

Oak Ridge denies Willis playoff spot

Though its playoff spot in District 13-6A was already secure, Oak Ridge still played the role of spoiler Saturday.

The War Eagles beat Willis 66-45 at Woodforest Stadium. Willis needed a win by at least nine points to make the playoffs. Instead, Conroe gets the fourth and final playoff spot in 13-6A and Willis ends its season 5-5 overall, 4-4 in district.

Oak Ridge moves on to the postseason at 7-3 overall and went 6-2 in district play.

The clash of 13-6A's top offenses lived up to the billing. Oak Ridge totaled 535 yards, 390 coming on the ground. Willis compiled 467 yards, 247 through the air.

Willis turned the ball over on its first two drives as it quickly fell behind 10-0. The Wildkats were without five-star quarterback DJ Lagway, who injured his ankle during last week's loss to The Woodlands. Hutton Hoegemeyer got the start at QB1 and struggled early before playing admirably well late.

The game was tied at 45 with 11:53 left in the fourth quarter at Hoegemeyer found Jalen Mickens for a 25-yard score and Daylion Robinson ran in the two-point conversion. But the War Eagles got two crucial stops when it needed to, recovering a fumble and forcing a turnover on downs in the fourth quarter, and finished the second half scoring touchdowns on their last five offensive drives.

Running back Frankie Arthur led Oak Ridge with 239 yards and three touchdowns on 26 carries. Braylon Harrell had 59 yards and two touchdowns on 11 carries. Quarterback Steven Smedley carried the ball 14 times for 98 yards and a touchdown.

Joseph Wilson added a 51-yard interception return early in the first quarter for a score. Jacob Webb got the scoring started with a 39-yard field goal.

After a tough start, Hoegemeyer found his rhythm and almost rallied the Wildkats to a win. He completed 17 of 29 passes for 247 yards and three touchdowns to one interception. Robinson had 70 yards on 14 carries and two catches for 34 yards.

Imauree Holmes had six catches for 96 yards. Mickens had four catches for 74 yards and a touchdown.

Freshman Jermaine Bishop had a spectacular showing for Willis with a 94-yard interception return for a touchdown and a 39-yard scoring run on a QB keeper when he relieved Hoegemeyer for a drive late in the third quarter.

Devon Lovelady had 72 yards and a touchdown on 11 carries for the Wildkats.