

### **By LaDonna Swedberg**

*Sports Writer*

It all comes down to districts, all season long each team works to improve to be at their very best at the end of the season and ready for the district tournament.

Wallace did improve and had an impressive end to their regular season, getting three big wins to move them to the top of their district. The Wildcats had done the work and all that was left were the district games and the difficult task of facing teams they had already encountered.

### **Wallace vs Hayes Center**

The first challenge for Wallace in the sub district was Hayes Center. This was the third meeting of the two teams and the Cardinals once again gave the Wildcats all they had, testing them up to the final buzzer.

The Cats got off to a good start doubling the Cardinals' score in both the first and second quarter.

Landon Swedberg was the first to get points on the board when he hit a jump shot. John Marquardt added a bucket and then Swedberg stepped behind the arc for a three-pointer which he followed up with an old-fashioned three point play. Before the quarter came to an end, Shane Anders put in two baskets, the second, at the buzzer.

Taylor Doell started things off in the second quarter when he turned a steal into two points. Marquardt then put up a couple of free throws before he, too, used his defense to add another basket to the books. Doell kept things going for Wallace when he drained a trey.

Before the half time break, Swedberg got another two baskets, one for two points and one for three which gave the Wildcats a 28–14 lead.

Hayes Center made things interesting in the third quarter when they came out and put up nine unanswered points. Anders eventually hit a three-pointer which ended up being the only Wildcat basket in the third. Marquardt added a free throw late in the quarter but the Cardinals outscored Wallace by 10 points. Wallace only had a four point lead going into the final eight minutes of play.

The Wildcats stepped it up in the fourth quarter but Hayes Center was not going away quietly. Marquardt put up the first two points in the quarter and then Josh Grauerholz got a put back. Marquardt then drove in for a basket and added a free throw to complete the three-point play.

The Wallace defense held the Cardinals to one three-pointer and their remaining points came from free throws. The Wildcats got one more basket from Swedberg and then they too used free throws for the remainder of their points; three from Swedberg and one for Doell.

Wallace defeated Hayes Center 45–39. Leading the way for the Wildcats were Landon Swedberg with 18 points, five rebounds and eight steals and John Marquardt with 12 points, three assists and four steals.

The Nebraska weather changed the plans for the final game of the sub district; instead of playing on Thursday night in Cambridge, the game was played Saturday night in Hayes Center. The opponent the Wildcats would face, was none other than a Wauneta/Palisade team that had really come on strong late in the season. Wallace would need a very complete and well played game to continue on to the district final.

### **Wallace vs Wau/Pal.**

The game did not get off to the start that the Wildcats had hoped for; the Broncos were shooting lights out and Wallace was having a difficult time getting a shot off. The Cats were only

able to come up with nine points in the opening quarter; Josh Grauerholz had four, John Marquardt three and Lane Scott had two points.



Down 9–17, the Wildcats came out in the second quarter and played a completely different game. The defense slowed the Broncos down and the offense found their rhythm.

Grauerholz made his presence known inside, scoring the first seven points. Lane Scott added a bucket to the books and then Shane Anders took over under the basket putting in seven points of his own.

Jose Arvizo made a free throw, Grauerholz added another short jumper and Taylor Doell two free throws to account for the Wildcats' 21 second quarter points. Wallace went into the half time break with a 30–26 lead.

The Wildcats have had problems in the third period and once again it came back to haunt them. After an outstanding second quarter, Wallace was only able to put eight points on the board in the third. Landon Swedberg hit a jumper and later, a free throw, Doell put in a three-pointer and Grauerholz added another bucket.

Hoping to make the second half look like the first half, the Wildcats started the final quarter with optimism but Wauneta/Palisade had other ideas.

The Broncos were playing with a lot of intensity and they did not let up as the game progressed. They had an answer for everything that the Wallace threw at them. Swedberg was able to put up eight points in the fourth quarter, Marquardt had two free throws and Jackson Porter a short jumper. Wallace lost to Wauneta/Palisade 50–65.

The entire season, each and every Wildcat was instrumental, in one way or another, to the successes in each game. They challenged each other in practice, they provided leadership in various ways and they all worked together as a team.

The team work was evident in the final game when each player who took the court, gave his best. Josh Grauerholz led the way for the Wildcats with 15 points, three assists and eight rebounds and Landon Swedberg contributed 11 points, three assists, eight rebounds and five steals.

The Wildcats had a great season with a 14 and nine record. Coach Joe Hesse was disappointed with how the season ended since the team had been playing so well, but he did feel that they had improved as the year progressed and that was definitely a positive.

Coach is hoping that the underclassmen will continue to build on this progress and carry it into next season; if they stay persistent with hard work and enthusiasm, there is a lot of potential and great possibilities for next season.