

Opinion: Wildcats' season bigger than one loss



The Louisburg High School football team made a lot of strides this season as the Wildcats finished with a 7-3 record after tallying just three wins a season ago. The Wildcat seniors gave the program the jump start it needed and turned it into a successful year.

Losing stinks. Let's just get that out of the way right now.

There is nothing worse than seeing your season, which you have spent months preparing for, only to watch it end prematurely. If you are a senior, it makes it even worse. The thought of not playing another game for your school hits a lot of athletes hard.

As much as students say they can't wait to graduate, there is a part of them that loves the opportunity to play in front of their community with some of their best friends – friendships that were in some cases forged as early as preschool or kindergarten.

This brings us to what happened on a cool Friday evening in Basehor.

The Louisburg football team came up short in the hopes of advancing into the state playoffs after losing to Basehor-

Linwood 41-34 in what was a back-and-forth affair. The emotional heart strings tugged hard after this one and for good reason.

For one, the Wildcats said goodbye to 12 seniors who suited up for the final time that night, but more importantly that senior class put a lot into helping the program bounce back from what was a frustrating season a year ago after tallying just three wins.

Last season, the Wildcats finished the year with just three wins and ended up missing the playoffs – a rarity when it comes to Louisburg football. However, a group of seniors wanted to make sure that didn't repeat itself.

Kyle Haith, Austin Terry, John Hastings, Mitchell McLellan, Alex Dunn, Cole Kramer, Dillin Roberts, Chris Turner, Anders Vance, Tristen Shrock, Jarod Woodward and Jaret Gilliland all led the charge in starting that work over the summer and it carried over into the season.

Along with a talented group of underclassmen, these seniors were able to complete what has been a big turnaround. It has been less than a week since the loss, so the disappointment still hasn't left some of the players or coaches, but the season was far from a failure.

In fact, I would consider it a big success.

Sure, losing in the first round of the playoffs doesn't always equal progress, but this Wildcat group took a giant step forward.

There were times where quarterback Austin Terry put the team on his back and led the team for a go-ahead touchdown or a come-from-behind win. Fellow senior receivers Mitchell McLellan and Cole Kramer each had big catches for touchdowns that provided some highlight reel moments.

The offensive line, led by Anders Vance, gave the Wildcats a nice push up front, while senior linebacker Alex Dunn was a leader on the Wildcat defense.

Coach Kyle Littrell did a great job over the summer of regrouping his team and getting them focused on the upcoming season. Despite a couple hiccups along the way, Littrell and those seniors paved the way for even more success in the coming years.

Just like in many of the other fall sports, the future is bright for Wildcat football. Louisburg has a good group of underclassmen returning and are ready to make another run in the playoffs next season.

However, the turnaround happened thanks to a lot hard work in the summer, a lot of rigorous practices and the leadership from a group of seniors that were poised to return Louisburg football to the playoffs.

Sure losing stinks and it always will. But the team has to take satisfaction on what it accomplished – trophies or not.

Sometimes it isn't all about the hardware. Sometimes it is about the blood and sweat paving the road for those to come after you.

And Louisburg football is in a better place because of it.