

## Sievertsen getting his kicks at UNI

Written by Jim Ecker

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CEDAR FALLS - Tyler Sievertsen does not believe in jinxes, so it's OK to ask him about his incredible streak of kicking PATs for the University of Northern Iowa football team.

Sievertsen, an all-state kicker during his prep career at Kennedy High School, has been UNI's top place-kicker for the past three years and has piled up some incredible numbers.

"I'm aware of them. I don't think about them," he said Saturday night after the fifth-ranked Panthers drilled No.9 McNeese State, 41-6, in the UNI-Dome. "I know the extra-point one is coming up here."

Sievertsen, a fifth-year senior, kicked five PATs Saturday and is now 97 for 97 in his career. He went 39 for 39 in 2011, was 41 for 41 last year and is 17 for 17 this season.

In short, he's been absolutely perfect as he nears the century mark.

"I'm not going to think about what number we're at," he said. "You have to go out every day and take every kick like it's your last."

The school record for consecutive PATs is 101, set by Brian Mitchell during his career from 1989 to 1991. Sievertsen needs four more PATs to tie the record and five to break it.

The Panthers (4-0) visit top-ranked North Dakota State (4-0) this Saturday in a showdown of FCS football powers. If Sievertsen kicks four or five PATs against the Bison, it would mean the Panthers had a good day in Fargo.

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Sievertsen does not take his streak or his accuracy for granted. He takes a serious, business-like approach to every attempt. He won't allow himself to get complacent or take success for granted.

"Every point matters," he said.

Sievertsen also has been highly successful on field goals. He's hit 35 of 42 during his career for a slick 83.3 percent. He missed his first attempt against McNeese State, but rebounded and made his next two.

Sievertsen has been highly decorated during his career at Northern Iowa. He's been named first team all-conference and second team All-American and has been a steady weapon for the Panthers with his placekicking and kickoffs.

Sievertsen quickly credits the entire team - snapper, holder and blockers - for doing their jobs on the special teams. He also credits the offense for putting him in position to make the PATs and field goals, and the defense for getting UNI the ball.

"It's a team effort," he said.

Sievertsen spent his first two years at Northern Iowa as a spectator before getting his chance as a redshirt sophomore in 2011. He's made the most of it and enjoyed an excellent career.

"I'm definitely satisfied," he said. "It's definitely very humbling. But again, it's not just me. There's a whole cast and crew behind you."

Saturday's game against McNeese State was supposed to have been a showdown of Top 10 FCS teams. Instead, it became a showcase for the Panthers.

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"I think it shows what this team is about," said Sievertsen. "I've been here for five years now. This is definitely a different team. We're a lot closer.

"We have fun when we play," he said. "We're really excited for next week."

North Dakota State has won the last two FCS national titles. The Panthers will be underdogs Saturday, but they've got a chance to upset the Bison and climb higher in the polls themselves.

Sievertsen plans to get his marketing degree from UNI in December. After that, he's hopeful of getting in the NFL.

"That's the plan," he said. "Who knows what the future holds?"