



Highlanders take down Klein in OT



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SHENANDOAH, Texas - Senior running back Sterling Scott rushed for 109 yards and two touchdowns, including the game-winning 9-yard touchdown in overtime to give The Woodlands Highlanders a 34-31 Bi-district playoff win over Klein at Woodforest Bank Stadium on Friday night.

“The way the game was going back and forth, you just knew that it was going to come down to the wire. The team that capitalized on the opportunities was going to come away with the win, and we came up big in overtime. Sterling Scott did a great job carrying the ball, (Junior quarterback) Chris Andritsos had big runs, offensive line did a great job and it’s a huge win for us,” said Highlander Head Coach Mark Schmid.

The Highlanders quickly took control of the game in the third quarter, taking the opening possession of the second half 75 yards for a quick score. Andritsos connected with Junior Chris Bell 28 yards to the Klein 40-yard line. Andritsos took the snap on the very next play and sprinted past the Klein defenders for a 40-yard touchdown. The drive covered 75 yards just 46 seconds into the third quarter, giving the Highlanders a 21-7 lead.

Klein (6-5) came roaring back, scoring in its next two possessions, the first being a quick strike 71-yard touchdown pass from Senior quarterback Rainer Ausmus to Senior running back David Hamm. The next Bearkat possession saw Klein drive 90 yards in 4:24, tying the game 21-21 on a Hamm 5-yard touchdown run with 2:42 left in the third quarter. The game’s momentum had fully swung back to Klein, as they again gained possession back with 49 seconds left in the third quarter.

The Highlander defense made a game-changing play when Senior defensive lineman Zak Krolczyk sacked Ausmus, forcing him to fumble and Senior linebacker Tanner Birdsong recovered for The Woodlands. The Highlanders recovered the games’s only turnover at the Klein 39-yard line with 0:03 left in the third quarter.

The Highlander offense wasted little time capitalizing on the Klein fumble, as they only took three plays to go 39 yards and re-gain the lead on a 1-yard touchdown run by Scott with 11:24 left in the game.

Like a heavyweight fight, Klein had an answer and tied the game for the third time when Hamm scored his second rushing touchdown of the night, from 31-yards out to pull Klein at 28-28 with 7:02 left in the game. Hamm finished with 39 carries for 195 yards and two touchdowns.

The Woodlands (9-2) tried to answer again, but the drive stalled at the Klein 29-yard line and Senior kicker Ryan Spaulding missed a 47-yard field goal with 2:06 left.

The Highlander defense came up huge again once more as the Bearkats drove to the Highlander 41-yard line before Birdsong tackled Hamm for a 3-yard loss, setting up a fourth-and-9 play. Klein turned the ball over on downs and the game went into overtime.

The Woodlands won the overtime coin toss and elected to go on defense first. The defense stiffened after Klein had a first-and-10 at the Highlander 13-yard line, but could not move the ball past the 7-yard line. Klein took its first lead in overtime on a 25-yard Kyle Pfau field goal, leading 31-28 with the Highlanders possession to come.

The Woodlands wasted little time as the Andritsos and Scott show continued as Andritsos had a 3-yard carry, followed by Scott's 7-yard carry to get the Highlanders a first down at the 15-yard line. It was Andritsos' turn with a 6-yard run to the 9-yard line. Scott took the next carry and ran up the middle and plunged into the end zone for a 9-yard game-winning touchdown.

"That whole (game-winning) drive, in the huddle we were saying keep pushing it, keep pushing it. All the guys were tired, but the guys did great blocking and I took it to the house," said Sterling Scott.

Klein got off to a quick start by taking the opening possession 75 yards in eight plays for a score. Ausmus drove across the goal line on a quarterback keeper for a 1-yard run to take an early 7-0 lead.

The Woodlands would quickly gain momentum back marching their first possession 67 yards in nine plays and scored on Junior running back Patrick Carr's 2-yard run, tying the game 7-7 with 5:20 left in the first quarter. Carr suffered a left-ankle injury and returned to the game for one offensive series in the third quarter.

The Highlanders would make a key stop in the first quarter as Klein marched 67 yards in 14 plays, but came away with no points. The drive stalled at the 1-yard line on a false start penalty on Klein backing them up to the 6-yard line. Klein Senior running back David Hamm was tackled for a loss back to the 8-yard line, forcing Klein to attempt a field goal. The 28-yard field goal by Senior Kyle Pfau was blocked by Highlander Senior Tyler Patrick.

The Woodlands took the lead on a long sustained drive at the end of the second quarter. The Highlanders marched 96 yards in 15 plays in 4:35, converting two third-and-11 plays on the drive. The drive was capped off by Andritsos' 13-yard touchdown run, giving the Highlanders a 14-7 lead with 45 seconds left in the second quarter. Andritsos finished with 17 carries for 170 yards and two rushing touchdowns. Andritsos was also 10 of 18 passing for 106 yards.

The Woodlands advances to the Area round of the Class 5A Division I playoffs against Round Rock (7-4) on Saturday, November 23, at Waco ISD Stadium in Waco, Texas.

Scott's OT scoring dash lifts The Woodlands past Klein 34-31



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By **Jim Mashek**

SHENANDOAH — Patrick Carr was on The Woodlands sideline, his left ankle heavily taped. The Highlanders had to turn to his understudy, 5-foot-4, 147-pound Sterling Scott, in overtime. And Scott delivered.

Scott's 9-yard scoring run in overtime lifted The Woodlands to a dramatic 34-31 victory over a dogged Klein squad on Friday night at Woodforest Bank Stadium in a Class 5A Division I bi-district playoff game.

"Winning the coin flip for overtime and going on defense first was huge," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "Our defense was able to hold them to a field goal, and that just opened the door for our offense."

The Woodlands, ranked No. 6 by HSgridiron.com, improved to 9-2 and will face Round Rock in the area round of the Class 5A Division I playoffs on Nov. 23 in Waco. Klein finished its season 6-5.

Scott carried the ball 17 times for 109 yards and two touchdowns. The Woodlands quarterback Chris Andritsos had 17 carries for 171 yards and had a 40-yard scoring sprint in the opening moments of the second half.

Andritsos ran an option play before giving the ball to Scott on the winning touchdown run. "It was a read and the hole opened up," Andritsos said. "Give it to the back." Scott rolled into the end zone and left on the shoulders of his teammates.

"That whole drive in overtime, the guys in the huddle were saying, 'Keep pushing, keep pushing,'" Scott said. "The guys were tired, but they were saying, 'Next play.' The guys did a good job blocking and I just took it to the house."

The Woodlands tempted fate in the final moments of regulation, as Ryan Spaulding's 47-yard field goal try with 2:06 left was wide left, giving the Bearkats good field position with the score tied at 28.

Klein used a pass-interference penalty against the Highlanders to get inside The Woodlands 40-yard line, but the Highlanders' defense was equal to the task and the game went to overtime.

"The game was going back and forth," Schmid said. "We knew it was going down to the wire. Klein was a physical team and they brought it right at us.

"Patrick wasn't 100 percent physically, so we got him out and let Sterling go. I'm glad I have him on my team."

Klein controlled the clock in the first half and opened the scoring on Rainer Ausmus' 1-yard quarterback sneak midway through the first quarter.

The Highlanders answered on Carr's 2-yard touchdown run with 5:20 left in the first quarter, and The Woodlands' Tyler Patrick blocked a 25-yard field-goal try by the Bearkats' Kyle Pfau early in the second quarter.

Andritsos scored on a 13-yard quarterback draw in the final minute of the first half, and the Highlanders extended their lead to two touchdowns on Andritsos' 40-yard run with 11:14 left in the third quarter.

David Hamm, Klein's do-it-all tailback, got behind the Highlanders' secondary on a wheel route and scored on a 71-yard pass from Ausmus with 9:46 left in the third quarter. Hamm carried the ball a whopping 38 times for 191 yards. His 5-yard run tied the game at 21 late in the third quarter.

The Highlanders' Tanner Birdsong forced an Ausmus fumble and made the recovery at the Klein 39. Scott scored on a 1-yard run to put the Highlanders in front 28-21 early in the fourth quarter.

Hamm's 31-yard scoring run tied the game with 7:02 left in regulation. The Highlanders threatened but couldn't get Spaulding any closer for the field-goal try with about two minutes left.

Scott said the Highlanders might have "underestimated" Klein early in the game, but that certainly wasn't the case after halftime.

"Klein was a good team, and they put up a good fight," Andritsos said. "We just outlasted them."