



Mulvane defender Caleb NeSmith (35) moves in to help as Sage Swaney (22) hangs onto a Wellington runner's jersey in the season finale Thursday night, Oct. 28. The Crusaders won the game and ended Mulvane's season at 3-6.

## Season Ends At 3-6

# Wildcats Can't Stop Wellington's Run

It was a microcosm of the season in 60 minutes.

Close but not close enough. Good but not good enough. Almost but, well, almost! In the end, it was just a Wellington blowout of the Mulvane Wildcats.

The football season drew to a close for the MHS Wildcat gridders Thursday night, Oct. 28, at home. It was a pre-Halloween nightmare on Wildcat Blvd. The Crusaders, undefeated and ranked in the top five in the Class 4A state rankings, powered past the Wildcats, 34-0, in the last District 10 game of the 2004 season.

The victory qualified Wellington (9-0) for the 4A playoffs for the ninth time in the last 10 years. Mulvane saw its season come to a close with a 3-6 record and 2-3 mark in the new Ark Valley Chisholm Trail League Division III.

And just as the season went, so did the last game. The Wildcats were in the game much of the second quarter, trailing only 13-0, and driving inside the Crusader 20 but a penalty pushed the Cats into a 3rd and long. The Cats turned the ball over on downs with less than two minutes before intermission, and on Wellington's 1st play, John Heath scampered 77 yards for a touch-

down. Instead of a 13-7 game, it was 21-0.

"The first half, we competed very well until that series of events," said Coach Dave Fennewald. "That big one hurt. That turned the game in their favor because it was a 14-point swing."

It also emphasized a season of near misses, what-ifs, almosts for the Wildcats. When Wellington came out and scored on another long run on its first possession of the 3rd quarter, the game was indeed over.

"Our kids came out and competed hard against a good team," said Fennewald. "I was awfully proud of that fact. Our kids knew we had virtually nothing to play for. We knew it would take a miracle for us to make the playoffs. Even with a win, we would have been on the outside looking in because Rose Hill wasn't going to lose to Belle Plaine and our kids knew that. Our kids knew this was their last game and they came out and played hard against a good Wellington team. Wellington is 9-0 for a reason."

The scenario was this: Mulvane needed to beat the Crusaders, then hope Belle Plaine beat Rose Hill by more than five points to get into the opening round of the 4A playoffs, which started Tuesday night, Nov. 2.

Wellington's standout running back, John Heath, tore up the Wildcat defense for 295 yards on the ground in 13 carries just a week after Rose Hill's Blake Ringwall blistered the Cats for 283 yards.

"Both Heath and Ringwall are great backs, the class of our league, but our season hinged on executing, and we didn't execute," said Fennewald. "When we executed, we won football games. From pro to high school ball, you have to make the plays when you get a chance, when the opportunity is there. You have to strike when you get a chance and sometimes I felt like we were just satisfied to compete."

"Plus, we were coming off a week where we didn't play very good football so our confidence level wasn't really high," added Fennewald. "That's high school football. When things start going against you, you have a tendency to think 'here we go again,' especially when your confidence level is down."

An offense that had been averaging 27 points a game was boxed up. "We just never got untracked on offense," stressed Fennewald. "We tried to spread then shift back to our regular set, hoping to loosen people up. People have been figuring us out and loading up the box. We felt that new wrinkle would help out but we just never got any rhythm going out there."

Mulvane was in the "red zone" three times and came away empty-handed each time. "We always did something to put our offense in a hole," said Fennewald. "We either missed open receivers or didn't pitch the ball or missed a block or committed a penalty that put us in a hole. Johnny Knight scored late in the game but a penalty wiped the score out. The penalty happened back up the field about 15 yards behind the play after he had already hit the end zone. That was the kind of game we had."

Mulvane still chalked up 162 on the ground with Knight rolling up 61 yards in seven carries, Logan Sorensen picking up another 49 yards and Caleb NeSmith getting 35.

And the Mulvane defense has struggled all season. It was a fatal combination for the Wildcats—an ineffective offense and a defense that couldn't stop the run. Wellington didn't compete a pass all night but had 445 ground yards.

The Cat defense was led by linebacker J.D. Hansen with nine tackles and Sage Swaney with nine tackles out of the secondary. Caleb NeSmith had eight stops and Tyler Pudden, Jason Wohlford and Logan Sorensen had five apiece. Hansen's interception was also the only turnover for the Cats.

### District 10 Game

Wellington	7	12	15	0-34
Mulvane	0	0	0	0-0
Touchdowns	Wellington: John Heath 3 (29, 77, 73, runs); Tyler Markley 2 (14, 15, runs)			
Points After Touchdown	Wellington: Taylor Caudillo 2 (kicks); Heath (2 runs)			

### TEAM STATISTICS

	Wellington	Mulvane
First Downs	16	8
Total Yards	445	246
Yards Rushing	445	162
Yards Passing	0	84
Passes Attempted	4	14
Passes Completed	0	6
Passes Intercepted By	1	1
Punts/Average	3-34	4-22
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Yards Penalized	0	43

### INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

#### Rushing

Wellington—John Heath 13 carries-295 yards, Joe Caudillo 7-46, Tyler Markley 9-67, Mitch Dugan 4-16, Garrett Brinkmeyer 2-10, Dustin Brown 4-11. Mulvane—John Knight 7-61, Logan Sorensen 17-49, Caleb NeSmith 8-35, Sage Swaney 3-5, Jason Wohlford 3-12.

#### Passing

Wellington—Dustin Brown 0 completions-4 attempts-0 yards-1 interception-0 TD. Mulvane—Logan Sorensen 6-13-84-1-0, Jason Wohlford 0-1-0-0-0.

#### Receiving

Mulvane—Matt Myers 3 receptions-45 yards, Tyler Obinger 1-10, Sage Swaney 1-8, John Knight 2-29.

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

TD Hansen 3 tackles-6 assists, Sage Swaney 2-7, Caleb NeSmith 3-5, Jason Wohlford 1-4, Logan Sorensen 1-4, Tyler Pudden 1-4, Mason Leonard 2-2, Jody Shook 1-3, Joe Cortina 1-3, Matt Myers 1-2, John Knight 1-2, Emery Thorne 1-2, Andrew Myers 0-2, Carl Jones 0-1. Interception—J.D. Hansen.

## Ark Valley-Chisholm Trail League Football Standings

### Division III

Team	League		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
Wellington*	8	0	10	0
Augusta*	4	3	7	3
Rose Hill*	3	2	6	4
Mulvane	2	3	3	6
Buhler*	1	4	3	7
El Dorado	0	5	2	8

### Division IV

Team	League		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
Andover Central*	5	0	9	1
Circle*	4	1	5	4
Andale*	3	2	7	3
Andover*	2	3	5	5
Clearwater	1	4	2	7
Kingman	0	5	1	8

\* clinched AVCTL-IV championship; \*4A playoff qualifiers.

### Games Saturday, Nov. 6

#### 4A State Playoff Games

Rose Hill at Abilene  
Wellington at Andover  
Andale at Goodland

#### Playoff Results Tuesday, Nov. 2

Rose Hill 21, Andover Central 13  
Wellington 14, Augusta 12  
Andover 21, Smokey Valley 7  
Andale 55, Chaparral 7  
Pratt 28, Buhler 0

#### Results Thursday, Oct. 29

Wellington 34, Mulvane 0  
Rose Hill 41, Belle Plaine 14  
Andover Central 28, Augusta 7  
El Dorado 34, Circle 30  
Collegiate 24, Andover 14  
Andale 41, Haven 0  
Buhler 7, Clearwater 0  
Kingman 32, Nickerson 6