

## FOOTBALL: Oak Ridge strikes early, tops Humble

By Jon Poorman, Staff Writer Updated 11:12 pm CDT, Thursday, October 8, 2020



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Oak Ridge wide receiver Landon Lightsey (14) runs for a 39-yard touchdown as wide receiver Scott Hickey (5) celebrates during the second quarter of a non-district high school football game at Woodforest Bank Stadium. ... more

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**SHENANDOAH** — Something had to give in a battle of the unbeaten.

With pristine 2-0 records on the line, either Oak Ridge or Humble was destined to leave the confines of Woodforest Bank Stadium Thursday evening with a tally in the loss column. The War Eagles made sure it was not them.

Oak Ridge prevailed with a 28-17 non-district victory over the Wildcats and are now 3-0 for the first time since 2017, the last season the program qualified for the playoffs. But while the triumphs have been rewarding thus far, there is still plenty of season remaining.

"Our non-district schedule, it's all about improvement and growing up," Oak Ridge coach Mark Schmid said. "It's all about playing together as a team. It's all about getting kids valuable reps because when you go into district play, you want to have that experience and have the guys that have had their mettle tested a little bit. You want to feel like you've got the ball rolling in the right direction."

After cruising to consecutive 21-point victories over Channelview and Cypress Springs to begin the season, Humble had a tougher time against the War Eagles. The Wildcats found themselves in a hole early, committed a multitude of errors and were not able to recover.

"We had way too many personal fouls tonight," Humble coach Charles West said. "We were out of character and not playing Wildcat football. But those are things we can correct and get ready for next week. We're going to get them corrected."

The bright spot for Humble was the play of running back X'Zavier Sidney, who finished the game with 190 yards on 21 carries. The Wildcats were effective with the ground game throughout the night, collecting more than 250 yards, but were unable to capitalize.



"I'm not focusing on the run game, pass game — I'm focusing on the whole three phases of the game," West said. "You just can't come out and have

all the turnovers and make those crucial mistakes inside the red zone and come out with a win against a good football team."

Oak Ridge came out of the gates with ferocity, taking advantage of Humble miscues and putting 14 points on the board within the opening two minutes. The barrage began with 15-yard touchdown run to the right pylon from Jahron Jonas. That quick score was set up by an interception from defensive back Dexter Green, who returned the ball 35 yards to the Wildcats' 20.

Another Humble turnover handed the War Eagles a double-digit lead. On the ensuing possession, a high snap resulted in a scramble for the ball in the end zone. Defensive lineman Jaylon Wyatt pounced on the rock to give his team the 14-0 advantage with 10:13 on the clock.

"It was really critical to set the tone and give us some momentum early, create some excitement," Schmid said. "We were able to take advantage of some miscues on their part and get 14 right away on them. I think that kind of carried us, especially through the first half."

The Wildcats finally stopped the bleeding later in the first quarter as Logan Hay hauled in a 33-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Jeremiah Price Knott. Michael Pulido added a 21-yard field goal to pull Humble within four at 14-10.

That would be as close as the Wildcats would get, however, as Oak Ridge scored 14 unanswered points in the second quarter. Wide receiver Landon Lightsey was the culprit on both accounts as he found paydirt from 39 and 33 yards out, respectively. The first score came on a quick pass to the perimeter from Steve Smedley, and the second came on a strike down the middle from Nick Osborne.

Lightsey finished the game with five catches for 116 yards, both team highs.

"Those (plays) were huge, especially when we know they're going to be loading the box and focusing on the run," Schmid said. "(Lightsey) runs really well, has good speed, so anytime we can get the ball in his hands, it's a good thing."

Oak Ridge appeared to add another touchdown to its lead with less than a minute to play as Osborne hit Jaquale Harrison down the field for a 46-yard score. The play was waived off on a penalty, but the War Eagles still walked into the locker room with a 28-10 lead.

Oak Ridge was without star running back Alton McCaskill, who piled up 400 yards of total offense over the team's first two games. McCaskill did not play due to an ankle injury suffered last week that has not quite healed up 100 percent. Jonas performed admirably at the running back spot for the War Eagles, rushing for 105 yards on 24 carries.

"We had some new kids step up and have to fill some shoes," Schmid said. "Jonas did a great job filling in for Alton."

Oak Ridge came up with two more interceptions in the third quarter, the first by Sammy Keith and the second by Harrison. Both picks thwarted promising drives for Humble.

The Wildcats were able to cut into the lead with 40 seconds to play in the period, however, as Sidney trudged up the middle for a 20-yard score. That was all the visitors could manage as the fourth quarter went scoreless.

"Jaquale Harrison was called on for double-duty tonight as a receiver and as a DB," Schmid said. "He played more tonight than he has in two weeks. ... Jaquale grew up tonight, and we had some other kids grow up tonight, so I'm proud of them."

Oak Ridge returns to action at 7 p.m. next Thursday against Montgomery at Woodforest Bank Stadium That will be the final non-district tilt for the War Eagles as they embark on District 13-6A play Oct. 29 against Conroe.

Humble, meanwhile, wraps up its non-district schedule at 7 p.m. next Friday against Lamar Consolidated at Turner Stadium. The Wildcats face No. 16 state-ranked Atascocita for their District 21-6A opener the following week.

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