



HIGHLANDERS CRUISE PAST CONROE, CLINCH 32nd CONSECUTIVE PLAYOFF BERTH

The Woodlands and Conroe met for the 49th time, with the Highlanders taking a 42-7 win and clinching an incredible 32nd straight trip to the playoffs. The Highlanders have now won 19 straight over the Tigers lead the all-time series 37-11-1. The loss drops Conroe to 2-3 in district play and puts their playoff hopes for 2026 in danger.

The Tigers took the opening kickoff and looked ready for the challenge, driving into the red zone highlighted by a 42-yard completion to Jayion Tarry Walker. On first down from the 11-yd line, Conroe QB Cameron Nunley's pass was interception by Cash Mock to thwart the Tigers' scoring threat.

The Highlanders immediately moved the ball past midfield with a long completion from QB Kaden Copelin to TE Colton Weddel. But that was as far as the drive went, with Copelin getting sacked on a 3rd and long and forcing a punt.

The Highlander defense would respond with a three-and-out, setting up the opportunity to get the offense back on the field. The Woodlands punt returner Thomas Daigle mishandled the punt, but Carter Cass was able to scoop the ball up and race 66 yards down the right sideline for the Highlanders' first score.

The Tigers offense was again unable to record a first down on their next possession, and the Highlanders took over on their own 26-yd line. The Woodlands would only need 4 plays to reach paydirt. Running back Jason Haskins got the ball past midfield with a 20-yd run before Copelin hit Bryson Bourn in the back corner of the end zone for the touchdown for a 38-yd score. Bourn now has 8 receiving TDs on the season.

The Highlanders got the ball back to start the 2nd quarter and again marched down the field, this time taking 10 plays before finding the end zone. Copelin hit Haskins for 14 yards to convert a 3rd-and-10. Two plays later, Copelin found Cass for a 21-yd TD reception as TWHS took a 21-0 lead.

The Conroe offense put together a 10-play drive of their own, reaching the Highlander 36-yd line before a 4th down incompleteness ended the threat. The Woodlands responded for one more TD before halftime. Copelin found Weddel on back-to-back plays to cap the drive. Copelin first converted a 3rd down with a 25-yd completion to Weddel to move the ball to the Tiger 22-yd line. On the next play, Copelin found Weddel again in the middle of the end zone for the touchdown. Weddel would finish with 3 receptions for 78 yards, including the TD.

The Highlander defense would end the first half with back-to-back sacks. First, Magnus Herndon had a record-setting 25th career sack. Herndon passes Michael Purcell for the all-time lead. Herndon would

go on to tie a school record for sacks in a game with 5. He now has 13 sacks on the season. Aiden Ventura would then close out the half with a sack of his own, as the Highlanders went into the locker room with a comfortable 28-0 lead.

The Highlanders were unable to move the ball on their first possession of the 2nd half, but the Tigers fumbled on their 1st offensive play to set up TWHS with great field position at midfield. The Woodlands converted a 3rd-and-10 with a Copelin 13-yd scramble. Copelin fumbled on the play but was able to recover the ball himself for the first down. The Highlanders fumble 5 times on the night, but the Tigers were never able to make a recovery. A few plays later, Haskins punched it in from 7 yards out to stretch the lead to 35-0. Haskins had a great night, totaling 136 yards of offense to go along with the TD.

Both teams exchanged promising drives that ended without points. The next Tigers' possession again ended on back-to-back sacks. Conroe's ensuing punt pinned the Highlanders inside their own 5-yd line. Several runs helped moved the ball out to the 29-yd line. That's when Copelin hit Cass for the big strike, who went 71 yards for the Highlanders' final score of the night. Copelin finished with 249 yards passing and four scores. Cass recorded 4 receptions for 107 yards and 2 receiving touchdowns to go along with his punt return score.

The Tigers did find the end zone late. Sawyer Buzbee hit Jayden Lane for a 6-yd TD completion to bring the final score to 42-7.

Max Mitchell and Magnus Herndon each totaled 7 tackles to lead the defense. In addition to Herndon's 5 sacks, the Highlanders also got sacks from Cole Maxwell, Cash Mock, Aiden Ventura, and Jason Side-Anene. The Tigers managed just 212 total yards on the night. The TWHS defense has now held opponents to 14 points or less in 6 straight games.

The Woodlands will return to Woodforest Stadium next week against Grand Oaks. The Highlanders have won all 6 previous meetings between the two schools. The Woodlands will look to remain stop the district standings in the quest for a district title while the Grizzlies will try and keep their 2026 playoff hopes alive.