

# The Woodlands dominates Klein Cain to advance to third round

[Dennis Silva II](#), Staff writer

Nov. 18, 2022



SHENANDOAH — An illustrious marquee playoff showdown between two Houston area powers turned out to be anything but.

The Woodlands opened a lot of eyes in the Texas high school football world on Friday evening, dismantling Klein Cain, 61-21, at Woodforest Bank Stadium in their Region II-6A (Div. I) area playoff game.

In a game that was essentially over by the end of the first quarter, The Woodlands (10-2) scored on its last six drives of the first half and ran over, around and through what was a highly-regarded Klein Cain team (10-2) coming in.

“We’re a damn good football team!” The Woodlands coach Jim Rapp howled to his excited players afterward. “And we played like it!”

“We’ve been doing that, and we’ve been fortunate to be doing that the last few games,” Rapp said of a quick start that saw the Highlanders lead 21-0 after the first quarter and 45-7 at halftime. “I was pleasantly surprised we were able to do that tonight. The kids are playing lights-out defensively. We’re doing some good things on offense. That’s what it’s all about.”

The Highlanders outgained the Hurricanes 299-97 in total yards in the first half and held them to 2.9 yards per play.

“We fit those double teams, fit the gap,” Highlanders senior offensive/defensive lineman Mitchell Blakeslee said. “Going into the game, we knew they run 75 percent of the time and we worked on run fits the whole week. We knew they could pass, so we had to defend that as well as possible, while being physical and staying tough on the run.”

Klein Cain had surrendered no more than 34 points in a game this season.

“We knew what we had to do,” The Woodlands junior quarterback Mabrey Mettaufer said. “We came out here like that and I’m glad we closed it out.”

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

The Woodlands gashed Klein Cain on the ground game, amassing 209 rushing yards in the first half on 21 carries. Overall, The Woodlands had 446 yards on 44 carries.

The Highlanders set up success with the run on senior Branson McShaffry’s 33-yard haul from Mettaufer to open the scoring less than halfway through the first quarter.

A little more than two minutes later, sophomore Quanell Farrakhan Jr. blazed down the home sideline for a 60-yard punt return.

From there, the rout was on.

Blakeslee got in on the fun, catching a wide-open nine-yard toss from Mettaufer. The Highlanders went almost exclusively to the run from there, as senior Arkez Gomez, senior Jason Williams and Mettaufer scored on carries of 3, 13 and 1 yards, respectively.

By the time Klein Cain got on the board on Blaine Bullard's nine-yard catch from senior Jaelen Smith with 9:49 left in the second quarter, The Woodlands led 35-0.

The Highlanders finished with 536 total yards to the Hurricanes' 290. Coaches and players credited The Woodlands' offensive line of right tackle Everett Champlin, right guard Cross Tucker, center Andres Alcantara, left guard Koltin Sieracki and left tackle Ryan Hughes.

"They're crazy good," Mettaufer gushed. "They're big. They can make a hole for a train to go through."

The Woodlands forced two turnovers to none of its own. Senior linebacker Tommy Kratt came away with a fumble recovery and senior defensive lineman Steele Herndon had an interception.

### **WHAT IT MEANS**

The Woodlands advanced past the area round for the first time since 2019. The 10 wins are the most since 2016.

Klein Cain has yet to surpass the area round in its brief varsity tenure. The Hurricanes' 10 wins were a single-season best.

### **QUOTABLE**

The win was The Woodlands' eighth in a row.

"It all goes back to our second district ballgame and losing (14-7) to New Caney," Rapp said. "That refocused us to what we needed to do. We tightened everything up. We had to be better. It wasn't our standard. It wasn't who we are."

"We're just trying to play up to our standard every week, and these kids keep setting the bar higher and higher."

### **GAME BALLS**

Mettauer played like the four-star premier recruit that he is. He made the the Hurricanes' defense his personal playground, completing nine of 13 passes for 90 yards and two touchdowns and rushing for 106 yards and a touchdown on 11 carries - in the first half.

Mettauer did not attempt a pass in the second half and finished with 112 yards on 13 carries. Gomez added 98 yards and a touchdown on seven carries. Senior Jacoby Mitchell had 12 carries for 81 yards.

Junior Aden Self had 88 yards and a touchdown on four carries and three catches for 25 yards.

Sophomore kicker Scott Starzyk connected on field goals of 34 and 24 yards, respectively.

Smith, Klein Cain's dynamic playmaker who entered the game with 21 total touchdowns (705 yards and eight touchdowns rushing, 668 yards and 10 touchdowns receiving, 425 yards and three touchdowns passing), was keyed upon by a ferocious Highlanders pursuit all night.

Smith finished with 13 carries for 121 yards and two touchdowns, three catches for 27 yards and completed three of 15 passes for 27 yards and a touchdown.

"He's a great player," Blakeslee said. "We watched film on him all week and found out what he likes and what he does. It was kind of muscle memory tonight after practicing and working it all week."

Senior running back Adeyemi Adeleke added 87 yards on 21 carries for Klein Cain.

#### **UP NEXT**

Winner plays Duncanville in next week's regional semifinal at 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 26, in Pflugerville.

"We didn't want this to be the last game, we didn't want to hang up our pads," Blakeslee said. "We fought and gave it our all. We came hard off the ball on the very first play and that carried over."