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## Williston loses 41-40 heartbreaker to Newberry in double overtime



**Gerard Williams breaks loose for a first down around the left end.**

### Story and Photos

**By Terry Witt, Senior Reporter © Sept. 23, 2017 at 8:57 p.m.**

**NEWBERRY --** The Williston Red Devils Varsity Football Team suffered an agonizing 41-40 defeat in double overtime to the Newberry Panthers Friday night (Sept. 22) at Newberry's homecoming.

The hitting was fierce. The scoring was off the charts. Three game officials were knocked to the ground during game. One official never returned. He said his leg was bent backwards in an awkward way and his hips were hurting him. He had to be helped off the field.



**Williston quarterback C.J. Strange turns loose a touchdown pass. The 6-foot 3-inch junior quarterback showed his passing talent Friday night.**

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Newberry runner Tresell Curtis is trapped by Williston defenders in the end zone for a safety.



The Williston High School Band belts out a tune during a game timeout.

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**Greg Miller and Scarlett MacDonald were crowned Newberry homecoming royalty at half time.**



**The Williston High School defense kept Newberry out of the end zone three times on this goal line stand before the Panthers scored.**

Newberry is Class 3A, and Williston is Class 1A.

But this was a rivalry game nonetheless. The very fact that Newberry invited the Red

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Devils to be their homecoming opponent meant a battle was brewing. The invitation wasn't a compliment.

The Red Devils came close to winning the game, but came up one point shy of victory.

In the second overtime, Newberry handed the ball to their big running back, Sylvester Pernell, for the final play of the game. He found blocking off the right side of the line and ran for the two-point conversion.

Many of the Red Devil players dropped to their knees in disgust and frustration. The Panthers celebrated their homecoming win before a jam-packed crowd of Newberry fans.

Williston Head Varsity Football Coach Justin Wentworth said his boys played a great game except for special teams.

"Great game; Overtime; we didn't do what we needed to do," Wentworth said afterward.

Panther Football Coach Richard Vester cited the Panther offensive line as the reason for the win. He said the line gave the team opportunities to run the ball.

"We had success running really, running the ball all night, particularly in the second half," Vester said. "We felt pretty confident we could get three yards."

His confidence in the running game led to the decision to run for two points in the second overtime rather than kick the extra point.

Williston, 2-3, is scheduled to play Fort White on Friday. Newberry, 2-2, hosts Union County.

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## **Game Summary**

The Red Devil defense stopped the Panthers' first drive of the night and took over at its own 23, but the Panther defense returned the favor on Williston's first drive, forcing a field goal that missed its mark.

The Red Devils took advantage of a second quarter Newberry fumble on a punt return and drove 12 yards to score the first points of the night, a 5 yard run by Gerard Williams. Gavin Wallace added the extra point.

Newberry scored on its next possession when Tresell Curtis ran the kickoff back to Williston's 30 yard line. Pernell ran for a 3 yard touchdown, but the extra point was missed. Williston kept the lead.

Williston scored a safety on Newberry's next possession, pinning Curtis in the Panther end zone to take a 9-6 lead over the Panthers.

Neither team scored for the remainder of the half.

The Red Devils had first possession in the second half, but a Newberry interception led to a 41 yard Newberry drive capped by a 15 yard scoring run by quarterback David Robinson. The extra point was good.

Williston answered quickly with a 35 yard touchdown pass from quarterback C.J. Strange to receiver Tanner Fowler. Wallace added the extra point.

Newberry responded early in the third quarter when Pernell scored on a 5 yard run. The extra point gave Newberry a 20-14 lead.

Williston answered the call by driving 60 yards to score on a 5 yard run by Williams. Wallace added the extra point. The score was 23-20 with Williston in the lead.

Newberry responded when Pernell broke through a Williston goal line stand to score from 5 yards out. The extra point failed. Newberry led 26-23.

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Williston tied the game after driving from its own 35 to score on a 20 yard field goal by Wallace.

Newberry was unable to score on its final possession in regulation. The game went into overtime.

Sylvester ran for a score in the first overtime. The extra point was good. But Williston answered on a 5 yard touchdown pass from Strange to Jermiah James in the corner of the end zone. Wallace added the extra point.

Williston answered when Strange ran a quarterback keeper behind his offensive line for a touchdown. Wallace added the extra point. Williston led 40-33.

Newberry answered with a 3 yard run by Robinson. The Panthers took a time out to talk about it. They handed the ball to Sylvester for a two point conversion run.

Game over.

## Football Flyer



**A drone owned by the Newberry High School criminal justice program videoed the entire homecoming from all angles, but mostly from well above the participants.**

*Photo by Terry Witt © Sept. 23, 2017 at 8:57 p.m.*