

CENTRAL FOOTBALL HOLDS OFF UPSET-MINDED HUMBOLDT STATE
Eldridge Runs for Three Scores, Fourth-Ranked Wildcats Rally Past Lumberjacks

ARCATA, Calif. (Oct. 10) -- Central Washington overcame a 20-13 halftime deficit with three second-half touchdowns, including two by senior **Randall Eldridge** (Lynnwood, Wash.), as the fourth-ranked Wildcats held off an upset-minded Humboldt State squad, 34-27, in Great Northwest Athletic Conference football action on Saturday night at the Redwood Bowl.

The win, which was Central's 13th straight in the regular season, its 27th straight over a GNAC member, and the program's 15th consecutive in the head-to-head series with Humboldt State, improves the Wildcats' 2009 record to 7-0 and 2-0 in GNAC play. The Lumberjacks are now 3-3 overall and 0-3 in conference action.

Eldridge had touchdowns in the second, third, and fourth quarters en route to his best rushing game of the season for the Wildcats. He finished with Central's first 100-yard rushing total of the season (111 yards) and quadrupled the team's rushing touchdown total with his three scores on the ground.

Central Washington fell behind early after failing to score on its opening possession. Humboldt State then responded on its first offensive play from scrimmage, as Mike Proulx threw a 52-yard touchdown pass to Corey Stollmeyer and the ensuing extra point by Kyle Schierholtz made it a 7-0 Lumberjack lead.

The Wildcats scored on two of their next three possessions, but both times, good field position culminated with field goals by senior **Garrett Rolsma** (University Place, Wash./Curtis HS) -- of 21 and 42 yards -- as Central trailed 7-6 after the first quarter.

Humboldt State scored after Rolsma's second field goal, as Proulx and Matt Devlin connected on a 10-yard scoring strike early in the second quarter. However, Schierholtz's extra-point attempt was blocked by the Wildcat special teams and the lead was a seven-point margin for the hosts.

Two possessions later, after senior **Marcus Ford** (Sacramento, Calif./Grant HS) recovered a fumble at the Humboldt 14, Eldridge scored the first of his three touchdowns from three yards out and Rolsma tacked on the extra point to tie the score with 7:44 to go in the first half. Humboldt State would match the Wildcats' touchdown, however, as Chris Bolt threw a 38-yard touchdown pass to Devlin for what proved to be the final points of the opening half as the Lumberjacks took a 20-13 lead into halftime.

In the second half, after Central Washington held Humboldt State to a three-and-out on its first possession, senior **Cole Morgan** (Seattle, Wash./Ballard HS) came into the game to relieve starting quarterback **Ryan Robertson** (Sammamish, Wash./Eastlake HS), and he proceeded to engineer a 12-play, 59-yard scoring drive that was capped off by a one-yard TD run by Eldridge.

Neither team would score again until another clutch special teams play by the Wildcats early in the fourth quarter. After the defense forced Bolt into two incompletions and the Lumberjacks to no gain on a rushing play, freshman Tyler Cardin blocked Schierholtz's punt and junior **Adam Bighill** (Montesano, Wash.) scooped it up at the two-yard line for the go-ahead touchdowns -- a score that gave Central its first lead of the contest and was the difference-maker. A muffed fair catch on a Wildcat punt later in the quarter had Central in business again, as Eldridge did all of the work on a nine-play, 34-yard drive, scoring the insurance touchdown with 4:43 remaining.

Trailing 34-20, Humboldt State attempted a comeback, scoring on a short field after Central's kickoff. Bolt threw a one-yard touchdown pass to Matt Smith with 3:36 left to make it a seven-point game, but the ensuing on-side kick was recovered by the Wildcats' **Buddy Wood** (Chattaroy, Wash./Riverside HS) and CWU ran out the clock with four more carries by Eldridge and two by junior **Bryson Kelly** (Mukilteo, Wash./Kamiak HS).

Central finished the game with a 317-291 advantage in total offense, including a 124-50 edge on the ground. Wildcat quarterbacks combined to go 19 of 35 for 193 yards but failed to throw a touchdown pass

for the first time since Oct. 30, 2004, snapping a streak of 53 consecutive games with a TD toss. Robertson threw for 127 yards on 13 of 22, while Morgan netted 66 yards passing on 6 of 13. Eldridge and **Johnny Spevak** (Edgewood, Wash./Puyallup HS) had five receptions each, with Eldridge leading CWU with 51 receiving yards.

Defensively, senior **Prince Hall** (Moreno Valley, Calif.) had his second-highest tackle total of the season with 13 stops including two tackles for loss. Three others -- Bighill, Ford, and Wood -- were credited with six tackles apiece.

Humboldt State, which posted the highest scoring total by a Wildcat opponent this season, saw both of its quarterbacks pass for better than 100 yards. Bolt was 9 of 17 for 124 yards, while Proulx completed 7 of 10 passes for 117 yards before exiting in the second quarter. The Lumberjacks had three players with 10 or more tackles, including a game-high-tying 13 from Guy Ricciardulli.

Central Washington, who could move up to third in Monday's next national ranking following the loss of top-ranked Grand Valley State on Saturday, will return to Washington for its next two games. The Wildcats take on Western Oregon in Battle in Seattle VII at Qwest Field in Seattle next Saturday (Oct. 17) at 6 p.m. before closing out their home season with Homecoming on Oct. 24 against Humboldt State.

QUICK NOTES: Spevak had a streak of 10 consecutive games with a touchdown reception snapped ... Central's longest active winning streak against an opponent was extended to 15 games. The last time the Wildcats lost to Humboldt State was in 1997, a 40-30 home loss ... The Wildcats played Saturday's game ranked fourth nationally, marking the highest AFCA Division II national ranking in the program's 11 seasons as a NCAA member ... After being avoided on kickoff returns for most of the first part of the season, senior **Courtney Smith** (Stockton, Calif./East Union HS) had 80 kick return yards on four returns. He entered play Saturday with just 83 return yards on five attempts this season. Smith also vaulted from 11th to seventh on the school's career list for kick return yardage ... Wildcat special teams have now blocked five kicks in their last three games and have at least one blocked kick in five of seven contests this season ... Central Washington has now won 15 consecutive night games dating back to the 2004 season. The Wildcats' last defeat under the lights was the 2004 Battle in Seattle, which was also their last loss against a GNAC opponent.

Central Washington	6	7	7	14	-	34
Humboldt State	7	13	0	7	--	27

HSU – Stollmeyer 52 pass from Proulx(Schierholt kick)

CWU – Rolsma 21 Field Goal

CWU – Rolsma 42 Field Goal

HSU – Devlin 10 pass from Proulx (Schierholt kick)

CWU – Eldridge 3 run (Rolsma kick)

HSU – Devlin 38 pass from Bolt (Schierholt kick)

CWU – Eldridge 1 run (Rolsma kick)

CWU – Bighill 2 blocked punt return (Rolsma kick)

CWU – Eldridge 3 run (Rolsma kick)

HSU – Smith 14 pass from Bolt(Schierholt kick)