good job with their defense. I’m really proud of what they’ve done.”

The Woodlands junior quarterback Mabrey Mettaufer said afterwards that his team has been playing with extra motivation since that loss to the first-place Eagles. “Since that loss, practice has been different, we’ve all been watching more film as a team,” Mettaufer said. “The chemistry is starting to gel. We had a switch that needed to be flipped and it got flipped after that game.”

## Highlights

The Woodlands led 17-3 at halftime as Mettaufer had his hand on two touchdowns. Scott Starzyk opened up scoring with a 32-yard field goal with 23 seconds to go in the first quarter. Mettaufer then scored on an 11-yard run and then threw a 3-yard touchdown pass to Jason Williams for the 17-0 lead.

Just before halftime and as time expired, College Park drove down into the red zone and Luke Greenwald hit a 30-yard touchdown to break up The Woodlands’ two-game shutout streak.

College Park, without starting quarterback Conner Dunphy and leading rusher Eugene Burnett due to injuries, moved the ball well in the first half. But drives kept stalling for one reason or another.

“Offensively, I thought we did some good things early,” College Park coach Lonnie Madison said. “We just had too many negative plays – rather that be penalties, sacks and different things that just killed some of the drives and momentum at the time. They did some good things, we just couldn’t capitalize on some of the drive we had early.”

In the second half, The Woodlands offensive weapon Arkez Gomez scored touchdowns of 4 yards in the third quarter and 3 yards in the fourth quarter. Gomez, who finished with 60 yards on 14 carries, was in more of a feature role at running back this week.

“Coach (Weldon) Willig always said don’t let winning mask the little things that get you beat later on down the line,” Rapp said. “That’s us really just looking down the road. Jason (Williams) has done a great job at running back for us. We just wanted to look at Arkez and see what he looks like and see if that’s something that just helps us. That was what we did tonight there.”

Starzyk added a 26-yard field goal with less than a minute left.

# What it means

College Park has dropped two straight games after a 49-24 setback at Willis last week. It will fall some in the standings entering Week 9.

The Cavaliers defense had two takeaways – an interception by Cole Walters in the first half and Jake Sheffer pounced on a fumble for a touchback in the fourth quarter.

“I thought the defense really came out,” Madison said. “I thought they played really hard and I thought the kids made a lot of adjustments from last week to this week. First of all, I want to say the defense did a wonderful job against a really good Woodlands offense.”

## Quotable

Rapp on the Highlanders now winning two straight against the Cavaliers and are now 15-2 all-time against their top rival:

“I think being ready to play this game is one of those things that happens,” Rapp said. “What happened to us a couple years ago when they beat us, that puts a little extra into this rivalry. I’ve done this a long time and Coach Madison and those guys do a really good job. I knew it would probably be an ugly kind of football game. The kids played really well, our defense played really well and (College Park) played really well. It wasn’t ugly, but it wasn’t our normal kind of game. A lot of it has to do with them.”

## Game balls

Mettaufer finished 11-of-16 for 158 yards and a touchdown. He also rushed for 114 yards on 10 carries.

The Woodlands lineman Mitchell Blakeslee blocked a punt and also was in on a sack.

College Park wide receiver Carter Deering had five catches for 62 yards, all in the first half.

## Up next

The Woodlands hosts Caney Creek next Friday night at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

College Park squares off with Oak Ridge on Thursday in what could be a pivotal game for a playoff bid.