

Harding's big game lifts Wildcats



Louisburg sophomore Grant Harding goes up for two of his of his 23 points Tuesday against Baldwin in Louisburg. The Wildcats won 57-45.

Grant Harding walked out of the Louisburg boys locker room Tuesday and ran into Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin, who had a rolled up banner ad in his hand that Harding had broken with a blocked shot during the Wildcats' game with Baldwin.

"You owe me 5 bucks," Gagnebin joked to Harding.

Harding couldn't hold back the grin. He and the rest of the Wildcats had a lot to smile about.

The Louisburg sophomore led the way with a game-high 23 points to help the Wildcats to a 57-45 victory over Baldwin in Louisburg. The victory snapped a nine-game losing skid and is the third time the Wildcats have defeated the Bulldogs this season

"This is obviously a huge win for us," Harding said. "We really needed this as we are getting close to the end of the season. Hopefully this will give us the boost we need and we can start getting some momentum as we get closer to substate."

Harding was a big boost for Louisburg as he seemed to be all

over the floor. Along with his 23 points, he finished with 11 rebounds, five assists, two steals, two blocked shots and one broken banner. He was also 11 for 11 from the free-throw line.

A lot of those assists came as Harding brought the ball up the floor. In the absence of point guard Corbin Wertz, who is still out with an injury, he played a point forward at times trying to initiate the offense.

“Grant was fantastic and we really needed him to be,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “With Corbin being out, we needed to find some offense somewhere and Grant really stepped up and took control. It was great to see, but what was even better was we were able to find 34 points from other spots on the floor.”

Senior Brady Lambeth rose to the challenge as he joined Harding in double figures with 17 points, including two 3-pointers. The Wildcats (5-12) also did a good job on the boards as senior Nathan Moore led Louisburg with 14 rebounds from the guard spot.



Wildcat senior Brady Lambeth puts up a shot over two Baldwin defenders Tuesday in Louisburg.

“I think Brady is getting it and the game is finally slowing down for him,” Nelson said. “A lot of times he is a mismatch out there on the floor, and it is all about trying to exploit those mismatches and he did a great job of that for us. He is starting to figure it out.”

As good as the game ended up being for the Wildcats, it didn't

start out that way. Both teams were sluggish from the floor and the game was tied at 6-all going into the second quarter.

It didn't get much better in the second as Louisburg center T.J. Dover was saddled with three fouls and the Wildcats were forced to play small. Baldwin was able to take advantage and turn that into a 23-18 halftime lead.

Baldwin built a seven-point lead early in the third quarter, but the Wildcats responded with an 18-5 run to grab a 36-30 lead. Lambeth connected on two 3-pointers in the quarter and the Wildcats also got baskets from Harding, Moore and Guetterman.

Louisburg answered with another 8-3 run to start the fourth quarter to pull away for the win.

"There have been times this year where we have lacked a killer instinct and it has hurt us, but we found it in that second half," Nelson said. "This win was huge for us."

The Wildcats will try and start a win streak Friday when they travel to Spring Hill. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

LOUISBURG 6 12

18 21 - 57

BALDWIN 6 17

7 15 - 45

LOUISBURG (5-12): Grant Harding 6-12 11-11 23; Brady Lambeth 7-14 1-1 17; Jacob Welsh 2-5 2-2 6; T.J. Dover 2-8 0-3 4; Nathan Moore 1-4 1-3 3; Sam Guetterman 1-3 0-2 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 20-47 15-22 57. 3-point field goals: 2, (Lambeth 2)