

The Woodlands falls to Duncanville in regional semifinal

Colby Gordon, Special to The Courier

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PFLUGERVILLE— The Woodlands may not disagree with anyone who claims that Duncanville is the best team in the state.

The Panthers ended the Highlanders' season Friday afternoon in a dominating 35-3 win in their Class 6A Division I Region II semifinal at The Pfield in Pflugerville.

Leading 7-3 at halftime, Duncanville (12-0) scored 28 points in the third quarter, while forcing two turnovers and holding The Woodlands to negative yards in the frame.

Overall, the Highlanders (10-3) only produced 115 yards of offense, mustering just 22 yards on the ground.

“They’re really good,” The Woodlands coach Jim Rapp said. “We struggled offensively and their defense played a heck of a game.”

Panthers junior running back Caden Durham rushed for 200 yards and three touchdowns on just 13 carries.

Highlights: The start of the third quarter couldn't have been worse for The Woodlands.

Durham took a toss sweep and sprinted 75 yards for a touchdown on the first play from scrimmage. Then on the Highlanders' first snap, Duncanville recovered a fumble on the seven-yard line.

A few plays later, on fourth-and-goal, Duncanville quarterback Keelon Russell tossed a three-yard touchdown pass to Dakorian Moore, and the Panthers led 21-3 barely more than three minutes into the second half.

With the way Duncanville's defense was playing, that was basically the game.

Russell and Moore hooked up on a 51-yard scoring strike and Durham crossed the goal line from 29 yards out for the Panthers' other touchdowns.



The Woodlands couldn't take advantage of starting in Duncanville territory twice in the first quarter, settling for two field-goal attempts. Scott Starzyk drilled one from 36 yards out on his second attempt.

What it means: The Woodlands' season is over, while Duncanville advances to the regional championship game against Westfield.

The Highlanders' three losses (New Caney, North Shore, Duncanville) all came against district champions who are a combined 36-1, with North Shore also still alive in the postseason.

Quotable: "We had our chances early and didn't execute well enough," Rapp said. "That hurt us in the long run, and had we had a lead at halftime, things might have been different. ... In the third quarter, they've got two scores right off the bat. It went fast."

Game balls: Durham would earn game MVP honors if it was handed out.

Russell finished with 154 yards and two touchdowns through the air, while Moore had six catches for 88 yards.

Lontrell Turner added seven receptions for 66 yards for the Panthers.

Highlanders cornerback Wei Wei had an interception while linebacker David Ifeanyi recorded a sack.



Scott Starzyk kicked a 36-yard field goal for The Woodlands in the first quarter.