

By LaDonna Swedberg

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The 2012 football season came to an end for the Wallace Wildcats when they were defeated by the Garden County Eagles 28 - 56. The Wildcats put up a good fight but they allowed a very talented Eagle team too many 'big play' opportunities.

Wallace started the game off well when the defense forced Garden County to punt after a three and out but things went down hill after that.

The Wildcats turned the ball over on the punt giving the Eagles great field position. They wasted no time getting on the score board when quarterback Devon Sullivan hit Layne McCarthy for a touchdown reception.

The Wallace offense was unable to get a first down on their first possession so they were forced to punt. The Eagles made their way into the back field and not only blocked the punt but they also returned it for another touchdown. A successful two point conversion gave Garden County a 0-14 lead.



The Wildcats had to once again punt the ball on their next possession. The Eagles, having all of the momentum, used a variety of running plays to get the ball into the end zone for six more points and a 0-20 lead.

In spite of the rough start, the Wildcats took the field determined to turn things around. They were able to get a first down and on a first and 10 play, John Marquardt found Landon Swedberg running down the sideline for a touchdown reception. Marquardt ran the ball for the two-point conversion to make the score 8-20 at the end of the first quarter.

Wallace was on the move to begin the second quarter but they stalled on the Eagle 26-yard line and turned the ball over on downs. The Eagles quarterback, having already scored through the air, decided to add a long rushing touchdown to his accomplishments. After sprinting 54 yards, Sullivan added six more points to the Eagles score.

Garden County's defense was causing problems as well. They intercepted the ball on the Wildcats' next possession and once again the Eagles had a very short field. They only needed three plays to get the ball across the goal line and just that quick, the score was 8-34.

Wallace really needed to get points on the board to stay in the game so the offense put together a great drive. The linemen were making it possible for the backfield to get five to six yards each play.

Swedberg found an opening the line provided and went 18 yards to get into the end zone to get the Wildcats on the board again.

Wallace had a new spring in their step. The special teams came up big when Mark Jameson

recovered the ball on the kick off. On the very next play, it appeared that Marquardt had scored on a 39-yard run but a penalty flag brought the ball back.

The Wildcats were unable to get a first down and ended up turning the ball over on downs. The Eagles looked like they might score again when they got the ball down to the two-yard line. They had four attempts at the goal line but the Wallace defense turned them away each time for a great goal line stance to end the half.

The third quarter did not get off to a very good start for Wallace. A flag on the kickoff return caused the Wildcats to have to start their drive at their own seven-yard line. The first play resulted in a safety for the Eagles. Following the free kick, Garden County only needed two plays to score a touchdown and with only 34 seconds ticking off the clock, the Eagles defense and offense had scored.

The Wildcats could have fallen apart at this point but they weren't going home without a fight. They began to claw their way back into the game. Wallace was facing a third and inches on their third possession of the quarter when the line once again provided a huge hole for Swedberg to scamper 51 yards for a Wildcat touchdown.

Marquardt completed a pass to Josh Grauerholz for the two point conversion and the Cats appeared to have gained some extra confidence.

The Wildcats' special teams definitely did their part in the game as they again jumped on the ball on the onside kick to give Wallace another shot on offense. Taking advantage of the situation, the Cats marched right down the field for another third quarter touchdown.

Swedberg completed the drive when he received a screen pass from Marquardt and went 19 yards for the score. With just under four minutes left in the quarter, the Wildcats had closed the gap in the score with it now reading 28-42.

Garden County must have realized that Wallace was not going to give them the game so they would have to earn it. Their offense took to the field and got to work moving the ball down the field. McCarthy, who had been difficult to keep up with the entire game, broke loose for a 31-yard touchdown run to give the Eagles a little more breathing room.

The final quarter proved to be a defensive battle. Garden County added a final touchdown early in the quarter but the remainder of the game was all about defense.

The Wildcats all put up a great battle, but leading the way for them on offense was John Marquardt with 98 yards on 32 carries and he was six for 19 in pass completions for 91 yards.

Landon Swedberg carried the ball 12 times for 94 yards, scoring two touchdowns and he had two receptions for 72 yards which resulted in touchdowns. Jeff Harms once again led the way on defense with 11 unassisted tackles and one assist. Swedberg followed him with eight unassisted tackles and five assisted.

The Wildcats ended their season with a 5-4 record. They battled injuries all season long and they faced some difficult competition but with some great senior leadership, they persevered and experienced some great accomplishments.