

Late push not enough for Wildcats against Paola



Louisburg sophomore Haden Yeager battles a Paola player for the ball during a match earlier this season. The Wildcats fell to Paola, 3-1, on the road on Oct. 8 at Paola High School.

PAOLA – For the last 15 minutes of its match with Paola, the Louisburg boys soccer team put the Panthers on their heels.

The Wildcats controlled possession and had numerous shots on goal, including one that found the back of the net. Unfortunately for Louisburg, the first 65 minutes didn't look like the final 15.

Paola opened the game with three goals, including two in the second half, and Louisburg couldn't catch up in a 3-1 loss on Oct. 8 at Paola High School. The Wildcats defeated Paola, 4-0, earlier in the season but it was a much different match this time around.

"We really played hard the last 15 minutes or so, and if we played that hard the entire game, I think it is vastly different outcome," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We gave up a couple of incredibly soft goals and didn't play hard. Then all of a sudden the last 15 minutes we decided to play hard. I don't know why we couldn't get up for a rival game. I thought we were ready to go, but it just didn't work out that way."

One positive to come from the Wildcats' loss was the return of midfielder Landon Johnson. The Louisburg junior suffered a leg injury in the offseason and made his season debut against the Panthers.

Johnson contributed in his first game back as he recorded an assist on the Wildcats' lone goal. He set up senior Brock Bila with 13 minutes left in the match and Bila's goal gave Louisburg a little bit of life.

"I thought he did fine out there," Conley said of Johnson. "His vision helps us a bunch, along with his knowledge of the game. He usually puts the ball right where it needs to be and he did a good job for the time he was out there. Once he gets more comfortable out there, he will help us even more."

Louisburg played without five varsity players again against the Panthers and injuries continue to mount against the Wildcats. They did get some time to heal up as they had a week off from action before the final week of the regular season.

The Wildcats (5-9) return to action today when they travel to Ottawa. Louisburg will then host Senior Night on Thursday when it faces off with Piper.