



The Woodlands Highlanders rumble past Cavaliers to clinch perfect season

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Published 11/04/2016



THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS – Already sitting on a comfortable 25-point halftime lead, the Woodlands Highlanders landed a knockout blow with three third-quarter touchdowns in a span of five minutes to roar past College Park 63-10 Friday night at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

The Woodlands Highlanders rolled to victory over the College Park Cavaliers 63-10 to win the War in the Woods 2016 and end district play undefeated

The victory clinched a perfect 10-0 season for The Woodlands while College Park finished a tough year with a 1-9 mark. While the Cavaliers came into the regular-season finale as heavy underdogs, they put up a good fight and played smart football to keep the game tight until late in the 2nd quarter.

“It’s been a struggle for us this year, but the kids fought and hung in there until the end,” said Cavaliers head coach Richard Carson. “There are going to be stretches in their life when they’ve only got one win, and hopefully they’ll fight through those times. That’s what I hope they take from this.”

The Highlanders put together a 57-yard touchdown drive on their first possession, using their diversified passing attack to find weaknesses in the College Park secondary. Woodlands quarterback Eric Schmid completed passes to receivers Kesean Carter, Chris Stewart and Dylan Casey, and Carter capped the drive with a 17-yard touchdown catch after a play-action left him wide open in the end zone.

Charles Gingras delivered the point-after to make it 7-0, and he and teammate Lockhart West shared placekicking honors throughout the night, going a combined 9-for-9 on PATs.

College Park, which had gone three-and-out on their first drive, responded with an impressive, clock-crunching drive that devoured nearly eight minutes and featured five third-down conversions. The drive was a statement that the Cavaliers had come to play. After 19 offensive snaps, the drive finally stalled in the red zone, but Carson Mohr made it count with a 32-yard field goal.

The Highlanders fired back quickly with a pair of touchdowns in a span 73 seconds. Schmid delivered a perfect 28-yard strike to Stewart in the back of the end zone, and then barely a minute later Carlos Ramos slashed through the right side on a 19-yard run.

Down 21-3, the Cavaliers could have buckled, but instead they bounced back with a bolt of offensive lightning. College Park quarterback Jordan Turnquest hit wide receiver Isaac West in stride on a crossing route over the middle and West was off to the races. His 60-yard touchdown catch thrilled the Cavalier fans and tightened the score to 21-10.

The Woodlands maintained their focus, however, and used their own big-play specialist, Carter, to put the game out of reach. Carter, the Player of the Game, took a handoff on the ensuing drive and used a burst of pure speed to race 57 yards down the right sideline for a touchdown. 59 seconds later the Highlander defense recovered a fumble in the end zone to make it 35-10.

"At halftime we talked about coming out and doing what we've done all year, and that's playing our brand of football," said Highlanders coach Mark Schmid. "It doesn't matter what the situation is or who we're playing, we want to play great offense and great defense."

In third quarter Stewart caught his second and third touchdowns of the night, and senior Jevon Wiley scored on a 30-yard run to guarantee this year would go down in history as a Perfect 10. Coach Schmid was able to rest his starters for the fourth quarter, keeping them fresh for next week's playoff opener at Woodforest Bank Stadium.

"We got beat by a very good football team tonight," said Carson. "I wish them well and think they're going to play a long way."

"We're still not where we want to be, and we always strive for perfection," said Schmid. "As we head into the playoffs we're going to face some very good teams, and we're going to need to be perfect sometimes."