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Mount Paran falls against Landmark Christian

By Jack Martin MDJ Sports Correspondent
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Landmark Christian proved to be too much for Mount Paran Christian, which will close the regular season next week before turning its focus to the Class A-AAA Private state playoffs.

Special - Chrystal Moore, file

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KENNESAW — Landmark Christian spoiled Mount Paran Christian's homecoming with a 45-24 win Friday at Catherine Steele Sewell Stadium.

After the loss, Mount Paran (5-4, 3-2 Region 5A Division I) will look forward to next week's region crossover game to bolster its seeding for the Class A-AAA Private state tournament.

Mount Paran started the game with the ball and promptly drove down the field using only running plays. The drive ended with quarterback Eli Hewatt's 29-yard touchdown run.

Landmark (8-1, 3-1) responded with a field goal before a punt ended Mount Paran's second possession.

On Landmark's second drive, it opened up the passing game as quarterback Skylar Hamilton led a five-play, 70-yard drive that gave Landmark a 10-7 lead with 47 seconds left in the first quarter.

Landmark never again trailed.

Mount Paran stuck to the running game, and its first pass attempt did not come until less than 9 minutes remained in the second quarter. The first pass was intercepted, the first of two interceptions for the Eagles' offense.

Mount Paran coach Connie Arnold said injuries his team has faced hurt its performance, but the Eagles' reliance on the running game can improve as players get healthier.

“We are just starting a lot of guys because of injuries, and so they’ll get better as the harder we work,” Arnold said. “We can get through next week, and then that first round of the playoffs is a bye, so it’ll give us some extra time to fix some of that.”

Arnold said players stepping in due to injuries are getting up to game speed, and it takes time for them to adjust.

“They’re working hard and, hopefully, this will carry over until next week and into the playoffs,” Arnold said.

After the interception, Landmark drove down the field and scored on a 5-yard touchdown run by Hamilton. It was the first of two rushing touchdowns for the Landmark senior.

The War Eagles had another five-play drive, this time covering 80 yards in under a minute. It was their fourth scoring drive in as many attempts.

Mount Paran responded with a field goal before halftime. From that point on, the margin remained at least two possessions.

Hamilton accounted for 223 yards and three touchdowns by halftime, putting the game out of reach for Mount Paran.

Arnold said Hamilton was dominant for Landmark.

“He’s hard to tackle,” Arnold said. “He’s a big, strong kid. He got the better of us tonight.”

Arnold said the team will bounce back and refocus for the upcoming playoffs.

“These kids, they love each other,” he said. “They’re great teammates with each other. They’ll be ready to go.”