

Wildcat football wraps up summer workouts



Louisburg lineman Anders Vance breaks through the line in a drill during the Wildcats' team camp in June. The Wildcats finished up their team workouts with a 7-on-7 tournament on July 18.

The season can't get here fast enough for Louisburg football coach Kyle Littrell and this is after a summer filled with camps, weight sessions and other workouts.

Some coaches might want a little break to regroup, but these last two months have left Littrell optimistic about what is to come.

"I really do love this group of players," Littrell said. "We had a really good summer and we got a lot of things accomplished. The chemistry is starting to come together and we have gotten better in a lot of areas. We are more experienced than we have been the last two years and it will show on the field."

Football was on the mind of a lot of players this summer as they participated in many different activities that began with 7-on-7 workouts every Monday in June. The Wildcat skill players traveled to Paola to work on both sides of the ball

against teams from around the area.

"I think what 7-on-7 was gave us a chance to look and see what teams will have coming back like Paola and Spring Hill," Littrell said. "I know 7-on-7 is a lot about passing and offense, but I really think defensively it helped us out a lot. We developed better communication, especially in the secondary and that is really big for us. Offensively we are obviously not going to throw the ball 30-40 times a game like we do in these drills, but it definitely helped us there as well."

Those sessions, along with the Louisburg team camp and a scrimmage with Blue Valley Southwest in July, gave Littrell a good look at what is his biggest competition of the offseason – quarterback.

Senior Austin Terry and junior Grant Harding have both gotten plenty of snaps the last two months as both are vying for the starting quarterback job. Both started games last year for the Wildcats, but both have different styles.

Terry is considered to have the more accurate arm, while Harding is better running the ball. The quarterbacks have their pluses and minuses and it has made for a good competition, Littrell said.

"I challenged both guys to improve in different areas before the summer started," he said. "I wanted Austin to try and be more of a physical runner and I wanted Grant to be a little more accurate throwing the ball. Both guys have done a great job of improving in both areas. They have taken coaching and instruction really well and both are fighters and that is what you want out of your starting quarterback.

"I kind of have an idea of who I want the starter to be, but I am not quite sure yet. When it comes down to it, I need to sit back and figure out how to get the best 11 guys on the field."

Whoever the quarterback is, Littrell knows they are going to have a large offensive line protecting him. He saw a lot of positives from his front five, including their work in a scrimmage with Blue Valley Southwest on July 17.

Both teams participated in the full pad scrimmage that featured light tackling, however the Louisburg coach was pleased with what he got out of his offensive and defensive lines.

"I thought the scrimmage was really good for both teams and we did some nice things," Littrell said. "Defensively, we had a rough day and we didn't communicate well and we fell asleep on a lot of counters and sweeps. But I thought we really did a nice job in-between the tackles of stopping the run.

"Our line is going to be bigger than we have seen here in a really long time. Bigger doesn't always mean better, but these guys have improved and I look forward to seeing them improve even more as the season gets closer."

The Wildcats concluded their summer the next day at the Blue Valley Midsummer Classic 7-on-7 tournament and represented well. Louisburg was the smallest school of the 14 teams in attendance.

Louisburg finished with a 3-3-2 record and Littrell noticed a trend on a couple of their defeats.

"I really thought our guys competed well for the most part and we beat some decent teams, but two of our three losses were after we sat out for a break, which told me that we didn't do a good job of staying focused," he said. "So after that second one, I talked to them about it and we go out and beat St. James 20-0 in our next one so I think the message got across and it was a good learning experience for our guys."

The Wildcats won't have to wait long before they take the field again as the first day of practice begins Aug. 17 and

the first game will be Sept. 4 when the Wildcats host Ottawa.

- **BENEFIT POKER TOURNAMENT:** Friends of the Louisburg High School football program will be hosting a benefit dinner and Texas Hold'Em Poker Tournament at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 22 at the American Legion in Louisburg. The poker tournament begins at 6:30 p.m. and all proceeds will benefit the Louisburg High School football program.