

Highlanders hold off Hightower in 2 OTs



The Woodlands wide receiver Max Ward hauls in a sliding, nine-yard touchdown catch in the back of the end zone on third and goal in double overtime.



The Woodlands High School head football coach Mark Schmid reacts to The Woodlands' 46-39 double-overtime win against Hightower.

By David Arno (Updated: 09.04.10)

SHENANDOAH — In the absence of workhorse running back Daniel Lasco, quarterback Joseph Schneider put The Woodlands on his back and carried the Highlanders to victory in double overtime over Fort Bend Hightower, 46-39 at Woodforest Bank Stadium on Friday night. It didn't come easy, though, as The Woodlands had to deal with dual-threat Hightower quarterback Bralon Addison.

A threat to tuck the ball and run every play, Addison ran for 168 yards and passed for another 157. But he fell short on the biggest run of the entire game. After trading shots the whole game and with The Woodlands (2-0) holding onto a one-point lead, the game went down to the final minutes. A 58-yard touchdown run by Schneider put The Woodlands up by 32-24 with only 1:14 left on the clock.

Two runs, a false start penalty and an incomplete pass later, it seemed as though Hightower (1-1) would be going home the loser in the Houston area's premier matchup of the night. After flushing Addison out of the pocket, the quarterback escaped numerous tackles to find Cameron Bolton, who had slipped behind the secondary. Bolton took the ball 59 yards with only 13 seconds remaining to pull Hightower within a two-point conversion of tying the game.

In keeping with his performance over the course of the game, Addison broke lose and got the tying conversion for the Hurricanes to force overtime. Making quick work of their first overtime possession, Hightower scored on its third play when John Parrham found paydirt on a 15-yard run up the middle to put pressure on The Woodlands to respond.

The Highlanders struggled to get things going in overtime, though. After only moving backward, The Woodlands was facing fourth and 14 — to score a touchdown, tie the game and force a second overtime. Schneider never lost his cool, though, and hit Jackson LaPlant for a 29-yard score, and a Ben Pruitt's extra point forced another overtime.

No fourth-down heroics were necessary for Schneider in the second overtime, as he hit Max Ward in the corner of the end zone from nine yards out to put the Highlanders up. Looking to score and tie the game to force a third overtime, Addison wasn't able to pull a rabbit out of his hat as he fell short by a yard on fourth and 11 when The Woodlands defense rose to the occasion and won the game for the Highlanders.

"(This win) says our guys want to fight to win. They have something to prove, and I think tonight they did that," The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. "We beat a good football team — coming in, Hightower won 26 or 28 consecutive regular season games. This is their first loss in over two and a half years for them in the regular season, so I think that says a lot about the job our kids did tonight."

On top of Schneider's 213 yards and four touchdowns on 18 of 32 passing, he led the Highlanders with 189 yards rushing and two touchdowns on 20 carries. "Joe had an outstanding night," Schmid said. "I don't know how many yards he ran for, or what he threw for, but it seemed like anytime we needed a play, Joe Schneider was making it on the offensive side."

Schmid said that his team's ability to hang in the game and ultimately come out victorious over such a quality opponent will give them confidence for the rest of the season. "I told the kids after the game that what I was most proud of was their tenacity and their unwillingness to give up or quit," Schmid said. "No matter what happened, they came back swinging and we got the last swing in."



The Woodlands outlasts Hightower, 46-39, in OT thriller

By **SAM KHAN JR.** Copyright 2010 Houston Chronicle

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Hightower quarterback Brandon Addison (2) tries to scramble away from the rush of The Woodlands' defender Garrett Hope in the first half.

SHENANDOAH — For the better part of four quarters and two overtime periods, The Woodlands Highlanders had their hands full with Hightower wunderkind Bralon Addison.

At times, they would stop the diminutive, yet speedy dual-threat quarterback. But every so often, the junior would make a highlight-reel worthy run or pass to keep his Hurricanes in the ballgame. And he was on his way to doing it one more time — until The Woodlands stopped him just short to secure a victory.

On a fourth-and-11 play in the second overtime of a marathon battle between area heavyweights, the Highlanders met and halted Addison a yard short of a first down to secure a 46-39 win over Hightower on Friday at Woodforest Bank Stadium. “That kid is one of the greatest athletes I’ve seen,” said The Woodlands defensive end Michael Cooper. “He had a great game, I thought we had a great game, and it’s two great teams — one of us had to win.”

In a 3-hour, 45-minute slugfest that featured four lead changes, 910 yards of offense and 87 points, it was the two quarterbacks who shined the brightest — Addison and The Woodlands quarterback Joseph Schneider.

Schneider’s night

The game became a matter of which quarterback would make more big plays and, on Friday, it was Schneider. The 6-1, 205-pound senior threw for 214 yards and four touchdowns and ran for 184 yards and two more scores for the Highlanders. “He doesn’t ever seem to get rattled,” The Woodlands coach Mark Schmid said. “He has tremendous poise ... he made big plays all night. Any time we needed a big play, Joe was going to make it, whenever they needed a big play, Addison was going to make it.”

After entering the half with his team trailing, Schneider gave the Highlanders a 25-21 third-quarter lead with a 34-yard run where he showed off some speed of his own. Later, with time running down in the fourth and The Woodlands (2-0) up by a point, a first down looked like it would secure the win. But Schneider broke through the line of scrimmage and sprinted 57 yards to give the Highlanders a 32-24 lead with 1:14 remaining.

The only problem was, it left the door open for Addison to perform another miracle. With the Hurricanes (1-1) out of timeouts, Addison led the team down the field, evading pressure twice on fourth-and-4 before finding a wide-open Cameron Bolton for a 59-yard touchdown on a busted play with just 13 seconds remaining in regulation. Addison (165 rushing yards, 167 passing yards, four total touchdowns) added the two-point conversion run to send the game to overtime.

Trading touchdowns

The teams traded touchdowns in the first overtime — a 14-yard run by Hightower running back John Parrham (18 carries, 94 yards) and a 29-yard pass from Schneider to Jackson LaPlant on 4th-and-14 to send the game to a second overtime.

The Woodlands got first possession and on third-and-goal from the 9, Schneider escaped a sack, rolled right and fired a dart to Max Ward in the back right corner of the end zone for what would prove to be the game winning score.

“There were a lot of great plays made on both sides of the ball,” Schmid said. “But the thing I’m most proud of is the resiliency and their willingness to keep fighting ... I told them ‘This is going to pay off somewhere down the line for us.’”