

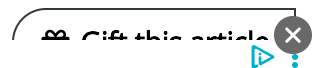
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Mount Paran tries to better playoff position

By Jack Martin MDJ Sports Correspondent
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Gavin Steele and Mount Paran's running game will try to break through Landmark's defense on Friday.
Cecil Copeland 2025, file



Mount Paran Christian hosts Landmark Christian in a game which could lead to home-field advantage and possibly a first-round bye at Catherine Steele Sewell Stadium.

The Eagles (5-3, 3-1) have won three of their last four games, including a 31-0 shutout of BEST Academy in their most recent outing.

Mount Paran got the best of Landmark last year, beating the War Eagles 28-21.

“It's going to be a big task for our kids to step up and play them,” coach Connie Arnold said. “They're very well coached by Tommy Lewis, and we don't expect anything but a dogfight.”

Landmark Christian (7-1, 2-1) is looking to get back in the win column after dropping its first game of the season, 24-19, to Whitefield Academy.

Both teams have likely secured a playoff spot, but the winner may earn home-field advantage and potentially a first-round bye.

Arnold said the implications of the game don't change the team's approach, and despite the injuries, Mount Paran is ready to play.



“Our kids have worked really hard,” Arnold said. “We’ve had to ask several of our younger kids to step in for injuries. Our kids are ready to play. They worked really hard all week. They understand how big this game is, and they’re going to attack it just like they would any other game.”

The War Eagles have allowed 20 points only twice this season, including in last week’s loss.

The Eagles will try to break 20 points with their run-heavy offense led by junior running back Gavin Steele. Steele leads the team with 601 yards and seven touchdowns.

Arnold said the team will have to be disciplined to break through against Landmark’s defense.

“Our linemen will have to stay on their blocks a little longer than they would with just because of their size, strength and speed,” Arnold said. “Just the team defense they have is going to be tough. So, we just hope we can control the ball and move it. If we can move the ball and take some time off the clock, that’ll minimize their scoring opportunities.”

Arnold said this game isn’t an indicator of Mount Paran’s season, and injuries make it difficult to gauge a team’s success.



“It's very unusual to have the amount of injuries we've had,” Arnold said. “So we're hoping to get some kids back, maybe by Friday. Our kids just love playing football. They love each other, and they're ready for any challenge you put before them.”

Landmark Christian is led by senior quarterback Skylar Hamilton. Hamilton has 624 rushing yards, 1,401 passing yards and 29 total touchdowns.

“I don't think you can stop Skylar Hamilton; you just have to try to contain him and try to minimize the opportunities by controlling the ball on offense,” Arnold said.

