

# Lamar opens District 8-6A play with statement victory over Martin

BY CODY THORN

Lamar football has not had a lot of luck against the Martin Warriors, a fellow Arlington ISD program.

Dating back to 2004, Martin had won 16 of the 21 meetings. During the past 12 meetings, the Warriors had won 11.

On Thursday night at Choctaw Stadium in the District 8-6A opener for both squads, the Vikings flipped the script. Lamar picked up its first win in the series since 2018 with a dominating 40-21 victory.

Lamar scored twice in the first quarter and built a 26-7 lead at halftime to improve to 2-2 overall, which is halfway to last year's win total.

A year ago in this game, Lamar got hammered 55-3.

"It's been a minute," Lamar coach Brian Skinner said of the win against Martin. "So it feels really good. We are excited, but this isn't the highlight for our kids. That is what I want them to understand. It is one (game) and it's on to the next."

Lamar's two first quarter scores came on the ground.

Running back Tayrone Thomas scored on a 25-yard score at the 7:50 mark. The



Arlington Lamar running back Tayrone Thomas celebrates his first-quarter touchdown run against Arlington Martin in a UIL football Class 6A game at Choctaw Stadium in Arlington on Thursday.

next drive ended with a 4-yard run by junior Braylon Williams. The standout linebacker, ranked No. 21 in the country by 247Sports, has more than 40 Division I offers to play at the next level.

"He's been begging me since his freshman year, well, actually, he's been begging since his eighth-grade year," Skinner said of the linebacker/running back. "He's like, 'Coach, you know I can play running back.' So, we had to let him show it a little bit."

Martin (1-3) had a chance to

trim the deficit in half on the next drive. However, the Warriors fumbled at the 6-yard line with 1:28 left.

That turnover turned into points when junior Jayden Shaw threw a short out route to junior Xian Johnson, who did the rest for an 86-yard score.

That came 12 seconds into the second quarter and helped the Vikings take a commanding 20-0 lead.

Martin got on the board on a 15-yard run by sophomore quarterback Chase Devoll with a little more than 10 minutes in



Arlington Martin's Kevin Grant (2) and Julian DeLeon (29) combine to tackle Arlington Lamar running back Tayrone Thomas in the first quarter of a game at Choctaw Stadium in Arlington on Thursday.

the second.

The Warriors had a chance to cut into the lead again, but another inopportune turnover hurt them.

Javian Jones-Priest had a 44-yard run on the first play of the Warriors' next drive. A penalty moved the ball to the Martin 5-yard line.

The first play after the penalty, the Warriors ran the ball but fumbled it. Johnson picked it up and ran it back to the 25-yard line, but he also fumbled it.

Mareco Harris picked it up for Lamar to retain possession.

A penalty pushed the Vikings back to the 11-yard line.

The Vikings would drive 89 yards and conclude the drive with a touchdown. Williams scored his second TD with 1:51 left in the first.

That gave Lamar a 26-7 lead

at the break with 13 points coming off Martin's turnovers.

"We play live every day at practice," Thompson said. "Our motto is all gas, no breaks."

Lamar added two scores in the fourth, while Martin had one score in each of the final two quarters.

Jones-Priest blocked a field goal attempt by Lamar and the Warriors marched down and scored with 4:08 left in the third. Wide receiver Malik Mason got a handoff on a trick play and threw a 5-yard touchdown to running back Trinatvious Hayes.

Kevin Grant hauled in an interception at the 2-yard line late in the third to give Martin the ball with a chance to pull the 26-14 deficit down to a possession.

The Vikings' defense forced a punt and then padded its lead

early in the fourth. A 38-yard run by Thomas set up an 18-yard scoring run by Shaw.

With 3:24 to play, Thomas scored on a 17-yard run to make it 40-14, with 20 points off turnovers. That turnover was courtesy of Thompson, who recovered a fumble in the Vikings' territory.

"He's the best player on the field," Skinner said.

The scoring ended with a 28-yard touchdown pass by Martin's Devoll to Chancellor Tealer with 1:54 to play.

In four of the previous five wins against Martin, the Vikings had scored at least 40 points: 42-10 in 2004, 41-34 in 2005, 44-36 in 2013 and 58-5 in 2018.

"We just got better," Thompson said. "We took the summer and put in the works and our coaches; we hired some new coaches."