

## Lamar, HISD blows past North Shore in Regional Final

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine

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It took more than a decade for another HISD school to represent the Greater Houston area in the regional finals. And the last time a Houston ISD football team won a Class 5A regional final they had a legendary quarterback and a high-octane offense to pave the way.

The opponent was the same, and so was the coach, but the players were different, but that didn't matter as the Lamar Redskins ended an 11-year drought by defeating the North Shore Mustangs 28-7 in front of a sold out crowd at Pasadena Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The Redskins, 14-0 claimed the Class 5A Division I Region III title and advanced to the state semifinals where they will meet San Antonio O'Connor at 3:00 p.m. Saturday at Austin ISD's Burger Stadium on Saturday, December 15th.

Lamar used a strong defensive performance to go along with a superb offensive showing by junior quarterback Darrell Colbert. Colbert provided 243 of Lamar's 329 all-purpose yards in the game, passing for two touchdowns and rushing for another. He hit Shelby Walker and Daijon Druhet on an 29 and 81 yard scoring pass and he added a 42-yard run with 7:43 left in the fourth quarter.

The game was up for grabs as Lamar held a 7-0 halftime lead. But midway in the third quarter the Redskins added two more scores to give them a 21-0 lead.

North Shore (12-2), didn't score any points until the 4:44 mark of the fourth period, ending its season with a chance to host the state semi-final game at their own stadium with a win.

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In 2001, Vince Young led the Madison Marlins to a 61-58 victory over North Shore in a 5A Regional Championship game. That game produced over 60,000 fans in the Houston Astrodome. That was Houston ISD's last regional title at the highest classification. Since then, the school district has been the topic of plenty jokes.

"Everybody loves to bash HISD," Lamar head coach Tom Nolen said. "I've been in it for 30-some years now. Great things are going on in HISD. Great things in the classroom, everywhere. This is just another celebration of it."

Lamar provided a fourth-quarter exclamation point when defensive lineman Zelt Minor sacked North Shore's Micah Thomas on back-to-back plays. The Mustangs were forced to punt, and five plays later Colbert ran for a 42-yard touchdown to remove all doubt.

"Defense has carried us all year," Coach Nolen said. "North Shore has a lot of speed, and they're well-coached. It's a great program. Any time you can beat a program like that it's a feather in your cap."

Now the Redskins are one step closer to their goal of winning a state title and making another road trip up 45-North to Arlington, Texas.

"We don't really care about everybody else," Lamar quarterback Darrell Colbert said. "We're trying to put on a show for HISD. Everybody said we wouldn't make it out of Houston. We are out of Houston on our way to Austin. We're trying to get to Dallas."

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