

SIX FIRST-HALF TAKEAWAYS PROPEL CWU TO 33-22 WIN AT IDAHO STATE
Wildcats Build 26-0 Lead En Route to Victory over Division I-FCS Bengals

CWU SPORTS INFORMATION

POCATELLO, Idaho (Sept. 26) -- Six first-half takeaways and a safety by the Central Washington University defense propelled the Wildcats to a 33-22 football victory over Idaho State University in front of 4,980 fans at Holt Arena.

The win was the 11th straight regular-season victory for the Wildcats (5-0), who are ranked fifth in the NCAA Division II. Idaho State, which competes as a member of the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), fell to 0-4.

Central stormed out to a 26-0 lead in the first 19 minutes of the game, totaling all 26 of those points over a span of 7 minutes, 37 seconds between the first and second quarters.

The Wildcat defense started the scoring with a safety as **Taylor Tanasse** (Yakima, Wash./West Valley HS) pressured ISU quarterback Kyle Blum into an intentional grounding in the end zone for a safety. On the ensuing possession, the CWU offense got on the scoreboard with a five-yard pass from redshirt freshman **Ryan Robertson** (Sammamish, Wash./Eastlake HS) to senior **Johnny Spevak** (Edgewood, Wash./Puyallup HS) late in the first quarter.

On Idaho State's next series, senior **Prince Hall** (Moreno Valley, Calif.) sacked Blum and forced a fumble, which fellow senior linebacker **Buddy Wood** (Chattaroy, Wash./Riverside HS) scooped up at the Bengals' five and ran into the end zone for a 16-0 lead.

Then, after a Blum fumble on the very next play from scrimmage that Tanasse recovered, the Robertson-to-Spevak connection came through with an 18-yard touchdown pass that gave Central Washington a comfortable 23-0 lead with 13:57 remaining in the first half.

In a game keyed by turnovers, Central came up with another takeaway as Hall intercepted Blum and gave the Wildcats the football at the ISU 12. Senior **Garrett Rolsma** (University Place, Wash./Curtis HS) booted a 28-yard field goal to culminate that drive and finish the Wildcats' first-half scoring binge with 11:06 to go in the period.

Idaho State took advantage of Central Washington turnovers later in the quarter. After Robertson threw the second of four interceptions for the game, Blum threw a 20-yard touchdown pass to JD Ponciano to break the shutout with 5:55 remaining in the half. A fumble on Central's next series gave ISU good field position, on which it capitalized with a 26-yard TD pass from Blum to Kelvin Krosch that cut the Wildcats' lead to 26-14.

The miscue-plagued but high-scoring first half was followed by a much lower-scoring final two quarters. Central's Robertson threw an interception on the Wildcats' first possession of the third quarter, which had gotten as far as the Idaho State 36, but Central's special teams reversed the momentum after blocking a Jon Vanderwielen punt and recovering at the Bengals' 8-yard line. Robertson then connected with sophomore **Justin Helwege** (Sammamish, Wash./Eastlake HS) two plays later to give the Wildcats a three-score advantage once again.

Neither team scored again until Idaho State found the end zone with 1:35 remaining in the game. Blum and Krosch connected on a 67-yard TD on a fourth-and-11 play, and the ensuing two-point conversion from Blum to Ponciano was successful. However, Central thwarted any last-ditch efforts by the Bengals with a recovery of the on-side kick.

Central Washington held Idaho State to minus-33 yards rushing -- the lowest rushing output by a Wildcat opponent since Oct. 8, 1988 when CWU held Lewis & Clark to minus-53 rushing yards. Central also

blanked the Bengals on third downs, where ISU was 0-for-11, and the Wildcats had the ball for nearly 39 minutes. Those numbers overshadowed a season-high 16 penalties for 124 yards and five turnovers.

The Wildcat offense posted nearly identical rushing and passing numbers on Saturday, totaling 192 through the air and 191 on the ground. Robertson completed 26 of 43 passes for three touchdowns, with tosses to eight different receivers, while junior **Bryson Kelly** (Mukilteo, Wash./Kamiak HS) had his best game of the season with 16 carries for 91 yards. **Randall Eldridge** (Lynnwood, Wash.) also had 16 carries, netting 65 yards.

On defense, Central was bolstered by the 2009 debut of junior linebacker **Adam Bighill** (Montesano, Wash.), who had a team-leading nine tackles including two tackles for losses and one of five quarterback sacks by the CWU defense. He also had a forced fumble and a fumble recovery. Wood, Hall, and **Jerome Williams** (Seattle, Wash./Ballard HS) added five tackles each, with Wood leading all players with 2 1/2 tackles for losses to move into the school's top 10 list for career TFL in the process.

Idaho State, which has now lost 19 of its last 20 games, was led by the 248 passing yards of Blum, who finished 19 of 32. The Bengal defense had three players register 10 or more tackles, including 18 by A.J. Storms and 17 by Phillip Arias. Rustin Phillips had two of the Bengals' four tackles for loss in the game.

Central Washington will now open defense of its Great Northwest Athletic Conference title, playing six consecutive conference games to round out the regular season. The Wildcats host Dixie State (2-3, 1-1 GNAC) next Saturday (Oct. 3) at Tomlinson Stadium, with kickoff slated for 1 p.m.

QUICK NOTES: Central improved to 3-9-0 all-time against teams who were affiliated with the Big Sky Conference when the Wildcats played them. The Wildcats also improved to 2-5-1 all-time indoors ... Spevak became the fifth player in CWU history with 4,000 or more all-purpose yards in his career. He now has 4,065 all-purpose yards, and his 3,834 receiving yards are just 53 shy of the CWU career record ... Wood moved into eighth on the career list for tackles for loss, as he now has 31 1/2 TFL in his career. The school record is 43 1/2 by Jacob Galloway (2001-04).