

Louisburg runs away from Sumner



Louisburg's Grant Harding gets a block from teammate Alex Dunn and runs down the sideline for a touchdown during Friday's district playoff game against Sumner Academy at Wildcat Stadium. The Wildcats won going away, 63-6.

The Louisburg football team left a lasting impression on Sumner Academy during Friday's district playoff opener at Wildcat Stadium.

Sumner Academy couldn't seem to shake the image of the back of the Wildcat jerseys. It was what the Sabres saw most of the night.

Louisburg scored early and often and racked up 56 first half points and came away with a 63-6 victory. The Wildcats picked up their third consecutive victory as well as they are one win away from making the state playoffs.

"The thing about this whole week was getting better," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. "It didn't matter who our opponent was, we just wanted to make sure that we got better."

It is hard to dispute that Louisburg (6-1) didn't get better.

The Wildcats ran up and down the field on the Sabres and they

couldn't be stopped, especially in the first half. Louisburg accumulated 387 yards on the ground and 446 total yards despite having a running clock the entire second half.

Louisburg had several different options in the backfield as 11 different players had rushing attempts for the Wildcats. Junior Korbin Hankinson led the way with 91 yards on just seven carries with two touchdowns, while teammate Thomas San Agustin had 88 yards on just four carries with a pair of touchdowns.

"That is a luxury that we have right now," Littrell said. "We have some tough running backs back there that have a little bit of speed and they enjoy the physical style of play. Most smaller backs would like to be on the perimeter running a lot sweeps, but our backs love to run iso and they love to run in the middle of the field. We have done a good job of opening holes for them. The thing I have been most impressed with is they are protecting the football and that is key."



Louisburg's Austin Moore (48), Nick Hull (44), Matthew Rison (56) and Tucker Batten (80) surround a Sumner Academy player Friday.

The Wildcats took off running from the opening kickoff as

junior Jake Hill broke free for a 44-yard return that set up a short field. Two plays later, San Agustin found the endzone on a 29-yard run to put Louisburg up a touchdown less than a minute into the game.

It was Hankinson's turn on Louisburg's next possession as he ended the Wildcat drive with a 3-yard touchdown to go up two scores.

Defense was also key for the Wildcats as they forced four turnovers, including an interception by Cole Kramer after Hankinson's touchdown.

Louisburg's offensive line of Anders Vance, Dustyn Rizzo, Garrett Lowry, Mason Koechner, T.J. Dover and Jarod Woodward opened holes all night for the running game and San Agustin took advantage on the Wildcats' next possession. San Agustin scored on a 40-yard touchdown run to put Louisburg up 21-0 that was set up by a 21-yard pass from Austin Terry to Grant Harding.

Right before the end of the first quarter, the Wildcats added more points when Hankinson scored on a 15-yard touchdown run to put the game out of reach.

The Wildcat defense forced three turnovers in the second quarter. Linebacker Alex Dunn recovered a fumble and then was rewarded with a 3-yard touchdown run.

On Sumner's next possession, Dover forced a fumble on the line of scrimmage and Vance picked it up. Hill then scored the team's sixth touchdown of the night on a 9-yard run to go up 42-0.

Harding picked off a Sumner pass on the Sabres' next drive, and then entered as quarterback for the rest of the quarter. Harding ran the option for a 30-yard touchdown and then found the endzone with a 13-yard run just minutes later to put Louisburg up 56-0.

The Wildcats put in a lot of their reserves with a running clock in the second half, but that didn't make anything less exciting. With the chant of "Owen" from the crowd, Littrell put in backup running back Owen Staver in the fourth quarter and he scored his first varsity touchdown on a 3-yard run to seal the win.

Staver was greeted by an excited sideline after his score as it was hard to wipe the smiles off the faces of his teammates and coaches. It was just one of many moments that the starters had a chance to watch the reserves in action.

"It is awesome because those kids do the same amount of work those kids do that get to play every Friday night," Littrell said. "They do the summer work and 2-a-days and their role on this team is just as important as anyone else's.

"One thing I mentioned to the kids at halftime was that this was an opportunity for them to provide leadership. When they are out there, help them out and make sure they are in the right place or help them out if they have done something wrong. That is leadership. That is what we want to establish from top to bottom. I thought our kids responded well and supported each other great."

The challenge will be far greater this coming Friday when Louisburg travels to No. 1-ranked, and defending state champion, Bishop Miege.

"It is a huge challenge, but it is another ballgame," Littrell said. "We can't make it bigger than what it is. I think that is maybe what our problem was in the Paola game is we got too amped up. It is district play and I get that, but at the same time it is not the state championship game. It is just a game. We are going to do all our usual stuff and try to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

"I just want to be as physical as we can with them. We are not scared of them. If they get us, they get us. If they don't,

then they don't. We are going to go out and play the most physical brand of football we know how to play and let the chips fall where they may. I know our kids are going to play their rear ends off and they are going to give it everything they have."

LOUISBURG		28	28
0	7 - 63		
SUMNER		0	0
0	6 - 6		

First quarter

L: Thomas San Agustin 29 run (Alex Dunn kick)

L: Korbin Hankinson 3 run (Dunn kick)

L: San Agustin 40 run (Dunn kick)

L: Hankinson 15 run (Dunn kick)

Second quarter

L: Alex Dunn 3 run (Dunn kick)

L: Jake Hill 9 run (Dunn kick)

L: Grant Harding 30 run (Dunn kick)

L: Harding 13 run (Dunn kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Owen Staver 3 run (Dunn kick)

S: 58 run (kick failed)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Korbin Hankinson 7-91; Thomas San Agustin 4-88; Grant Harding 2-43; Jake Hill 5-37; Alex Dunn 4-28; Will Ridley 5-22; Nick Hull 2-21; Kyle Allen 4-19; Austin Moore 2-18, Owen Staver 3-18; Austin Terry 1-4.

PASSING: Austin Terry 3-3-59

RECEIVING: Grant Harding 2-55; Mitchell McLellan 1-4