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Wildcat nation rejoices as team wins 1st game in two years

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Woodland's Jarvis James (22) applies a stiff-arm to a

would-be tackler Friday in the Wildcats' 42-24 win over River Ridge.

The Woodland Wildcats earned their first victory since 2013 on Friday, downing the River Ridge Knights at home, 42-24.

Following the game, Wildcats fans, players and coaches celebrated in an uproar. The win was a welcome change to all who wear the cardinal and navy.

"It feels like a huge weight is lifted off of our school and off of our program. [I'm] so happy for the kids, happy for our school and ... our community," said Woodland head coach Tony Plott.

After the first two River Ridge possessions — which produced only 30 yards of offense and saw one three-and-out — Woodland put the first points on the board with a 59-yard scramble from senior Jarvis James with 2:16 remaining in the first quarter. Senior Mitchell Taylor ran in for the 2-point conversion, putting the Wildcats ahead, 8-0.

Then, with 11:44 left in the half, junior Brandon Allen broke away from the Knights' defense to punch one in from 24 yards out, making it 14-0 in favor of Woodland.

After a late second-quarter touchdown drive by River Ridge, the Wildcats responded with 0:56 remaining in the half with a 41-yard run by quarterback Grant Robinson. The senior looked to be fully recovered after missing the Sept. 11 matchup with Sprayberry due to a minor ankle injury.

The Knights would put together a quick field goal to go into the half down 21-10 to the Wildcats, who gave up only 98 yards of offense in the opening two quarters.



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Perhaps those in the Wildcats' fan section, plagued by memories past, might have assumed the first half was a fluke. Maybe they thought that their beloved home team would inevitably repeat mishaps that had so far led to a trifecta of losses thus far in the season.

Instead, the Woodland team summoned some of the attitude of well-known ESPN anchor Lee Corso, figuratively saying to those who lacked belief, "Not so fast, my friend."

The Wildcats slammed River Ridge in the third quarter, putting up three touchdowns in the first 9 minutes. First, senior Phelan Philpot dashed to a 57-yard touchdown to make the score 28-10 with 9:50 left in the third quarter. Philpot would finish the game with well over 100 yards on the ground individually.

On the ensuing Knights possession, Taylor anticipated a pass from River Ridge senior quarterback Marcus Spears to return a 2-yard pick six, giving Woodland a 35-10 edge.

The Woodland onslaught continued as senior Jonathan Applin ran in from eight yards with 3:09 left in the third quarter, making him the sixth Wildcat to score a touchdown on the night. After the extra point by senior John Scifers, Woodland held a commanding 42-10 lead.

The Wildcats would afford the Knights two more touchdowns in the fourth quarter, but the established lead would prove insurmountable.

Perhaps most notable about the victory is that, in contrast to its first three outings of the season, Woodland looked sharp handling the ball and made few mistakes.

"We did a better job of taking care of the football," Plott noted. "That's been something we stressed all week. The kids, they responded. The kids have fought all year long. [What has] caused us our problems in the past is just being sloppy and losing our focus and, obviously, not

taking care of the football. And they did a better job tonight, and in terrible conditions.”

Plott said the Wildcats will spend the next week getting ready to face Cass Oct. 2 at Doug Cochran Stadium.

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