



## Vikings keep up with Highlanders, but Woodlands holds on for 21-14 over Bryan for tough 14-5A win

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By DAVID CAMPBELL

The Woodlands' ground attack could never give the Highlanders much separation from the Bryan Vikings.

In the end, though, it gave them a win.

A running game led by quarterback Chris Andritsos and fellow junior Patrick Carr burned off the final 4 minutes, 29 seconds to give the Highlanders a 21-14 win Friday at Merrill Green Stadium. The pounding finish squashed an emotion-filled upset bid from the Vikings.

"There's not a dry eye left in the locker room," Bryan coach Ross Rogers said. "I thought that was our best defensive game all year. Our kids fought tooth-and-nail and made some good things happen."

The victory, coupled with A&M Consolidated's 41-23 win over Conroe Oak Ridge, put The Woodlands (6-2, 5-0) into sole possession of first place in District 14-5A. Bryan (2-7, 0-5) made sure that district advantage was very much in doubt until the end, though.

"It's how we've done things this football season," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "Late third or fourth quarter, we've been able to grind the clock and run the football successfully and I think that's what we did tonight."

The Vikings never got ahead, but never wavered when a response was needed. They just could not finish the last one. Andritsos, whose quarterback keeps were effective for most of the night, ran up the middle for 18 yards and the final touchdown with 1:13 remaining in the third period.

Bryan followed that by moving from its 25 to the Highlanders' 5 with Corey Johnson making a nice reception, but he fumbled the ball and Kade Markle recovered at the 6.

Andritsos rushed for 142 yards and targeted Tyler Patrick for key passes. Patrick caught five balls for 78 yards. Carr ran 20 times for 106 yards.

The Highlanders' defense held the Vikings' running game in check. KeeKee Johnson led the Vikings with eight carries for 35 yards.

"I'm proud of the way our defense played," Schmid said. "They gave up one touchdown all night long and kept Bryan on the long end of the field. If you hold somebody to seven points, you ought to have a real good chance to win the game."

The Highlanders earlier bypassed a chance to take a lead with a short field goal, instead opting to pass on fourth down at the Bryan 7. Vikings D.J. McCoy and V.J. Banks threw Carr down a yard short of a first down.

The Woodlands took a 14-6 lead with 2:12 left before halftime, but Banks ricocheted the momentum quickly back in Bryan's favor. Banks calmly fielded the ball at his 1, broke easily through the first wave and banked left for a return to The Woodlands' 36.

"We were going to bring it to the bench and he started that way, but saw a hole and popped it clean," Rogers said. "It was a great boost for us to go down and score just before halftime."

After picking up a first down, B.J. Ross dropped back and delivered a perfect pass against double coverage that his brother Darius wrestled away from two defenders.

"My brother threw to me and they tried to knock it out of my hands, but I was able to hang on to it," said Darius Ross, who started it in the backfield. The Vikings had just added the play before the game. "I thought it was a great throw by [B.J.] and Darius did just a great job because their guy got back and got a hand in there, but Darius held on."

It was the highlight play of the half, until the two-point conversion. B.J. Ross lifted a fade pass to the left corner of the end zone where Tyler Murphy and Geoffrey Keating blanketed Bobby Johnson. Ross' pass dropped neatly into the hands of Johnson, who made a one-handed grab to tie the game at 14.

"We ran it to perfection," B.J. Ross said. "He was even, but he was leaving, so I just threw it in for a touchdown. I knew that Bobby would make the play. In 7-on-7, he made a lot of one-handed catches."

The Vikings didn't want the halftime break though. "We wanted to go straight to the third quarter. We needed to keep the momentum going," Rogers said.

While The Woodlands moved the ball on their opening drive, and got big runs from quarterback Andritsos throughout the first half, a missed field goal kept the Highlanders off the board until the opening play of the second period. Andritsos, who delivered a good pass to Patrick, pushed in from the final yard.

Bryan pulled within one when Antwone Wallace picked off a soft Andritsos pass in the right flat and easily weaved his way in for a 27-yard score with 8:56 left. The lead held at 7-6 when Sterling Scott blocked the conversion.

The Highlanders had a chance late in the half to regain the lead, but Bryan's defense turned them away. Linebacker Coleman Johnson made a diving play to swat away a pass intended for Jeremy Davis Harper, who had gained a step advantage. The half ended with the Vikings' Cedrick Johnson Jr. smothering Andritsos, whose awkward pass was thrown underhand and out of bounds.

"It was a very physical game," Schmid said. "We made lots of mistakes and didn't execute very well offensively. Part of that was our problem, but part of that was Bryan's defense did a really nice job today."

B.J. Ross played despite an injured ankle that again limited his ability to run. "The kids believe in him and he doesn't want out," Rogers said.

# Highlanders get past Bryan

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BRYAN, Texas – Chris Andritsos scored two touchdowns and [The Woodlands High School football](#) team came away from Bryan with a hard-fought 21-14 victory to remain unbeaten in District 14-5A play.

Andritsos scored on a 1-yard run in an explosive second quarter that saw both teams score twice. He added an 18-yard touchdown run late in the third quarter for what proved to be the margin of victory.

The Highlanders improve to 6-2 overall and 4-0 in district play while the Vikings slip to 2-7 and 0-5. But it didn't come easy.

Andritsos broke a scoreless tie with a short touchdown run. He set up the score with a 25-yard pass completion to Tyler Patrick. Andritsos completed nine of 19 passes for 110 yards. Patrick accounted for 78 of those yards on five catches. The drive was set up by a Geoffrey Keating interception, the first of two Highlanders picks. Tyler Murphy got the other.

However, a pick-six the other way put Bryan on the scoreboard. The Highlanders were able to block the PAT kick attempt and hang on to a 7-6 lead. That lead increased to 14-6 after the Highlanders drove 60 yards late in the second quarter. The scoring drive is capped off by a 6-yard touchdown run from Sterling Scott.

But the Vikings answered with a 31-yard touchdown pass in the final minute of the first half and then tied the game with a successful two-point conversion pass.

However, Andritsos answered with the game-winner late in the third quarter. The junior quarterback rushed for a game-high 142 yards on 24 carries. Patrick Carr also added 106 rushing yards on 20 carries.

The Highlanders defense held Bryan to just 48 yards on the ground over 27 rushing attempts.