

Wildcats respond with big second half



Louisburg's Grant Harding signals for a touchdown as teammate Cole Kramer runs into the endzone for the Wildcats' first touchdown of the season Friday. The Wildcats scored 28 points in the second half against Ottawa to roll to a 35-6 win.

As the Louisburg High School football team ventured to its locker room at halftime of Friday's season opener against Ottawa, coach Kyle Littrell gave his players an option.

The Wildcats held a touchdown lead after two quarters in their home debut, but at times they looked sluggish. The performance had reminded Littrell of what his previous two teams have looked like.

"Guys, we are in the same place we have been the last two years," Littrell told his team. "Do you want to continue to be that, or do you want to be a different team?"

Following the game, it was obvious the Wildcats chose the latter.

Louisburg racked up 28 second-half points on its way to a 35-6 blowout win over Ottawa in which the Wildcats got several big plays on both sides of the ball.

“It was a great team win and everyone contributed,” Littrell said. “The kids played hard in the second half and they responded to the challenge. I think they decided they wanted to be a different team.”

It started on the defensive end for the Wildcats. Louisburg forced four turnovers, including three in the second half that eventually turned into two touchdowns.

Junior Dustyn Rizzo was a force on the defensive line for Louisburg as he caused a lot of havoc. Rizzo led the team with two sacks, a forced fumble, a fumble recovery and had five tackles.

Fellow junior T.J. Dover was also strong up front with a team-high six solo tackles and had two fumble recoveries. Junior linebacker Thomas San Agustin had four tackles to go along with a forced fumble and a fumble recovery. Senior lineman Anders Vance also had a forced fumble.



Junior lineman Dustyn Rizzo wraps up an Ottawa runner during the Wildcats' home opener on Friday. Rizzo led the Louisburg

**defense with two sacks,
along with a forced
fumble and a fumble
recovery.**

“Both of them have motors and length,” Littrell said of Rizzo and Dover. “They have power and explosion and it is nice to have players like that – that just go. You can tell even after the first game that our kids love each other, they love the coaching staff and the coaches love them.

“At the end of the day, we know this is just one game. We started off 2-0 last year as well, but we ended up 3-6 so our work is cut out for us to get better.”

Offensively, the Wildcats were able to wear out the Cyclones on the ground and then beat them over the top with the pass. Senior quarterback Austin Terry found several different targets as he finished 10 of 12 passing for 183 yards and three touchdowns.

Terry found his favorite target of the night, Cole Kramer, on a 39-yard touchdown pass down the sideline with five minutes left in the first quarter to give the Wildcats the early lead. Kramer finished with five catches for 107 yards.

“He is making good decisions with the ball,” Littrell said. “We have kids that are running good routes for him and our offensive line is giving him enough time to throw the ball. He is going to have to continue to get better and he is not as good as he can be yet.”

From there, however, the Wildcat offense stalled a couple different times as they failed to convert on two fourth downs. Late in the second quarter, Ottawa was driving in hopes of tying the game, but Rizzo forced an Ottawa fumble that allowed the Wildcats to hold on to their lead.

“I thought they dominated us on the line of scrimmage when we

were on offense in the first half and even a little bit of the third quarter," Littrell said. "I knew their bigs would get tired before ours did so we just had to keep pounding it in there and loosen them up with some passes and getting their d-backs to drop a little bit and we did that."

The offensive line of Vance, Rizzo, Dover, Jarod Woodward, Garrett Lowry, tight end Grant Harding and fullback Alex Dunn, helped plow the way for the Wildcat rushing attack. Louisburg racked up 226 yards on the ground on 43 carries, which averaged a little more than 5 yards an attempt.

Ottawa started to wear down in the third quarter and the Wildcats took advantage when Terry found Mitchell McLellan for a 44-yard touchdown pass as McLellan blew by his defender for the easy score.

Terry once again found the endzone with his arm, this time he connected with Grant Harding on a 9-yard touchdown pass. That came after the Wildcat defense forced another fumble to set up the short field.

On Ottawa's next possession, Louisburg forced another fumble and recovered 14 yards away from another score. San Agustin finished the drive off with a 5-yard touchdown run to make it 28-0 late in the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter, the Wildcats sealed the win when Korbin Hankinson scored on a 9-yard touchdown run. That score was set up on a 54-yard run by Jake Hill to put the Wildcats in the redzone.

"I think the last quarter-and-a-half we ran the ball a heck of a lot better," Littrell said. "It was just one of those things where you run the ball it takes their will to play away."

Louisburg will try to make it two in a row this Friday when they travel to Eudora. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOUISBURG		7	0
21	7 - 35		
OTTAWA		0	0
0	6 - 6		

First quarter

L: Cole Kramer 39 pass from Austin Terry (Alex Dunn kick)

Third quarter

L: Mitchell McLellan 44 pass from Terry (Dunn kick)

L: Grant Harding 9 pass from Terry (Dunn kick)

L: Thomas San Agustin 5 run (Dunn kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Korbin Hankinson 9 run (Dunn kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Jake Hill 4-65; Thomas San Agustin 15-55; Korbin Hankinson 8-37; Austin Terry 8-29; Cole Kramer 2-13; Grant Harding 2-10; Mitchell McLellan 1-7; Alex Dunn 1-2. Totals 43-226.

PASSING: Austin Terry 10-12-183-3-0

RECEIVING: Cole Kramer 5-107; Mitchell McLellan 2-54; Grant Harding 1-11; Dillin Roberts 1-11.