

SPORTS

# Conroe stops long drought to Oak Ridge with 44-41 win

Marcus Gutierrez, Staff Writer

Oct. 8, 2021 Updated: Oct. 9, 2021 12:52 a.m.



3 of 33

Oak Ridge wide receiver Camden Morgan runs for a 37-yard gain during the first quarter of a District 13-6A high school football game at Buddy Moorhead Stadium, Friday, Oct. 8, 2021, in Conroe.

Jason Fochtman, Houston Chronicle / Staff photographer

Conroe coach Cedric Hardeman was emotional talking with his staff and the Tigers Friday night.

Conroe had just ended Oak Ridge's eight-game winning streak over the Tigers by defeating the War Eagles 44-41 at Buddy Moorhead Stadium on homecoming night.

Hardeman had a nice cold Powerade bath as members of the Conroe football team made their way with a cooler.

"It was big," Hardeman said on the win and snapping the streak. "That's a very good team over there and well coached too. They played hard all night just like us. For us to rebound and respond and make plays when we had to, I'm just so proud of these guys."

The win ended a three-game losing streak and started the Tigers (3-3, 1-0) out with a win for its first District 13-6A game. Oak Ridge (1-5, 0-1) lost its fifth game of the season.

The scoreboard was used very often during the game as both offenses battled back and forth throughout the night.

There was a total of 11 lead changes and two ties in the game.

Conroe quarterback Clayton Garlock was 14 of 29 for 330 yards, throwing two touchdowns and running for two touchdowns on the ground for the Tigers. Garlock also connected with seven different receivers during the game.

Hardeman reminded his team to keep their composure as adversity struck throughout the game.

"Everything that we have done since boot camp is learning how to respond," Hardeman said. "They have done that; I just haven't done a good enough job the last three games of getting them ready to win games. This is who we are. We represent a community that handles adversity and sticks together and that's what we did tonight."

Oak Ridge lit up the scoreboard and quarterback Steve Smedley was making plays all over the field.

The junior quarterback was making his first appearance back on the gridiron since Week 2 of the season.

He finished the game 21 of 28 for 295 yards and threw four touchdowns for the War Eagles.

Oak Ridge coach Mark Schmid thought his signal caller had a great game.

“I think he played really well,” Schmid said. “I told him after the game its hard to believe you haven’t taken a snap since week two. I thought he looked poised and comfortable out there. He said he was just excited to play again.”

Oak Ridge tried an onside kick, but the ball was tipped, and Marcus Scott II picked the ball in the air and returned it 64 yards for the score giving the Tigers a 37-34 lead over the War Eagles with 6:33 left in the third quarter. Scott II also had an interception in the game.

Smedley had a favorite target in Camden Morgan. Morgan finished the game with 11 catches for 162 yards and two touchdowns.

Running back Larry DeBose had 17 carries for 208 yards with two touchdowns.

Conroe’s defense made a fourth down stop in the fourth quarter Oak Ridge turned the ball over on downs.

Garlock connected with Louis Williams III for a 10-yard TD pass with 7:34 left in the game.

Oak Ridge responded when Smedley hit Jaquale Harrison for a 17-yard TD pass with 4:24 left in the game, but it wasn’t enough for a comeback.

*marcus.gutierrez@chron.com*