



### By LaDonna Swedberg

*Sports Writer*

The Wallace and Medicine Valley game lived up to all the hype with the two teams battling down to the final buzzer. It proved to be a game of ups and downs with momentum changes and both teams leaving it all on the field.

The Wildcats got the first break when the Raiders fumbled the ball on the return of the opening kickoff. Wallace took possession of the ball on Medicine Valley's 38-yard line and after getting one first down, they were facing a fourth and three at the 23-yard line. John Marquardt hit Andrew Gardner in the middle of the field for a touch down and the first score of the game. The two-point conversion was unsuccessful so the Wallace had the early 6 - 0 lead.

The Raiders were quick to respond. Following a good kickoff return, they started their drive on the Wallace 19-yard line. A pass play put them down to the seven yard line but they didn't score until they were facing a fourth and two. Medicine Valley was unable to complete their two-point conversion as well so the scoreboard read 6 - 6 with 6:23 remaining in the first quarter.

Wallace looked as if they would come right back with a score after Landon Swedberg returned the kickoff 58 yards to the Raider 18-yard line. The Wildcats made it down to the five yard line where they stalled and turned it over on downs.

The Raiders were able to get a first down out to their 14-yardline but a bad snap over the quarterback's head and the quick Wallace defense gave the Wildcats two points as a result of the safety.

Wallace got the ball back with great field position following a very short free kick by Medicine Valley. The Wildcats took advantage of the short field and scored on the second play when Swedberg went around the outside of the defenders and ran for a 20 yard touch down. Andrew Gardner was able to tack on the extra two points to give the Wildcats a 16 - 6 lead.

The defenses took over on the next two possessions and each team was forced to punt as the game had progressed into the second quarter. The Raiders were the first to strike. Following the Wallace punt, they successfully completed a pass play for a touchdown and added the two-point conversion to cut the Wallace lead to 16 - 14.

The Wildcats came charging right back. Marquardt once again found Gardner for a successful 40 yard pass play down to the MV eight-yard line. The Wallace fans had to wait until the Wildcats had a fourth and goal before they could see six points added to the scoreboard. Marquardt found Swedberg in the end zone for the touchdown. The PAT was unsuccessful so with 5:37 remaining the half, Wallace had a 22 - 14 lead.

The next three possessions belonged to the defenses. The Raiders were forced to punt after a three-and-out and then Wallace fumbled the ball away on their attempt on offense.

The Wildcat defense again stopped MV but this time Bi Gatobu got back to block the punt. Nearly every Wildcat attempted to recover the ball but it was Andrew Gardner that finally got on top the ball in the end zone for the score. Swedberg was able to cross the goal line for the extra two points and a 30 - 14 lead.

Wallace was really looking to go in at halftime with the momentum but the Raiders had other ideas. A long pass on their first play had MV in the red zone. The Wildcat defense kept them out the endzone four consecutive plays but with only 23 seconds on the clock, the Raiders were able to complete a pass for the touchdown. The two-point conversion was unsuccessful so the halftime score was 30 - 20.

The Wildcat offense was the first on the field in the second half but they didn't get off to a good start. Medicine Valley came up with an interception and three plays later they turned it into six points. The Raiders tacked on the two-point conversion and the Wildcats held on to a slim 30 - 28 lead.

Wallace knew what they needed to do and they went right to work to get the job done. They started the drive on their 36-yard line and after good runs from Marquardt and Josh May, Swedberg went the final 27 yards for the Wildcat touch down. The PAT was unsuccessful so with 6:23 left in the third quarter Wallace increased their lead to 36 - 28.

The Raiders would not go away. Once again they responded to the Wildcats score. With 2:57 remaining in the third quarter, they again pulled the score within two points of the Wallace by scoring a touchdown but coming up short on the PAT.

Wallace was moving down the field as the quarter was coming to an end but with less than a minute on the clock they fumbled the ball and MV recovered at their own 37-yard line.

The Raiders took advantage of the turnover and moved the ball down the field to put six more points on the board and take their first lead of the game. With 10:32 left to play in the game, Wallace was now trailing 36-42.

Medicine Valley had taken the momentum and quieted the Wallace sidelines and, on the Wildcats next possession, the Raiders came up with another interception.

The Big Blue may have been down, but they were not out, their defense stepped up big and stopped the Raiders on a fourth down when they were at the four-yard line, knocking at the door to put the game away.

Wallace pretty much had the length of the field to go for to tie the game but they were up to the challenge. It looked like they were in trouble with a third and 21 at their own 10-yard line but Tanner Clough made an amazing catch near mid-field to keep the drive alive.

Little by little, the Cats moved the ball and ate time off the clock. It came down to a fourth and goal on the two-yard line with less than 30 seconds on the clock. Swedberg took the hand off in the back field and charged up the middle but fell short of the goal line. The Raiders took over on downs and only needed to run one play to end the game.

The Wildcats put up quite a battle and statistically they had better numbers than the Raiders, they were just one yard short of the most import stat; the score.

Landon Swedberg was the leading rusher for the Wildcats with 109 yards on 25 carries and two touchdowns. Andrew Gardner had four receptions for 93 yards and one touchdown. John Marquardt was 8 for 22 passing for 133 yards and two touchdowns.

The defensive leaders for Wallace were Jeff Harms with four solo tackles and 21 assisted tackles, Landon Swedberg had seven solo and 10 assisted and John Marquardt had three solo and eight assisted stops.

The loss was a heartbreaker for the Wildcats but they are looking to learn from the game so that they can be a better team and more prepared for playoffs. Wallace does not play this week due to the fact that they played a week zero game and this is their off week. They will play in the first round of play off on Thursday, Oct. 31.