

# THE COURIER

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

## No. 4 The Woodlands rolls past Conroe, clinches playoff berth



By Keith MacPherson  
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The Woodlands had a new look against Conroe but the results stayed the same. Despite wearing white helmets for the first time this season, No. 4 state-ranked The Woodlands played the bad guy as it took down longtime rival Conroe 48-7 in a District 12-6A contest on Friday at Moorhead Stadium.

"I told them (the helmets were) something that we've never done before," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "We will be willing to wear it again."

The Woodlands (8-0, 4-0) now holds an all-time record of 27-11-1 against the Tigers in a rivalry that dates back to 1978 when McCullough High School first opened. The Highlanders have now won nine consecutive meetings and 19 out of the previous 20 matchups dating back to 1997.

Eric Schmid led the way for the Highlanders, throwing for 154 yards on 14 of 20 passing with three touchdowns while also rushing for another.

Conroe (3-5, 0-4) had issues getting its offense going without star running back Donovan Lloyd. The junior Tiger running back, who entered the contest with more than 1,500 yards on the ground, missed the game with injury, watching from the sidelines in shorts and his No. 20 jersey.

Eric Schmid found Dylan Casey for an 8-yard touchdown pass to get the scoring going as the Highlanders took a 7-0 lead over Conroe on their first drive with 8:52 to play in the opening stanza.

Jordan Talford added to the Highlander lead by breaking a pair of tackles and eluding another on his way to an 11-yard touchdown run with 4:43 in the first quarter to put The Woodlands up 14-0. Talford finished with 37 yards with eight carries on the night.

Kesean Carter hauled in Eric Schmid's second touchdown pass of the night – a 10-yard scoring toss – as The Woodlands took a commanding 21-0 lead with 10:02 in the second quarter.

The Highlanders went up 28-0 as Carlos Ramos punched in a 3-yard touchdown run with 5:52 in the first half.

"We've got a bunch of good seniors – many of them who were up there last year and have been in the trenches," coach Schmid said. "Having that experience is huge. We can do so much more with them from a mental standpoint."

Eric Schmid eluded pressure and snuck into the end zone on an 11-yard touchdown run to go up 34-0 with 8:45 in the third quarter. Schmid padded the Highlander lead by finding Carter on a 29-yard touchdown pass – his third of the night – to make it 41-0 with 46 seconds remaining in the third quarter.

Carter ended up with four catches for 90 yards and two scores. He left late in the second quarter with what looked to be a shoulder injury but returned after halftime.

Conroe finally found the scoreboard as Colby Kizzie connected with Kelly McFarland on a 52-yard touchdown strike to make it 41-7 in favor of the Highlanders with a little more than 11 minutes left in the fourth quarter.

Kizzie ended the night with 172 yards through the air despite being sacked five times. Ameer Patten had 61 yards on 17 carries filling in for Lloyd

Connor Klapesky scored on a 5-yard touchdown run with the reserves rolling in for the Highlanders midway through the fourth quarter to cap the scoring for The Woodlands as it took a 48-7 lead. The win clinches a playoff berth for The Woodlands while the loss eliminates Conroe from playoff contention.

"This was a big game for us," Schmid said. "We likely punched some North Texas team's ticket to come to Woodforest (Stadium) in the first round of the playoffs."



## Highlanders stay perfect with dominant effort

By Jim East, WOL Sports

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CONROE, TEXAS – With a balanced offensive assault that saw five different players score the game's five first touchdowns, The Woodlands High School football team grabbed an early lead and never looked back, cruising past Conroe 48-7.

"This is a longtime rivalry and an important game, even for an old guy like me," said Woodlands head coach Marck Schmid. "We're at their stadium, and going in we knew that a win tonight would clinch a playoff spot."

The Highlanders (8-0) matched their offensive intensity with an unforgiving defensive effort that limited the host Tigers to just 31 total yards heading into the halftime locker room. As a result of their defense play, the potent Woodlands offense often had a short field to work with, and they made the most of it.

Highlander quarterback Eric Scmid threw for 219 yards and three touchdowns in just three quarters of work (the Woodlands' reserves played the fourth quarter). Two of his touchdown passes ended up in the hands of Kesean Carter, who caught four passes for a team best 91 yards.

"We always talk about playing 48 minutes, playing a solid four-quarter game," said Schmid. "They've started to do that in the last three or four weeks. Even when we're putting other kids in the game, they get in there and finish it the right way."

Woodlands rusher Carlos Ramos, the Player of the Game, had 51 yards spread evenly among catches and rushes. He ran for the final touchdown of the first half to put his team ahead by a commanding 28-0 advantage. Jordan Talford and Schmid also ran for touchdowns, and that even distribution made it impossible for Conroe to focus on any one player.

Still, that didn't stop Conroe from treating their fans to some old-fashioned, hard-hitting football in the second half. The Tigers flew to the ball and uncorked some punishing tackles in the final 24 minutes, and not once did they show signs of letting up or surrendering.

Conroe scored their lone touchdown on an impressive 71-yard drive that bridged the third and fourth quarters. The final play came on a daring fourth-and-one gamble when wideout Kelly McFarland took off on a fly pattern down the right sideline, and quarterback Colby Kizzie hit him in stride for a 48-yard score.

McFarland had a tremendous night with nine catches for 114 yards. Playing without the services of running back Donaven Lloyd, sophomore speedster Ameer Patten showed a lot of heart and carried the ball 17 times for 63 yards.