



### **By LaDonna Swedberg**

*Sports Writer*

The Wallace Wildcats started the football playoff season on a positive note when they defeated the Brady Eagles 44-8.

Wallace wasted no time getting down to business when Shane Anders opened the game with a high, short kick that the Eagles didn't appear to be expecting. Brady fumbled the difficult kick and John Marquardt was there to recover the loose ball on the Eagles 36-yard line.

The Wildcats displayed some new looks as the offense took the field. Tanner Clough was under center as the quarterback and John Marquardt and Landon Swedberg were in the back field. Each of these players had the opportunity to carry the ball for positive yardage right down to the goal line. Marquardt completed the drive with a two-yard run and then Clough tacked on the two-point conversion to give Wallace the early 8-0 lead.

Anders once again tried the high, short kick and almost had success the second time round but Brady was able to get on the loose ball at their own 24-yard line. The Eagles however, ended up fumbling the ball on their second play and Josh May was able to recover the loose ball.

Wallace took over on the Brady 21-yard line and once again each player in the back field ran the ball for good yardage. Tanner Clough looked as if he might make it into the end zone when an Eagle player was able to knock the ball loose. Brady recovered the ball in the end zone for a touch back and took over on their own 15-yard line.

The Wildcat defense didn't allow the Eagles to go anywhere, in fact, Brady lost yardage on each down. Brady had to punt the ball when they were facing fourth and 15 at their own 10-yard line.

Wallace started their third drive on the Brady 30-yard line. Marquardt opened the drive with a 21 yard run down to the 9-yard line and after getting four more yards to the five-yard line, Swedberg ran the ball in for the touch down. Swedberg got to the outside corner for the PAT and with 6:44 remaining in the first quarter, Wallace had a 16-0 lead.

Brady started their next drive on their 22-yard line. They put together a nice drive moving the ball all the way to the Wallace 23-yard line. The Wildcat defense got stingy at that point and stopped the Eagles short on a fourth and five. Wallace took over on downs on their 25-yard line.

Wallace went right to work to put together a successful drive and as the first quarter came to an end, they were on the move. Marquardt started the second quarter with a long pass to Swedberg who was near the end zone but the ball was just off his fingertips so they went back to the run. Little by little the Wildcats made their way to the goal line. Marquardt was able to put six more points on the scoreboard when he picked up a fumbled snap and took it in for the score. The two-point conversion was no good, so the Wildcat lead was 22-0.

The Eagles wasted no time responding to the Wallace score. Following Anders' kick off to the Brady 33-yard line, Eric Roe shot through the line on the first play of the possession and scampered for a 47 yard touch down run. A completed pass gave the Eagles the extra two points and with 9:58 left in the first half, Brady had cut into the Wildcat lead with the scoreboard reading 22-8.

The Eagles attempted an on-side kick and they were nearly successful but the ball was recovered out of bounds so the Wildcats started their drive near mid-field. Landon Swedberg looked like he might score on the opening play but he was tripped up from behind at the 18-yard line. John Marquardt then went to the air finding Tanner Clough at the six-yard line and then again on the next play for a Wildcat touchdown. The PAT was unsuccessful so the Wallace lead stood at 28-8.

Brady had a good return following Anders' kick-off and they started their drive at their 39-yard line. Wallace stopped Brady on a fourth and nine and took possession of the ball at the Wildcat 21-yard line.

With plenty of time on the clock, Wallace was looking to put together another good drive and pad their lead before half-time.

Swedberg got the drive started with a 38-yard run all the way down to the Eagle 15 yard line. Marquardt then hit Swedberg for a nine-yard pass play and just that quick, the Wildcats were in the red zone. It took a few tries, but on third and goal, Marquardt found Andrew Gardner in the end zone for the touchdown. Marquardt was able to run the ball in for the PAT and the Wildcats increased their lead to 36-8 with 3:28 left to play in the first half.

Anders had challenged the Eagles with the high, short kick off kicks, so he decided to show them just how far he could kick and he put the ball deep in the end zone for a touchback.

Brady's final drive of the half had many ups and downs for both teams. Just when it looked like the Cats had a big defensive stop, a penalty flag gave the Eagles a big first down. When it appeared that Brady had scored a touchdown, a penalty flag brought the ball back. A total of four penalty flags were thrown in the final three minutes of the half as Brady was trying to add to their score. The Wildcat defense hung tough however, and they held on to their 36-8 lead as they went in for halftime.

The Wildcats got off to a great start in the second half. Following a touch back on the opening kick off, Wallace started their drive on their 15-yard line. Marquardt completed a pass to Swedberg on the first play and he carried it all the way to Brady's 11-yard line. Two plays later Marquardt completed the drive with an 8 yard touch down run. Swedberg ran across the goal line for the two-point conversion to increase the Wildcat lead to 44-8.

The defenses prevailed as the game progressed. Brady had decent field position on their next drive but a bad snap caused them to lose 19 yards and the Big Blue defense took advantage and forced them to punt.

Brady's punter pinned the Wildcats back at their own two-yard line. Wallace, being cautious with the ball, came up a half a yard short at their 11-yard line and had to punt the ball away. Swedberg delivered a long, high punt that Brady couldn't handle and the Wildcats recovered the

loose ball to maintain possession at the Eagles 28-yard line.

Marquardt tossed a swing pass to Swedberg and he worked his way to the 15-yard line but that was as far as the Cats could get. They turned the ball over on downs as the third quarter came to an end.

Each team had to punt on their next possession and then each team had issues with hanging on to the ball. Brady fumbled the ball away and then a fumble caused Wallace to turn the ball over on fourth down. Brady was threatening to score as they made their way to the Wildcat 10-yard line but a bad snap, a defensive stop and the clock ended the Eagles chance to score.

The 44-8 Wallace victory advanced the Wildcats to the second round of playoffs where they hosted Hayes Springs on Wednesday, Nov. 6.

Offensive leaders for the Wildcats were John Marquardt who completed 8 of 17 passing for 126 yards and two touchdowns and he carried the ball 19 times for 83 yards. Landon Swedberg rushed for 117 yards on 12 carries with two touchdowns and he had five receptions for 93 yards.

John Marquardt also had a great night defensively as he led the team with six solo tackles and nine assisted, he caused a fumble and he recovered a fumbled. Shane Anders and Jeff Harms also put up some good defensive numbers. Shane had three solo tackles and seven assists and Jeff had two solos and seven assists.

