

# SPORTS



Photos by Brett Blocker

Brycen Christensen snags a thrice-bobbled ball from the clutches of an Annandale cornerback to put the 'Cats in goal line territory.

## Homecoming thriller: 'Cats slip by Annandale 21-17

### FOOTBALL

By Bruce Strand  
Sports reporter

The Homecoming game went down to the last minute Friday night and New London-Spicer pulled it out 21-17 over Annandale on Kyle Doty's five-yard touchdown run with 47 seconds left, on a fourth down play.

The Wildcats (3-1) passed up a field goal attempt that would have tied the game and called for a play action pass. Doty had a receiver open but a blitzing defender got his hands on him. The quarterback spun away and dashed across the goal line.

"We made the decision to go for the win, even though that would have been essentially an extra point," said coach Chad Gustafson. "It was just a great high school football game. Annandale is really good. They have great athletes all over the field."

The Wildcats gave up 10 points, set up by their own two fumbles, in the fourth quarter to fall behind 17-14, then mounted a seven-minute, 70-yard drive for the winning touchdown.

After NLS went ahead, Annandale (2-2) reached the 50-yard line, but on the final play of the game, NLS defensive end Lawsin Dechon sacked the quarterback.

Brycen Christensen, wide receiver and cornerback, once again sparked the Wildcats on both sides of the ball.

The 6-foot-2, 185-pound junior scored on a 71-yard pass play and caught eight passes for 145 yards. On the final drive, Doty found Chris-

tensen for first-down yardage on a 4th-and-15 play. From the five, he was open in the end zone. "Kyle saw me but somebody got hold of him," Christensen said. "He somehow spun away."

Christensen, also a basketball standout, intercepted two Gagnon passes, one of them at the two-yard line to kill a Cardinal drive. "I saw it was going to be a fade route," said Christensen, who slipped in front of the receiver and picked it off just before stepping out of bounds.

About winning so dramatically at homecoming, he said, "That was really special."

NLS opened the game with an 80-yard drive capped by Mason Delzer's two-yard run behind a crunching block by fullback Connor Rothwell. Then came two big pass plays, one by each team. Connor Gagnon fired to Hawkin Miller for a 76-yard touchdown, pulling Annandale even at 7-7. Doty responded with the strike to Christensen, who made a leaping catch 40 yards down field and had an open field for the last 31. The first period ended 14-7.

The second and third periods were scoreless.

Annandale capitalized on NLS fumbles to score twice in the fourth quarter on Tristan Shoberg's six-yard pass to 6-foot-7 Brady Spaulding and a 25-yard field goal by Gavin Polston, taking a 17-14 lead.

Gagnon, described by Gustafson as a "dynamic" talent, completed 12 of 20 for 155 yards. He left the game with an ankle injury after being tackled in the third period. Shoberg hit seven of 15 for 78 yards. Miller caught five for 120 yards and Spaulding

seven for 60 yards.

The NLS defense was dented for 233 air yards but Gagnon was intercepted twice, both times by Christensen. Meanwhile, the Wildcats limited Annandale to 51 yards on 22 rushes.

Doty completed 14 of 21 for 207 yards with Christensen snagging eight for 145 yards and Gabe Rohman four for 50. Rothwell carried 13 times for 58 yards, and Delzer 13 times for 50 yards.

Tackle leaders were linebacker Gavin Degner with nine, cornerback Peyton Coahran with six, and linebacker Brandyn Anderson and Dechon with five each.

Dechon had two tackles-for-loss besides the sack.

The Wildcats played at undefeated Litchfield on Friday. Next Friday, they'll host Milaca.

Sept. 24  
NLS 21, Annandale 17

Ann. 7 0 0 10 - 17  
NLS 14 0 0 7 - 21

NLS — Mason Delzer 2 run (Gabe Rohman kick).

Ann — Hawkin Miller 76 pass from Carson Gagnon (Gavin Polston kick).

NLS — Brycen Christensen 71 pass from Kyle Doty (Rohman kick).

Ann — Brady Spaulding 6 pass from Tristan Shoberg (Polston kick).

Ann — Polston 25 field goal.

NLS — Doty 5 run (Rohman kick).

**Team totals**  
NLS — 34-130 rushing; 15-22-221 passing, 0 int; 56 plays, 351 yards; 17 first downs; 10-99 penalties.

Annandale — 22-51 rushing; 19-25-233 passing, 2 int; 57 plays, 284 yards; 16 first downs; 5-44 penalties.

**NLS offense**  
Rushing — Connor Rothwell 13-58, Delzer 13-50, Doty 4-19, Christensen 3-3, Brody Lien 1-0.

Passing — Doty 14-21-207, 0 int; Delzer 1-1-14, 0 int.

Receiving — Christensen 8-145, Rohman 4-50, Trevin O'Malley 1-12, Rothwell 1-11, Delzer 1-3.

Kickoff returns-average — Delzer 3-17.7.

**NLS defense**

Tackles (solo-assist) — Gavin Degner 8-1, Peyton Coahran 6-0, Brandyn Anderson 5-0, Lawsin Dechon 5-0, Christensen 4-0, Rohman 3-1, Brody Lien 2-1, Rothwell 3-0, Evan Caskey 3-0, Sam Gabrielson 3-0, Trevin O'Malley 2-0, Anakin Haglund 2-0, Grant Paffrath 1-0, Luke Knutson 1-0, Kaidin Yeo 1-0, Hunter Downey 1-0, Brody Duke 1-0.

Sacks — Dechon 2.

Tackles for loss — Dechon 2.

Interceptions — Christensen 2.

Kickoffs-average — Rohman 4-45.

Punts-average — Rohman 2-34.



QB Kyle Doty charges through a hole in the Cardinals' line. The senior starter would go on to secure the Wildcats' victory in dramatic fashion: a five-yard, fourth down touchdown run with just 47 seconds on the clock.

## NLS logs tourney title, marathon win in busy stretch

### VOLLEYBALL

By Bruce Strand  
Sports reporter

Playing their eighth match in five days, the New London-Spicer Wildcats found themselves in their longest match of the year Tuesday evening.

If they were fatigued, they didn't show it, outlasting Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted 26-24, 22-25, 25-20, 17-25, 15-13 at Howard Lake. They had won a tournament on Saturday and won two of three regular matches since Thursday.

"Our team is in great shape. We don't do a lot of subbing so the six starters are used to playing all the way around for the entire match," coach Erin Schoumaker said. "We came

from behind in both (close) games, which is something we have been struggling with, so that was really positive."

At Parkers Prairie on Saturday, NLS won a tournament against smaller schools. They were missing starting setter Nyla Johnson. "Other players stepped up, and we didn't have as many unforced errors, which is something we have been working on," Schoumaker said.

The Wildcats lost 3-0 to Rockford (17-2) there Thursday but haven't lost since.

At Parkers Prairie, the Wildcats beat Northern Freeze 25-21, 25-9; split with West Central Area 25-13, 22-25; split with Browerville-Eagle Valley 25-16, 21-25; beat Parkers Prairie 25-14, 25-18; then faced Browerville-Eagle

Valley again in the finals, winning 17-25, 25-15, 15-13. They advanced after the two ties because they won total points.

NLS clipped Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City 25-13, 25-14, 25-10 on Monday evening at home before subduing HLWW on Tuesday.

The Wildcats (11-8-2) hosted Watertown-Mayer on Thursday evening. They will host Willmar on Tuesday and play at Glencoe-Silver Lake on Thursday.

(Note: complete statistics for the tournament Saturday were not available at press time.)

Sept. 23  
Rockford 3, NLS 0

Lauren Loegering knocked down 14 kills and Sophie

Bremer 10 for the Rockets. The Wildcats struggled at the net, with more hitting errors (15) than kills (12), and in passing with everyone below 2.00.

NLS.....15 10 14  
Rock.....25 25 25

**Wildcat summary:** Audrey Schneider 3-3-0 hitting ... Ava Hauer 1-20 serving, 1 dig ... Ava Carlson 1 dig ... Avery Rich 5-5-0 serving, 13-15-2 hitting, 5 digs, 1.82 passing ... Dakota Rich 10-11-1 serving, 1-1-1 hitting, 2 digs, 1.10 passing ... Ellary Peterson 5-5-0 serving, 7-7-2 hitting, 1 dig, 2 blocks, 1.79 passing ... Grace Truscinski 7-7-0 serving, 11-16-2 hitting, 2 digs, 1.64 passing ... Kendra Gerhardson 4-4-0 serving, 6-12-3 hitting, 5 digs,

7 assists ... Olivia Mages 6-7-1 serving, 14-16-2 hitting.

Sept. 27  
NLS 3, ACGC 0

Kendra Gerhardson and Olivia Mages rattled off eight kills each and Ellary Peterson seven, with Nyla Johnson lofting 27 assists, in the sweep of

ACGC.

NLS.....25 25 25  
ACGC.....13 24 10

**Wildcat summary:** Audrey Schneider 2-2-0 hitting, 1 block ... Ava Carlson 1-1-1 hitting, Ava Hauer 3-3-0 serving, 3 assists ...

Volleyball

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