

Mabrey Mettauer accounts for 7 touchdowns in The Woodlands' win over Oak Ridge

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SHENANDOAH — Wisconsin Badger fans tuning in to the live stream on YouTube were likely clamoring at the sight Friday night. Their future quarterback — wearing a white helmet with a red ‘W’ nonetheless — had himself a night. The Woodlands senior Mabrey Mettauer accounted for over 400 yards of total offense by halftime. The Highlanders opened District 13-6A keeping their perfect record against Oak Ridge intact for another year.

The Highlanders put one in the win column for the first time this year with a 55-26 victory over the host War Eagles at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

The three-year starter for The Woodlands (1-2) entered the night with 264 passing yards and minus-7 rushing yards through two games. Mettauer finished with 429 passing yards, 103 rushing yards and seven total touchdowns when all was said and done on a humid Friday night.

“I was really trying to spread the ball tonight,” Mettauer said. “Get everybody some touches. They did an amazing job catching the ball. I delivered it to them. It was an overall team effort. The O-line did their job making me not feel rushed and the receivers got open when I needed them.” Oak Ridge’s (1-2) star-powered defense had a tough time slowing him down all night long.

Highlights

Oak Ridge opened strong as it recovered a pooch kick and running back Larry DeBose scored from 3 yards out to open the game.

“We started out extremely well,” said Oak Ridge coach Mark Schmid, who spent 30 years coaching at The Woodlands before retiring after the 2017 season (he returned to coaching with Oak Ridge in 2019). “We took advantage of a special teams error on their part. Scored the first touchdown of the game. But then we had a special team flaw by allowing them to block the extra point.”

But The Woodlands took over two plays into the ensuing drive as Mettauer called his own number on an inside draw and sprinted 62 yards up the middle to the end zone. “They took away my smoke route,” Mettauer said. “They all just jumped, so I just took it. The hole was open. The O-line was up front and they are some dogs. You could drive a bus through that thing.”

The Woodlands coach Jim Rapp was impressed with the poise and athleticism on that call. “What I saw out of Mabrey tonight was I saw him relaxed and be himself,” Rapp said. “He was making the kind of plays he made when he was a sophomore and those were plays he made as a junior. He was able to pull the ball down and make something out of nothing. It felt like he didn’t have an option to throw, the lane opened up and he put on the jets. That was good to see.”

In the first half, Mettauer, a four-star commit (via 247Sports), totaled 338 passing yards with two touchdown strikes — 18 and 61 yards — to junior four-star recruit Quanell X Farrakhan Jr. in the first half. Mettauer also connected with Patrick Rabel (37 yards) and Aden Self (65 yards) for touchdowns as The Woodlands led 35-20 at halftime.

Oak Ridge hung around for a while. Off a recovered fumble by five-star Georgia commit Justin Williams, a senior linebacker for Oak Ridge and the No. 16-rated class of 2024 recruit in the country, the War Eagles pulled to within a point as Tevian Jefferson caught a 29-yard flea-flicker pass from senior quarterback Adam Trosclair.

After the Highlanders went up 21-13, Oak Ridge returned fire with a 43-yard touchdown run by senior Frankie Arthur, the four-start Central Florida commit. Oak Ridge turned it over in the red zone right before halftime as The Woodlands’ Caycen Bartolazzi grabbed a fumble off the turf and the Highlanders scored from there.

Out of halftime and a bad punt by Oak Ridge, Rabel caught a 26-yard touchdown from Mettauer at the 9:14 mark. On the second drive of the quarter, Mettauer connected with Shane Walker for 42 yards and touchdown throw No. 6 on the night.

The Highlanders’ second unit scored with 5:33 remaining as backup quarterback Patrick Miller batted forward a 4-yard touchdown to Kimo Kouletsis. With 1:39 left, Oak Ridge added a 9-yard touchdown run from Justin Hayes.

What it means

The Highlanders are trending in the right direction heading into Week 4. The Woodlands fell out of the Houston-area Class 6A rankings this week after allowing 41.5 points per game in losses to ranked North Shore and Lamar.

“We played a couple of really tough teams to start off,” Mettaufer said. “We got the job done tonight. This is a really good confidence boost for our team. I’m super excited for this.” The Woodlands allowed 501 yards per game in those losses. It allowed 397 yards this week.

“I was not happy the first drive (of the night),” Rapp said. “It was just a repeat of what we had done the past couple of weeks. I think they settled in. They were shell shocked too. The standard for us is to play really good defense and that hadn’t been the case the first couple weeks. Granted, it was about who we played and not about us.”

It’s back to the drawing board for Oak Ridge, which now has gone another year with a notch in the loss column to The Woodlands. The 0-for-20 War Eagles previously played a six-point loss to the Highlanders in 2019, the closest score in the series.

“I think our kids played hard,” Schmid said. “You can’t fault them for their effort. The good thing is we played a top-notch opponent in The Woodlands. We’re going to be better for it. We have two weeks until we play again and we’ve got some dings and some bruises to heal up on. That will give us a chance to do that and improve upon some things we didn’t do so well tonight.”

“I’m excited for our football team and I’m excited about getting a win,” Rapp said. “It’s tough to be 0-2 when there’s high expectations on your football team. You can tell the kids ‘We’re a good football team.’ But until you get out and get you a win, there’s some doubt that creeps in. Oak Ridge is a good football team, they really are. They’ve got some great defensive players and some great offensive players. I was proud of the way we stepped up and really competed this week.”

Game balls

Mettauer’s leading receivers were Farrakhan with four catches for 117 yards. Walker totaled 89 yards on five receptions while Rabel also had five receptions and 86 yards.

Jefferson, who left in the third quarter on a stretcher after a hard hit in the middle of the field, totaled six catches for 75 yards to lead Oak Ridge. The War Eagles rushed for 248 yards as a team.

Arthur had 101 yards to lead. Hayes ran for 90 yards on 12 touches in the fourth quarter. DeBose totaled 57 yards on 12 attempts.