



HIGHLANDERS PASS FIRST ROAD TEST OF 2026, BATTLE PAST KLEIN OAK FOR WIN

The Woodlands traveled to Klein Saturday night and came away with a much-needed 41-38 win over Klein Oak to even their 2026 record at 1-1. The game started an hour later than originally scheduled due to lightning in the area. After falling behind and trailing at halftime, the Highlanders surged back in the 2nd half and held on late for the victory.

The Highlanders took the opening kickoff and marched down the field in just three plays for the game's first score. Quarterback Kade Copelin started the series with the 30 yd QB draw before hitting Bryson Bourne on a 35 yd TD strike. Klein Oak responded with a TD drive of their own, capped by a 9 yd run by Panther QB Andre Phillip.

TWHS wasted no time in recapturing the lead. Carter Cass took the ensuing kickoff 94 yards for a touchdown as the Highlanders went back ahead 14-7. It was the Highlanders' first kickoff return for a TD since Parker Stewart took one to the house in the 2024 playoff game at Cy Ranch.

The Panthers again responded with another TD of their own. Detrick Davis had a big run of over 60 yds to put Klein Oak deep in Highlander territory before Phillip found Carson Varro in the corner of the end zone for a 21 yd score.

On the first play of the 2nd quarter, the Panthers recovered a Highlander fumble for the game's first turnover. Klein Oak capitalized on the break with a Micah Rhodes 4-yd TD run. The Highlanders followed with another successful offensive drive but had to settle for a 38 yd Franco Heinze field goal.

Klein Oak responded with a field goal drive of their own, taking a 24-17 lead with under a minute left in the first half. But the Highlanders weren't done. In just three plays, highlighted by a 22 yd completion to Kaiden Stewart, The Woodlands moved into field goal position. Heinze hit from 48 yards for the FG to close out the half with the Highlanders trailing 24-20.

The Highlander defense opened the second half with a three-and-out to force the game's first punt. Copelin hit back-to-back 20 yd completions to Colton Weddel and Jason Haskins to move the Highlanders into the red zone where Bo Duke punched it on from 4 yards out. The TD gave The Woodlands a 27-24 lead.

The lead didn't last long. Seven plays later, Phillip again found Varro down the sideline for 61 yd TD as momentum shifted back to the Panthers. But the Highlanders again responded. Copelin hit Bourne for a big 24 yd completion as the Highlander offense marched back down the field. This time, Copelin hit Cass for a short 5 yd TD putting TWHS back in the lead at 34-31.

The Woodlands defense got their second stop of the game and forced a punt at the start of the fourth quarter. The offense immediately found the end zone as Kaiden Stewart took the ball on the an end-around and scampered 54 yards for a TD on the drive's first play. The score put gave The Woodlands their largest lead of the game with a 41-31 lead.

Klein Oak had no thoughts of going away. The Panthers moved the ball back into Highlander territory and on a 4th and 23, Phillip found Davis behind the defense for a 40 yd touchdown to cut the lead to just 3 points. The Klein Oak defense then recorded a three-and-out as the Highlanders were forced to punt for the first time in the game.

Set up with great field position, the Panthers were able to move the ball to the Highlander 24 yd line. After a penalty wiped out a 4th down conversion, Vincent Lewis sacked Klein Oak's Phillip to seal the victory.

The Highlanders will attempt to build off the momentum of this win as they wrap up their non-district schedule next week at Humble. The Woodlands and Humble have split 24 previous matchups but haven't faced off since 2005.