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9-MILE WAR

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About this section

By STEVE LEE
Sports Reporter

Talk about two high school football programs on opposite ends of the spectrum, this year's 9-Mile War might be the biggest blow-out ever in the storied rivalry. On Nov. 5 when Zephyrhills hosts arch-rival Pasco at Bulldog Stadium, the home team will be gearing up for its seventh playoff appearance in eight years while the visiting Pirates are likely to conclude a rare winless season.

While the Pirates would like nothing more to dash the Bulldogs' bid for home playoff games following their clinching of a district title, Zephyrhills coaches, players and fans are wary of a letdown. Either way, Pasco County's oldest and fiercest rivalry that dates back to 1941 favors the home team this year.

Pasco leads the all-time series 41-21, but Zephyrhills has closed the gap in recent years. Aside from a 27-9 upset by the Pirates in 2019 (the only season the Bulldogs did not make the playoffs on their current run), Zephyrhills has five of the last six 9-Mile War games. This year marks the 63rd clash between the rivals.

The 9-Mile War, aptly named since the two east Pasco cities are separated by that distance, has included numerous family members on both sides over the years. The game has often

pitted brothers and cousins, fathers and sons, uncles and distant relatives against one another. That means there always are bragging rights at family dinner tables or other social gatherings that last for an entire year.

Some of those relationships, which sometimes have included players and coaches switching sides at various points of their careers, began long before high school. Some high school football players on both sides came up through the Pasco Athletic League playing for the Dade City Pirates or former Zephyrhills Bulldogs. Others from both cities have played for the Zephyrhills Bulldawgs, who currently compete in the Mid-Florida Football and Cheerleading Conference.

Plus, many of the current and past high school players have been teammates or opponents at three area middle schools — Stewart Pasco and Centennial.

Through the first nine games, Pasco was 0-9 and had to forfeit twice due to a low turnout of players with just 29 on the opening-day roster, and injuries to key players.

On the other hand, Zephyrhills opened the season with 39 players and has been fortunate enough to escape major injuries to top players. The Bulldogs have dominated at times and come into the 9-Mile War game with a stellar 8-1 record.

Regardless of records, the annual Pasco-Zephyrhills clash always is a must-see.



The oldest and fiercest rivalry in Pasco County pits the Pasco Pirates against the Zephyrhills Bulldogs. This year's version of the 9-Mile War marks the 63rd clash between longtime arch-rivals Pasco and Zephyrhills. Playoff-bound Zephyrhills hosts the Nov. 5 matchup at Bulldog Stadium. The county's oldest rivalry dates back to 1941. Sometimes the series skipped a few years and twice — 1993 and 1994 — the teams squared off in home-and-away games during the same season.

Overall Record: Pasco leads the all-time series 41-21.

Last season: Zephyrhills won 21-0 at W.F. Edwards Stadium in Dade City. Districts: Pasco competes in Class 6A, District 5. Zephyrhills is aligned in Class 5A, District 9.

Coaches: Pasco's Jason Stokes, third season; Zephyrhills' Nick Carroll, sixth season.

YEAR-BY-YEAR

1941 Pasco	6-0	1992 Pasco	48-6
1944 Pasco	37-0	1993 Pasco	40-21
1945 Pasco	19-0	1993 Zephyrhills	9-7
1946 Pasco	54-0	1994 Pasco	27-14
1947 Pasco	34-0	1994 Pasco	46-7
1948 Pasco	33-6	1995 Zephyrhills	23-20
1949 Pasco	21-7	1996 Pasco	24-21
1954 Pasco	54-18	1997 Zephyrhills	33-0
1955 Pasco	41-14	1998 Pasco	13-8
1969 Pasco	7-3	1999 Pasco	16-10
1970 Pasco	19-6	2000 Pasco	10-7
1971 Zephyrhills	42-14	2001 Zephyrhills	34-27
1972 Pasco	35-0	2002 Zephyrhills	26-8
1973 Pasco	49-0	2003 Pasco	18-13
1974 Pasco	6-0	2004 Pasco	40-7
1975 Zephyrhills	7-6	2005 Zephyrhills	31-6
1976 Pasco	34-0	2006 Zephyrhills	23-14
1977 Pasco	50-22	2007 Zephyrhills	14-7
1978 Zephyrhills	48-0	2008 Pasco	24-0
1979 Pasco	27-7	2009 Pasco	48-7
1980 Pasco	21-0	2010 Pasco	50-7
1981 Pasco	26-20	2011 Pasco	45-0
1982 Zephyrhills	19-18	2012 Pasco	56-17
1983 Pasco	10-7	2013 Pasco	24-16
1984 Pasco	19-0	2014 Pasco	35-34
1985 Pasco	37-7	2015 Zephyrhills	50-16
1986 Zephyrhills	35-14	2016 Zephyrhills	46-0
1987 Zephyrhills	20-3	2017 Zephyrhills	42-13
1988 Zephyrhills	13-7	2018 Zephyrhills	49-0
1989 Zephyrhills	36-6	2019 Pasco	27-9
1990 Zephyrhills	19-7	2020 Zephyrhills	21-0
1991 Pasco	35-7		

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Calendar of Events on Facebook@ZephyrhillsEagles#3752

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2021 ZEPHYRHILLS BULLDOGS

Zephyrhills and winless Pasco appear to be miles apart with this year's 9-Mile War likely to rank among the most lopsided games

By STEVE LEE
Sports Reporter

To call this year's high school football matchup between longtime rivals Zephyrhills and Pasco is a bit of a misnomer. More like a blowout, judging by the Bulldogs' 8-1 record compared to 0-9 for the Pirates, who last went winless in 1942.

In what just might turn out to be the most lopsided game in the storied history between arch-rivals separated by nine miles will take place this Friday at Bulldog Stadium. Kickoff before an expected full house is at 7:30 p.m.

Players, coaches and families have been linked to Pasco County's oldest and fiercest rivalry that began in 1941. While Pasco holds the career lead at 41-21, Zephyrhills has cut into that margin by winning five of the past six meetings. Before that, however, the Pirates reeled off seven consecutive wins in the series.

One coach who has been on both sides of the fence is current Zephyrhills assistant Tom McHugh, who before that was Pasco's head coach. McHugh, who also has been a defensive coordinator at Wesley Chapel is Pasco's all-time winningest coach with an 86-50 record from 2007-2018.

In order not to overlook their opponent, the Bulldogs must approach Friday night like any other game and not think they can just step on Tom Fisher Field (named after the winningest coach in school history) and come away with a victory.

"I think you have to approach it the same way," McHugh said. "That's why they call it a game."

Familiarity rings true on both sides with some players having donned the uniforms of both teams while a few coaches have stood on the sidelines for each squad as well. Not to mention brothers and cousins who have gone head-to-head against one another.

"I always say they've played together their whole lives, so they know each other," said McHugh, alluding to the fact that some players have been teammates or opponents in youth football and at the middle school

level. "It always gets your blood up. They'll talk about (the rivalry games) for years."

Zephyrhills coach Nick Carroll concurred, saying, "All the records and who's favored and what not doesn't really matter. I don't think our kids will be complacent because they know what's on the line for us."

Carroll, who as a former Zephyrhills player never lost to Pasco in the rivalry and has won four of five games in the series as a coach, always knows when the 9-Mile War will be played.

"It's like anything else in a rivalry," he said. "You have that one circled on the calendar because you know it's going to be a great game. No matter what the records are it's important. It's bragging rights for another year. It's the crowd and the brotherhood. Everyone's there."

Earlier this season, due in part to Pasco's low roster turnout and a slew of injuries that resulted in two forfeits, there was some talk on social media about the 9-Mile War not being played this year. People in charge on both sides, however, denied that and vowed to keep the series intact.

Pasco's Dawn Wetherby, that school's athletic director and cheerleading coach, is a relative newcomer to the rivalry. Nonetheless, she is glad cooler heads prevailed on the matter of this year's game.

"The historical aspect of the Zephyrhills-Pasco game is like no other I have ever personally experienced," she said. "My first 9-Mile War game was an incredible experience, seeing all the fans in the stadium where some were wearing split shirts to support their family history of attending both schools. The support of the two communities reminded me of my high school Friday night lights."

While anything could happen this Friday night at Bulldog Stadium, the visiting Pirates are the ones likely not to be celebrating when the final whistle blows to end the game. That would leave Zephyrhills another step closer to narrowing Pasco's all-time lead.

2021 ZEPHYRHILLS BULLDOGS



varsity schedule

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:30 p.m.

Last season: 9-3

District: Class 5A, District 9

Coach Nick Carroll, sixth season.

Assistants:

Raleigh Allen
Matt Jackson
Pat Fortunato
Tom McHugh

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE
Aug. 27	at Kathleen	W 16-12
Sept. 3	HERNANDO	W 43-2
Sept. 10	at Fivay	W 42-0
Sept. 17	at Wesley Chapel	W 34-9
Oct. 1	WEEKI WACHEE	W 48-0
Oct. 8	WIREGRASS RANCH	L 40-7
Oct. 15	at Cypress Creek	W 44-3
Oct. 22	at Nature Coast Tech	W 35-0
Oct. 29	HUDSON	W 49-20
Nov. 5	PASCO	

JV

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:00 p.m.

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE
Aug. 26	at Wesley Chapel	W 34-7
Sept. 2	ANCLOTE	W 14-6
Sept. 16	at Pasco	W 55-0
Sept. 23	WIREGRASS RANCH	W 17-14
Sept. 30	at Land O'Lakes	L 28-27
Oct. 7	SUNLAKE	W 14-0
Oct. 14	RIVER RIDGE	W 35-17
Oct. 21	at Cypress Creek	W 20-0

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2021 ZEPHYRHILLS BULLDOGS

varsity roster



No.	Player	Position	Year
1	TJ Jackson	QB	12
2	Ben Raines	WR, S	11
3	Jaylin Thomas	RB, CB	12
5	Maddox Rivera	WB, S	11
6	Tymar Mckever	WR, FS	12
7	Jaxson Rivera	QB, K	12
8	Christian Clemens	K	11
8	Raleigh Allen	WR, QB	12
9	Jakobe Campbell		10
10	Theotis Smith	MLB, TE	12
11	Dalton King	WR, C	12
12	Rodney Smith	MLB, TB	10
13	Maquire Neal	DE, SB	12
14	Nick Sheldon	RB, SS	12
16	Willie Queen	TB	12
19	Xavier Garraway	WR	12
20	Marcell Tucker	CB, WR	11
21	Isiah Porter	CB	11
22	Lawrence Graham	LB, TE	11
26	Gabe Mathis	WR, CB	11

No.	Player	Position	Year
27	Levi Smith	LB, C	11
28	Teddy Sands	WR	10
28	Rashawn Searight		11
30	Donovan Couch	OLB	11
33	Davion Bartley		12
35	Vikai Dexter	DE, TE	10
42	Jeremiah Bland		11
45	Tynan Lacure		11
50	Blake Yearby	C, MLB	11
51	Nick Patrias	C, DL	12
61	Xavier Salgado	G	11
62	Logan Lagrone		10
64	Gabe Coveny	T, DT	11
66	Kamil Mehrab	T, DE	12
72	Christian Velasquez		10
75	Damon McMillian	G	10
76	Annaleese Thomas	T	12
77	Caleb Durham		11
80	Izaha Kyle		11

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JV
BULLDOGS



2021 ZEPHYRHILLS BULLDOGS

JV
roster



No.	Player	Year	No.	Player	Year	No.	Player	Year
1	Santana Johnson	10	19	Tyler Hitchner	10	57	Orion Wiggerton	9
2	Teddy Sands	10	20	Kaden Tanner	10	60	Vikai Dexter	10
4	Jacavien McGovern	10	21	Colin Rood	10	61	Ramy Eltoukhy	9
5	Rodney Smith	10	22	Ronald Juene	10	62	Brody Switzer	9
6	Malachi Woodard	9	25	Thomas Glascoe	10	64	David Llanes	9
7	Jaylin Jackson	10	30	Ryley Brinker	9	65	Jordan McDaniel	10
8	Fred Maxner	10	31	Nyayvien Jackson	9	70	Jared Apple	9
10	Jonnie Jones	10	33	Jackson Dunn	10	71	Brandon Tucker	9
11	Jayden Sanchez	9	35	Jamaricus Cherington	9	74	Kaiden Worrell	9
12	Tristan Lennon	9	44	Robert Williams	9	75	Juliem Toribio-Castillo	10
13	Nathan Rios-Rivera	10	50	Matthew Johnson	9	77	Andre Ball	10
14	Jakhari Redfield	9	51	Samaryn Black	9	80	Yannco Lopez	9
15	Malik Dillard	9	53	Hyaden Little	9		Logan Lagrone	10
16	Kacyn Hall	9	55	Jonathan Alexander	9		Camron Bill	10
18	Matthew Thompson	9	56	Giovanni Montes Deoca	9			

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Zephyrhills Bulldog varsity cheer team



Pasco Pirates junior varsity cheer team



Zephyrhills Bulldog junior varsity cheer team



Pasco varsity cheer team

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Below: In Pasco's 2014 win, Zephyrhills wide receiver Jackie Tucker (4) hauled in the pass for the game-tying touchdown with 25 seconds left.



Left: Quarterback TJ Jackson stepped up after running back Zyre Roundtree was sidelined, but critical turnovers doomed the Bulldogs' comeback hopes in 2019 as their four-year winning streak in the rivalry came to a halt.

Below: Zephyrhills running back Myles Carter turns the corner and gets past a Pasco defensive player en route to a big gain down the right sideline in the 2016 game. Carter scored the game's first touchdown on a 10-yard run.

Right: In the 2013 game, Pasco's Jaquan Clower (4) was brought down by Zephyrhills' Arttonyo Lee.



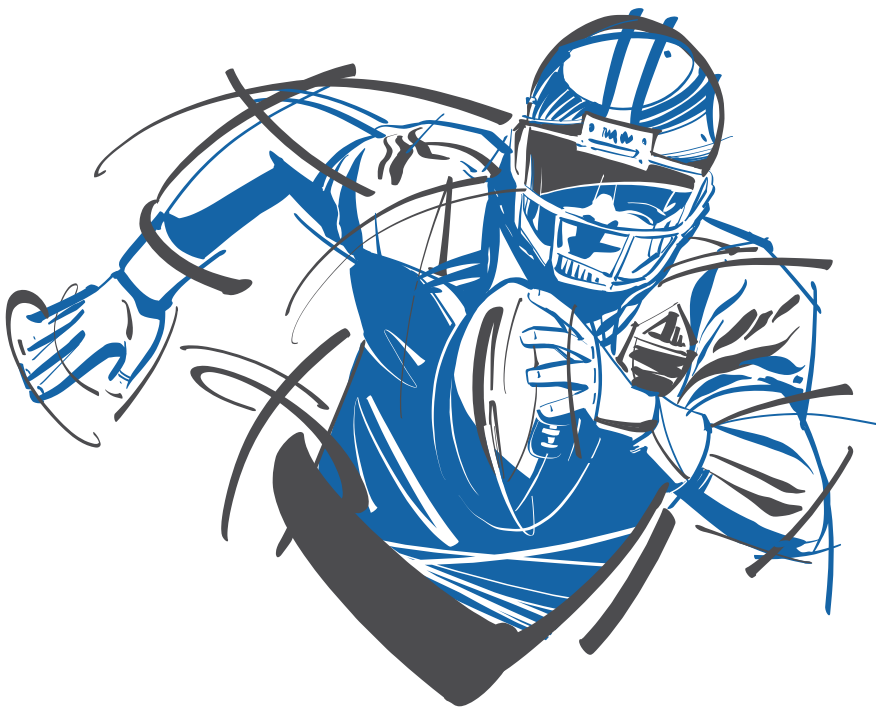
Below: The Bulldogs set records in the 2018 9-Mile War win. They celebrated in the end zone after their decisive 49-0 victory over Pasco.



Above: Zephyrhills' Tre'Pavis Mobley shakes off a Pasco defender en route to a big gain in the 2017 game.

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2021 PASCO PIRATES

9-Mile War renews in lopsided scenario

The age-old rivalry has levelled out in recent years but faces a tale of two completely different teams in 2021

By ANDY WARRENER
Sports Reporter

Typically, the 9-Mile War is a game where you can throw the records and stats out of the window. The crosstown rivals get the best shots from each other and the contests are usually hotly-contested. That's not going to be the case on Nov. 5. The Pirates caught the Bulldogs flat-footed in 2019 with a 27-9 win; head coach Jason Stokes's first year. The Bulldogs avenged the defeat last year on Pasco's home turf 21-0.

In this year's 63rd installment of the rivalry game, the contest is going to be even more lopsided in favor of the Bulldogs. The Pirates are a team that is in total collapse. Not only have they not won a game in 2021, they have scored just six points total on the season. This does not bode well as they face a Zephyrhills team that has pitched back-to-back defensive shutouts against their top district competition in Nature Coast Tech and Hudson, respectively. The Bulldogs are steam-rolling and the Pirates are reeling. It could be disastrous for the Pirates.

The quarterback position is arguably the most important position on the field and the Pirates have not been able to find that guy this year at all. Sophomore Jayvion Johnson got thrust into the role at the beginning of the season but has struggled to find his footing. He's been plagued by injury and has thrown for just 84 total yards on the season, with two interceptions. The Pirates are decidedly and predictably a one-dimensional offense.

That's bad news against a Bulldog defense that just held hulking Nature Coast running back Christian Cromer to 50 yards rushing and then followed that up by stunning 1,900-yard Hudson passer Hunter Young with a shutout.

The Bulldog defense will be bearing

down on the Pirate run game and the Pirates don't have anywhere else to go. They'll face eight, nine, maybe 10 defenders in the box. It's going to be tough sledding to say the least.

Meanwhile, the Bulldog offense is hitting on all cylinders. Quarterback Jaxson Rivera is dealing the ball around very well and the run game is clicking. Rivera also helps control field position by taking some punts and all kickoffs and booting most of them in the end zone for touchbacks.

It's going to be difficult for the Pirates to key in on any one player. While Jaylin Thomas has already racked up more than 1,000 yards rushing and 10 touchdowns, Willie Queen and TJ Jackson are threats in the ground game and Jackson even slots in as a wildcat quarterback. The Bulldogs can give you a lot of different looks on offense. Contrast that against Pasco's porous defense that's allowed lopsided wins in every game that was not a forfeit.

The only thing the Pirates have going in their favor is the albeit unlikely scenario that the Bulldogs will be looking ahead to their playoff game the following week. The Bulldogs clinched the Class 5A District 9 title with the Nature Coast win and cemented it with the 36-0 drubbing of Hudson. It's likened to an NFL scenario where a team has clinched their playoff spot and has nothing to play for in that last regular-season game. While the struggling team could salvage their entire season with an upset of a stout opponent. The NFL team might play much of their second string and perhaps sleep on their opponent. That scenario however, is highly unlikely on Nov. 5. This is the 9-Mile War. There's bragging rights on the line.

There was the whole "love bug" thing that started in 2019, the Pirates describing their win as wiping love bugs off their windshield only to have Zephyrhills players bring jugs of orange love bug repellent to their 2020 win at Pasco.

It's a storied rivalry that the Bulldogs still trail 41-21, all time. There's just no way that head coach Nick Carroll, a Zephyrhills alumni, is going to let his team take their foot off the gas. You're going to see the first-team offense and defense, at least as long as the game is competitive. If the game gets out of hand, Carroll might start reaching for the reserves.

It's going to be a long night for the Pirates. The one saving grace is going to be the running clock. It could be implemented as early as the first half. Prediction? Zephyrhills 41 Pasco 0.

2021 PASCO PIRATES



varsity schedule

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:30 p.m.

Last season: 6-6.
District: Class 6A, District 5.
Coach Jason Stokes, third season.
Assistants: Rick Gavin, Allyn Williamson, Anthony Byerly

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE
Sept. 3	NATURE COAST TECH	L 42-0
Sept. 10	at Hernando	L 35-0
Sept. 17	SPRINGSTEAD	L 24-0
Sept. 24	at Zephyrhills Christian Academy	L 55-0
Oct. 1	at Vanguard	FFL 2-0
Oct. 8	at Lake Gibson	FFL 1-0
Oct. 15	at Belleview	L 58-6
Oct. 22	LAND O'LAKES	L 36-0
Oct. 29	LECANTO	L 37-0
Nov. 5	at Zephyrhills	

JV

Home games in CAPS. Start time is 7:00 p.m.

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE
Sept. 2	at Wesley Chapel	FFL 2-0
Sept. 8	CYPRESS CREEK	L 29-0
Sept. 16	ZEPHYRHILLS	L 55-0
Sept. 23	SUNLAKE	L 37-8
Oct. 7	at Wiregrass Ranch	L 50-9
Oct. 14	at Land O'Lakes	L (FF)
Oct. 21	at Hudson	L 2-0

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varsity
PIRATES



2021 PASCO PIRATES

varsity roster



No.	Player	Position	Year	No.	Player	Position	Year
1	Enrique Matos	ATH, ATH	11	33	Gavin Alexander	DE, FB	10
3	Angel Miles		10	36	Tyreese Grose	DT, FB	10
5	Eldrick Williams	RB	10	39	Ethan Ayo	ILB, RB	12
6	EJ Redfield	DB, OLB, RB	12	44	Javon Jeune	OLB, DE	12
7	Bradly Kenner	TE, DE	12	50	Cody Juarez		11
8	Elijah Chilbert	WR	12	52	Cassidy Grubbs	DT	11
9	Omarion Harrison	WR, FS	12	55	Allen Clark		10
10	Nicolas Torres	WR, DB	10	58	Chris Jones	DL, OL	11
11	Jayvion Johnson	QB	10	64	Cody Tadlock	G, DT	12
13	Raphael Hernandez		12	65	Zachary Gude		11
15	Anthony Cozzolino	LB, TE	10	66	Austin Beach	OC	10
15	Johndreis Grant	FS, SS	11	67	Anthony Pratt	DT, OL	11
21	Bruno Ingalls	LB, FB	11	72	Bradon Jones	OL, DL	11
23	Jordan Gibbs	DE, OLB, LS	12	74	Corbin Smith	G, DT	12
24	Ethan Humphries	LB	11				

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2021 PASCO PIRATES

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roster



No.	Player	Position	Year	No.	Player	Position	Year
1	EJ Williams	RB, CB	10	32	Shelby Gibbs	C, NG, OG	10
2	Luis Stanley	DE, TE	9	34	Desmick Davis	DE	10
3	Gavin Harrelson	QB	9	40	Brandon Temple	WR	9
4	Migueli Picciurro	WR, CB	9	56	Kiahezeh Russel	OT, NG	9
5	Sidney Allen	QB	10	57	Logan Fernandez	DT	10
7	Riley Sigler	LB	9	63	Juan Torres	OG	9
8	Hayden Warnock	WR, S	9	83	Carlo Picciurro	WR, CB	9
9	JJ Johnson	QB	10				
10	Neveah Tedeman	S	9				
19	Javin Solomon	CB	9				
21	Bruno Ingalls	K	10				
23	Tanarion Sims	P, CB	9				
24	Vincent Irizarry	LB	9				

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Left: Zephyrhills running back Jaylin Thomas cuts upfield for a big gain in a 49-20 homecoming win over Hudson.



Right: Willie Queen, who came in to spell Thomas at running back, runs around the right side for a key first down in a first-half scoring drive.

STEVE LEE

► **ZHS FOOTBALL:** From Page 1A

huddle in the south end zone. Carroll also was quick to credit many coaches he has worked with along the way. That includes former Pasco coaches and current Zephyrhills assistants Tom McHugh, Pat Fortunato and Matt Jackson, as well as junior varsity coach Raleigh Allen.

"Hats off to them," Carroll said.

Aside from posting a perfect 5-0 district record, the Bulldogs improved to 8-1 overall — their lone loss coming against Wiregrass Ranch, a Class 7A team — with a third straight win. It also gave them six victories this season by a running clock, which comes into play when a team gets ahead by 35 points or more.

Zephyrhills wasted little time getting on the scoreboard, capitalizing on a turnover for a touchdown. That marked the sixth time the defense has a scoring touchdown this season. Nick Sheldon intercepted Hudson quarterback Hunter Young, returned the football 28 yards and fumbled before teammate Theotis Smith scooped it up and fell into the end zone.

Hudson came right back as Young connected with A.J. McFarlane on a 62-yard touchdown pass, but a running attempt for a two-point conversion was stuffed by the Zephyrhills defense and the home team maintained a slim 7-6 lead.

The Bulldogs blew the game open with 35 points in the second quarter. Quarterback Jackson Rivera plunged into the end zone from a

yard out and later three touchdown passes of 32 and 52 yards to Lawrence Graham and Sheldon, respectively.

Hudson (5-4) added another score in the second quarter when Logan Shawell ran into the end zone from 13 yards out.

The teams traded touchdowns in the second half. Zephyrhills took a 49-12 lead on Willie Queen's 3-yard run in the third quarter and Young hooked up with McFarlane for a 3-yard pass in the fourth and final stanza.

For Zephyrhills, Rivera finished with 101 passing yards with the two touchdowns and Jaylin Thomas rushed for a game-high 176 yards. The senior running back has surpassed 100 rushing yards in eight games this season.

Hudson had some impressive numbers as well with Young passing for 299 yards to go with a pair of touchdowns and an interception. His primary targets were McFarlane, who had 149 receiving yards and two touchdowns, and Ladamien Starks, who had 122 receiving yards.

While homecoming night was memorable, it was not the last home game of the season. Zephyrhills hosts Pasco in the 9-Mile War and then a playoff game in the first round. The Pirates, who are winless in what has turned out to be one of their worst seasons, clearly are the underdogs this year.

"Now we've got the 9-Mile War and our record is 0-0," Carroll said, in an effort to ensure his team does not overlook Pasco.

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Above: Wade Thomas, executive director of the Thomas Promise Foundation, and his family were honored during a pregame ceremony at midfield.



Above right: Homecoming court members are L.J. Graham and Alexis Martin.



STEVE LEE

Above: Zephyrhills players warm up before last Friday night's homecoming win over Hudson at Bulldog Stadium.



Left: Kaylin Miller is shown with Kenneth McCullough..



Above: Emmalise Feliciano, who designed her dress, is shown with Theotis Smith.



Above: MaKenna Campbell and Calvin Scott.



Above: Joining Blake Yearby is Lana Pattituce.



Above: Brooke Baldus is paired with Stanley Britt.

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