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# Loss to Baker gives Jewell more incentive

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Many coaches can look to one game during the course of a season where a victory turned the team around. William Jewell Coach Vic Wallace looks to a loss as the Cardinals' turning point.

Baker handed Jewell a 10-0 decision three weeks ago, a decision that virtually ended the Cardinals' quest for the Heart of America Athletic Conference title. But Jewell wanted to keep a string of playoff appearances alive and the players have responded with two wins to raise the Cardinals record to 7-1-1, good enough for a No. 7 ranking in NAIA Division II.

"We went through a couple of periods early in the season where we weren't playing very good football," Wallace said. "But we've been playing real aggressive, technically sound football the last few weeks.

"I think we played an excellent game against Baker and we lost. But there has been a big turnaround. Since that ball game we've played well.

"Our players came out of that game refreshed. It wasn't just the loss, but for the first time all year we gave a total effort. Now we've just exploded offensively and defensively and our players realize that it is fun.

"It was an important game at the time from the standpoint that it did propel us into high gear. Now this is the most important game of the year, because if we win it, we're in the playoffs and have a shot at the national championship."

Jewell today travels to Tarkio, 3-6, for the regular-season finale. The Cardinals need a victory to stay in the playoff hunt. Come Sunday, the NAIA will take the top eight ranked teams and seed them in the playoffs. A loss would probably knock Jewell out of the top eight.

In other HoA games, league champion Baker hosts Central Methodist and Culver-Stockton is at Mid-America Nazarene. Graceland winds up its season with a non-conference game at Southwest Baptist (Mo.). Missouri Valley finished the season last week and is ranked 17th in NAIA Division II.

**Central Methodist at Baker:** Central Methodist, 1-8 overall and 1-5 in the league, is a sacrificial lamb in this game. Baker wants to complete its season unbeaten and untied but also wants a shutout to tie an NAIA record with six shutouts this season. Baker, ranked No. 3 in Division II, has the top defensive team in the NAIA in terms of points and yardage allowed.