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The end of each season comes down to the subdistrict tournament, previous wins and losses are irrelevant, it is a must win situation. The competitive D2-9 subdistrict was wide open waiting for the squad that could be the better team two games in a row and continue to the district final.

Wallace vs. Hayes Center

The first challenge for Wallace was the Hayes Center Cardinals; a team that the Wildcats had struggled against late in the season. Even though the Cats came away with the earlier victory, they knew that they would have to a complete game to take the Cardinals down a second time.

Wallace came out and established themselves in the opening quarter but not without the Cardinals chasing close behind. Hayes Center's Taylor Walker put up the first points of the game but Wallace responded with six unanswered points; John Marquardt drove the lane for the first two then Landon Swedberg put down two free throws and turned a steal into two points. After a Seth Gohl three-pointer, Landon Swedberg put together an old fashioned three pointer.

Kasey Schwenk put in a additional basket for the Cardinals and then Shane Anders got a put back for Wallace to put his team up 11-7 at the end of the quarter.

The game remained close throughout the second period as the teams exchanged scoring runs and baskets. Collin Swedberg got the first bucket off a Marquardt assist. At that point, Hayes Center put up three consecutive scores but Wallace came back with two scores of their own. Marquardt was able to put one in off the glass and shortly after, Anders did the same. In between Cardinal baskets, Marquardt and Anders each put in an additional basket. The Wildcats took a slim 21-19 lead into half time.

It was obvious that both teams were going to be battling to the end as the competition continued to be a tight in the third quarter. The Cardinals only had two different players put points on the board while Wallace had a variety of players scoring. Andrew Gardner got points on the board by getting a couple of put backs. Collin Swedberg drove the lane for a basket and later added a free throw and Hayden Woodcox hit a short jumper. Landon Swedberg put up the final points in the quarter by draining a three-pointer and then, just ahead of the buzzer, he drove in for two to give the Wildcats a 35- 31 lead going in to the final quarter.

It all came down to the team that had the most to give in the end. Collin Swedberg got things started the way the Wildcats needed him to by putting in a put back and then stealing the ball and taking it in for a lay up and a quick four points on the board for Wallace. Gohl came back with a basket off the glass but Landon Swedberg responded by driving in for a bucket.

Hayes Center put in the next two baskets but Wallace came charging back. Landon Swedberg turned a steal in to two points and then he added a free throw on the Wildcats next possession. The Cardinals were able to get one final basket but the remainder of the game consisted of Wallace playing tough defense and shooting free throws. Landon Swedberg put in six free throws before the final buzzer to give the Wildcats a 50-40 victory.

Leading the way for Wallace was Landon Swedberg with 23 points, five steals, two assists, seven rebounds and one blocked shot. Collin Swedberg had nine points, three steals, one assist and two rebounds.

Wallace vs. Hitchcock Co.

The hard-earned victory gave the Wildcats the opportunity to once again face Hitchcock County. Many teams would have been frustrated having to compete against a team that had

defeated them in two previous occasions, but Wallace looked forward to the meeting with confidence that they could beat the Falcons in the final match up.

The Wildcats started the game with enthusiasm and determination and they used four different players to put points on the board in the opening quarter. Gardner took an assist from Collin Swedberg to get the first points of the game and shortly after that, Marquardt put in a put back.

Hitchcock County came storming back scoring all four of their first quarter baskets. The Wildcats could have folded but they stepped up to the challenge and came back to take the lead. Landon Swedberg hit a huge three-pointer and then Collin Swedberg stole the ball and went the distance for a lay up to give Wallace a 9-8 lead at the end of the first period.



The pace of the game picked up slightly in the second quarter as the two teams continued to battle back and forth. Each point that the Falcons scored, the Wildcats responded to with a score of their own.

Hitchcock County struck first but Collin Swedberg answered with a short jumper. After a Falcon put back, Collin took an assist for Marquardt and put it in off the glass. Hitchcock County was only able to get a free throw on their next possession but Marquardt was able to get a basket.

Daniel Arp was able to get a Falcon bucket but Landon Swedberg responded by driving in for a Wildcat basket. As the quarter came to an end, Austin Blume tacked on a free throw but Anders was able to add to Wallace's lead by hitting a two-point buzzer beater to give the Cats a slim 19-16 lead.

The Wildcat fans really got behind their team to encourage them throughout the second half and the Wallace boys responded by digging deeper to create plays on both sides of the ball.

The third quarter ended up being a defensive battle as the Cats chose to slow the game down to take the Falcons out of their normal fast paced game. The strategy worked as Wallace held Hitchcock County to just six points. Even though the Wildcats were only able to score seven points, they added to their slight lead. Putting points up for Wallace were Gardner with a free throw and a jump shot, Landon Swedberg turning a steal into a basket and Woodcox beating the buzzer with a lay up.

The Wildcats started the the final period with a 26-22 lead and a very fired up crowd; would the third time be a charm for the Cats? As play got underway, Blume quieted the Big Blue when he stole the ball and put up the first points of the quarter. Marquardt however, came charging back by driving the lane, not once, but twice, for two quick Wildcat baskets.

Not to be out done, Blume returned the favor by getting a lay up and one. Wallace went back on offense and again spread the floor to allow Marquardt the opportunity to drive in for another basket.

Wallace was in foul trouble which changed their defensive play inside and the Falcons took advantage of the situation by successfully driving the lane on their next two possessions. In the

mean time, Anders was able to knock down three free throws to help maintain the slim Wildcat lead.

There is not nearly enough time, space nor words to even begin to describe all that took place in the final 90 seconds of the game but to say that it was fast paced and physical would be an understatement.

With little time left on the clock Blume got open on top the key for a huge three-pointer to bring his team within one. Once the Wildcats put the ball in play, Hitchcock County quickly fouled two different times to put Wallace at the line. Landon Swedberg was able to put in two free throws but Blume went right down the court and drove in for a quick lay up. The Falcons once again wasted no time fouling to put the Collin Swedberg on the line but he was not able to capitalize and Hitchcock County came down with the rebound with under 20 seconds left in the game.

The Falcons once again were trying to get the ball inside but Marquardt was able to tie up the ball as they passed it in to Arp. The possession of the jump ball went to Hitchcock County with just 10 seconds remaining on the clock. Looking to double things up on the inside, the Cats left Nathan Rick all alone in the corner on the inbound play. Even though Rick is more of an inside player, he knocked down the three pointer to give the Falcons a two point lead, their first since mid-way in the opening quarter.

Following a turnover and a Falcon free throw, Marquardt made a valiant effort on a last second shot from beyond half court, the ball went off the back board but not through the hoop. Wallace lost the heart breaker by a score of 37-40.

Marquardt led the Wildcats with 10 points, two assists, one steal and five rebounds. Landon Swedberg followed Marquardt with nine points, one assist, one steal and five rebounds.

Coach Hesses was very pleased with the effort of his team, especially the way that they stepped up on defense.

“You have to hand it to a team that can hit two clutch three-pointers late in the game, to pull out a win. The game plan and execution was great, we just came up a play or two short.”

The Wildcats ended their outstanding season with a 18–5 record, losing only to Mullen, Dundy County and Hitchcock County.