

Wildcats overcome odds to beat Paola



Louisburg junior Noah Juarez (right) boots the ball away from the Wildcat net during their match with Paola last month. The Wildcats traveled to Paola on Thursday and came away with a 3-1 victory to avenge a loss earlier in the year.

PAOLA – Playing with a full 11 players on the soccer pitch is hard enough to get a win, but to compete with only 10 makes it extremely difficult.

The Louisburg soccer team played all but 15 minutes with a man down during Thursday's road contest in Paola. In the end, the Wildcats made it look a lot easier than it actually was.

Louisburg strung together three second half goals on its way to a 3-1 win over the Panthers. The win was an even bigger one for the Wildcats as they avenged a loss to Paola from earlier in the season and have now won three in a row.

"I am not sure why, but it seemed like we played better when we had just 10 guys on the field," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "I am not sure if we were just more focused or fired up because of what happened, but we were able to control most of the game, which was great to see. We had to move some guys around in different spots, but everyone responded well and we

played together.”

It all started 10 minutes into the match when defender Cale Schneider and a Paola player both received yellow cards. A few minutes later, the Wildcats were awarded a free kick. Schneider set the ball quickly and kicked it.

The ball hit the Paola player, who wasn't the required 10 yards away from the play according to York, and Schneider received his second yellow card, which became a red and was forced to leave the game. The red card also means Schneider will miss the next contest as well.

“Cale was just trying to play fast and get the ball up the field,” York said. “I didn't agree with the call as I didn't think he did anything wrong there, but you have to go with what the official called. It was unfortunate for us, but I thought our guys responded well to the challenge of playing a man down.”

With Schneider, the Wildcats' defensive leader out of the game, York moved midfielder Noah Juarez back to stopper to help contain the Paola attack. Defenders Hunter Mitchell and Jairus Brown also made up for the loss of Schneider with strong play in the back as well.

As it turned out, it was Juarez who led the Wildcat offensive attack as well. Juarez scored two goals to give Louisburg a scoring boost and senior T.J. Svoboda added a goal of his own.

After a scoreless first half, Svoboda scored in the opening minutes of the second half to put Louisburg up 1-0, but the lead didn't last long as Paola responded and tied the match just minutes later.

Louisburg (4-6-1) took the lead for good midway through the second half as Paola was called for a foul in the box, the Wildcats were awarded a penalty kick and Juarez converted the opportunity.

Juarez gave the Wildcats a two-goal lead later on a free kick from 25 yards out that found the back of the net.

"I thought we really controlled possession as we had a lot of shots on goal, especially in the second half," York said. "I think we had like 20 for the game, so that was definitely great to see."

Louisburg will try for another revenge win at 4 p.m. today when it hosts Spring Hill. The Wildcats fell to the Broncos 2-1 earlier in the season and they hope they can add another win to their streak.

"You can tell with the games we have had recently that we have gotten more opportunities and we are gaining more confidence, which is what we need," York said. "We are playing better and we are a better team than when we played Spring Hill a few weeks ago. We just need to go out and show it, and I think we can."