

# Wildcats fight hard on senior night



Louisburg's Noah Juarez goes up for the bicycle kick in the box during the Wildcats' final home contest Thursday against Ottawa. The shot found the back of the net for the Wildcats' first goal, but Louisburg fell 3-2. The Wildcats also honored their seven seniors during the senior night ceremony following the game.

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As Louisburg High soccer coach Ben York looked onto the field in the waning seconds of his team's final regular season contest, he saw one thing.

York saw a never-give-up attitude – especially from his seniors.

It was fitting that his seniors left it all out on the pitch in the Wildcats' 3-2 loss on senior night to Ottawa on Thursday in Louisburg. It was a night filled with mixed emotions as Jairus Brown, Parker Cates, Hunter Mitchell, Michael Minster, Cale Schneider and T.J. Svoboda were recognized following the contest.

“Most of these guys have been varsity from the very first second that they came into the program,” York said. “It has been fun to watch them progress. Our whole team progression

goes as our seniors go. When they play well, we play well.”

For the most part, the Wildcats played strong, considering Ottawa blanked Louisburg back in early September. Playing without sophomore midfielder Grant Ryals who was out with an illness, Louisburg was forced to reshuffle their lineup again.

The injury moved Brown to midfielder and brought Curran Conklin off the bench to start on defense. Despite that, the Wildcats were ready to go from the start.

Cates, Brown and Mitchell all had shots on goal in the first two minutes of the contest, but the Wildcats didn't let up on their shots on goal.

Junior Noah Juarez received a cross into the box when he decided to go up into the air in a group of Ottawa defenders for a bicycle kick. The move worked as he fired the ball into the right corner and gave the Wildcats a 1-0 in the 11<sup>th</sup> minute.

“That was the best goal I have seen here in probably seven or eight years,” York said. “That is something that he practices all the time. He got a great cross and he got on the end of it. I was fortunate that I was at the right angle where I was able to see it, because if I would have missed it then it would have been a real bummer. It was fantastic and the goalie didn't have a chance to stop it.”



**Louisburg High School soccer**

seniors were honored on senior night Thursday. The LHS seniors (from left) are Michael Minster, T.J. Svobda, manager Lilly Scott, Cale Schneider, head coach Ben York, Jairus Brown, Parker Cates and Hunter Mitchell.

Ottawa went on the attack in the 27<sup>th</sup> minute when the Cyclones struck a shot on goal, but was saved by Minster as he came out of the goal. The shot rebounded back to an Ottawa player who had an empty net, but his shot was knocked away by Schneider.

The scrum around the goal continued as Minster saved another shot, but this time the Cyclones were there for the rebound again and tied it up.

Sophomore Christian Scholtz had the best chance to give the Wildcats the lead back in the 36<sup>th</sup> minute, but his shot from the left shot rolled across the top of the post and rolled out. The game stayed tied 1-1 at halftime.

Ottawa scored two goals within minutes of each other, with the final one coming in the 58<sup>th</sup> minute to put the Cyclones up 3-1.

The Wildcats (4-10-2) didn't give up as Juarez had a shot in the box that was deflected by Ottawa, but sophomore Raistlin Brewer was right there for the rebound and found the back of the net in the 63<sup>rd</sup> minute to make it 3-2.

"We conceded some silly goals," York said. "It hurts not playing with your starting midfielder in Grant, and we are not a team that does well when we are not our full unit. We don't have a whole lot of depth in our group. Our seniors did a good job to carry us to the result we had, which was a more

reasonable result than 3-1 would have been.

“We had a lot more possession of the ball and we did a lot more with it than we did the last time we played. We have progressed a lot since the beginning of the season.”

Despite the loss, the six Wildcat seniors will have at least one more home game. Louisburg begins the regional playoffs at 4:30 p.m. today as the No. 7 seed Wildcats host No. 10 Fort Scott (2-14) in the East Regional. The Wildcats defeated Fort Scott 10-0 earlier in the season.

Should the Wildcats advance, they will travel to No. 2 Independence (9-7) for a 4 p.m. start Tuesday with the regional championship set for Thursday.

“We have the type of team that can surprise some people in the playoffs,” York said. “We can play with any team in our region. We have played two of the top teams in our region and we have played them pretty tough. We have to get this first game out of the way, but I feel like we are an uptick and we can play well. If we can win two games then we are in the regional championship, and that is what we want.”