



Mustang seniors Joel Cole and Jacques Holiday gather themselves on the Parkland bench after their 16-14 loss to West Charlotte last Friday night. Both Cole and Holiday are second-year players for Parkland Coach Homer Thompson (photo by James Parker).

**Prep Spotlight**

**Mustangs bow in state playoffs**

By SAM DAVIS  
Chronicle Sports Editor

CHARLOTTE -- West Charlotte scored nine second-half points to break a 7-7 halftime deadlock and defeat Parkland 16-14 last Friday night in Charlotte's Memorial Stadium.

The Mustangs, the dominant team in Forsyth County, this season, fought hard in defeat, but were unable to move into field goal range in the final seconds of the game.

Down 16-7 with only 5:05 left in the game, the Mustangs mounted a five-play, 72-yard drive to pull within 16-14 with 2:29 left. However, after its defense held West Charlotte on four downs, Parkland's last-minute drive fell short.

Despite the loss, Mustang Coach Homer Thompson said his team had a lot to be proud of.

"I had a good feeling about the game," said Thompson. "We wanted to win very badly, but someone had to lose."

"I thought the teams were pretty even," Thompson said. "But we had a couple of turnovers and they didn't have any. They were bigger up front offensively than we were defensively and that's the first time we've been up against a bigger team all season."

"They took the ball and drove it straight at us. We hadn't had anyone do that to us all season,

so we had to use a lot of stunting defenses rather than our regular read defense."

After the game, the Mustangs appeared emotionally drained, many of them having played their final high school game. Thompson, who said he's closer to this team than any in the past, said he was caught up in the emotion as well.

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-- Homer Thompson

Thompson. "We beat every team in the county this year and that's hard to do. They helped give this school a lot of pride. They hung in there together for two years. We had fun together and we cried together."

"This is the closest-knit group of guys that you will ever find. You don't have many teams that are a compatible group on and off the field. These guys will probably be together until graduation and even after that."

"After the game, I took each player and talked to him individually," Thompson said. "It

was important to do that rather than talk to them as a team."

All year, the Mustangs' senior-dominated defense had carried the team. Yet, although the defense turned in a strong performance against the Lions, the offense played perhaps its finest overall game of the season.

Leading the way was junior backup tailback Kennard Martin, who tallied the Mustangs' first touchdown on a 15-yard sweep to give Parkland an early 7-0 lead. Martin later scored the other Mustang touchdown on a 27-yard pass from reserve quarterback Tony Covington.

"Kennard's speed kept us in the game," said Thompson. "He had enough speed to get around the corner and I think it fooled them. On the touchdown run he made a super run just to stay in bounds."

Although Parkland got on the board first, West Charlotte made the first serious threat of the game. The Lions took the opening kickoff and drove to the Mustang 17-yard line. However, Parkland held them on downs.

Two possessions later, Martin put his team on the board, the score coming on the first play of the second quarter. Parkland moved 87 yards on 13 plays to go on top. Martin had several impressive runs during the march as did starting tailback, Donald Jackson.

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