

Missed chances hurt Cats in loss to Paola



Junior Noah Juarez heads the ball away during Louisburg's home match with Paola on Tuesday. The Wildcats took an early lead, but couldn't hold on in the 2-1 loss to the Panthers and they have now lost two straight.

Less than 15 seconds into the match, the Louisburg soccer team converted on one of its toughest goals in the short season.

Herman Knipp crossed the ball into the box and found the head of Christian Scholtz, who put it in the back of the net to give the Wildcats an early lead over Paola.

It was the easy opportunities that gave the Wildcats problems.

Louisburg had several chances to put some distance between itself and Paola on Tuesday in Louisburg, but the Panthers took advantage of a couple Wildcat mistakes to steal a 2-1 game.

"The frustrating part for me was we were the more talented team and we didn't win, but that will happen from time to time," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "You have to give Paola credit. They are a better team than they were a year ago and they played hard. We just had so many chances and we just didn't take advantage."

“Right now we are lacking that instinct to put teams away, and the longer you let an opponent hang around the more confidence they get. We just need to put this behind us and figure out how to get better.”



Louisburg defender Jacob Benne heads the ball away Tuesday during the Wildcats' home game with Paola.

The Wildcats (1-2) had approximately 20 shots on goal, many of which were either just wide or were stopped on big saves from Paola goalie Alex Slawson.

Following Scholtz's goal to open the match, the game remained at a back-and-forth pace until midway through the first half when Paola's Niklas Kramer scored on a 1-on-1 with Louisburg goalie Michael Minster.

Late in the first half, the Panthers nearly took the lead but Minster knocked away a shot at the top of the net to keep the game tied. Louisburg junior Noah Juarez found himself in a 1-on-1 situation with Slawson right before halftime, but his shot went wide left.

It was much of the same in the second half. Juarez, Jairus Brown, Scholtz, Cale Schneider and T.J. Svoboda all had shots on goal, but couldn't convert.

The Panthers were able to take advantage of a Wildcat miscue on defense midway through the second half as Paola's Manny Velasquez took a shot that hit the right post and went in.

"We have known since the beginning of the season that weakest part of our team is defense," York said. "We are a little young and inexperienced back there and we made a couple of mistakes. We just have to play better overall as a team. We have to start playing with more confidence."

The Wildcats continued to put pressure on Slawson all the way up to the final seconds. With under 10 seconds left, Louisburg passed the ball up the field to Knipp, who dribbled into the box.

Knipp was taken down and the side official waved his flag to indicate a foul that would have given Louisburg a penalty kick and a chance to tie the game once again.

However, the head official had declared that time already expired before the foul was committed.

"Normally, in situations like that the head referee will go to his AR (assistant referee) and talk with him to see if the right call was made," York said. "But the head referee never went over to talk with him and that is his choice. It was just a big moment in the game that could have given us a penalty kick, and possibly tied the game, so I just figured he would have double checked with his AR."

Louisburg will try and snap its two-game skid today when it travels to Spring Hill. Varsity action is set to begin at 6 p.m.

Wildcats lose first game of season to Ottawa

Coming off an easy win to start the season, Louisburg ran up against a tough Frontier League opponent in Ottawa on Sept. 3.

Ottawa pulled away in the second half and Louisburg fell 3-0 at Ottawa High School to record its first loss of the season. The Cyclones scored one goal in the first half and the Wildcats had their chances to tie or take the lead, but Ottawa scored two late goals in the second half to seal the win.

"We definitely had our chances in the Ottawa game, we just shot ourselves in the foot a couple different times," York said. "Ottawa is a good quality team, but what they do best is take advantage of other teams' mistakes, and we made a couple in the back that hurt us. We just stood around and watched the ball a couple times. Ottawa may have only had like five shots on goal but they made them count."