

Wildcats suffer heartbreak in playoff loss



Louisburg senior quarterback Austin Terry outruns several Basehor-Linwood defenders during Friday's regional playoff game at Basehor-Linwood High School. The Wildcats fell 41-34 to end their season with a 7-3 record.

BASEHOR – The players and coaches knew it was going to have to come to an end one day.

Unfortunately for the Louisburg football team, the end came sooner than it had hoped. Following the Wildcats' 41-34 loss to Basehor-Linwood on Friday in the regional round of the playoffs, the realization was hard to comprehend.

Despite a rough start, the Wildcats battled to the end and took a fourth quarter lead before Basehor-Linwood followed with two late touchdowns to end Louisburg's season.

"I feel bad, but I can't imagine what they are going through right now," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. "They are the ones who have put in all the work in the summer, the camps and 2-a-days and everything we do to try and make ourselves better. I commend each and every one of those kids for their level of commitment this year. They played hard all year long and were a pleasure to coach."

Both teams made their fair share of mistakes to keep the other one in the game.

Early on, Basehor-Linwood took advantage of a blocked punt, several Wildcat penalties and a kickoff return that accounted for its three first half touchdowns.



Louisburg's T.J. Dover (70) and Alex Dunn (21) team up on a tackle Friday in Basehor.

As for Louisburg (7-3), it ended the first half with a big touchdown and carried the momentum over into the second half. The Bobcats botched two kickoffs and had a fumble that led to two more Louisburg touchdowns and eventually the Wildcats took a lead with nine minutes left in the contest.

However, when it came down to it, the Wildcats couldn't keep the high-powered Basehor offense off of the field.

"They didn't punt once," Littrell said. "In the first half, our body language wasn't very good. We didn't come out and put four quarters together in all three phases, and when you do that in the playoffs you have the feeling that we have right now."

The game didn't start out like the Wildcats had hoped. Louisburg struggled to move the ball early and had a punt blocked on the game's opening possession.

Basehor-Linwood recovered on the Louisburg 11-yard line and scored its first touchdown two plays later. The Bobcats added another touchdown on a 7-yard pass with five minutes left in the first half to go up 13-0.

On Louisburg's next possession, the Wildcats took advantage of a Basehor miscue. The Wildcats punted the ball away, but the Bobcat receiver went out of bounds then came back inbounds to touch it. The penalty was 15 yards and gave the Wildcats new life.



Senior lineman Anders Vance leaps to try and knock down a pass during the Wildcats' playoff loss in Basehor.

Quarterback Austin Terry found tight end Grant Harding on a 21-yard touchdown pass to make it 13-7.

The momentum was short lived as Basehor's Jahron McPherson

took the ensuing kickoff for an 82-yard touchdown. Louisburg didn't get its head down as it came right back with a big play of its own.

Terry hit senior receiver Mitchell McLellan on a bubble screen and McLellan took off down the sideline for a 68-yard touchdown with 21 seconds left and the Wildcats trailed 20-14 at halftime.

Louisburg kicked off to start the second half and got a friendly bounce on the Basehor artificial turf. Kicker Connor Green kicked the ball on the ground, a Basehor player couldn't hold on and McLellan recovered the loose ball.

Two players later, running back Thomas San Agustin scored on a 34-yard touchdown through the Bobcats defense, and after the extra point failed, the game was tied at 20-all.

Once again, the Bobcats halted the Louisburg momentum as McPherson had his second big play of the game with a 47-yard touchdown run.

Shortly before the end of the third quarter, Louisburg's offense responded with a 14-play drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown run from Terry, and after a failed 2-point conversion, Louisburg trailed by just one.

To start the fourth quarter, Basehor fumbled deep in Louisburg territory and the Wildcats took advantage. San Agustin scored on a 1-yard touchdown run, and after a Terry 2-point conversion run, the Wildcats held a 34-27 lead with nine minutes remaining in the game.



Senior receiver Mitchell McLellan runs down the sideline for a 68-yard touchdown in the first half Friday.

Basehor's offense came alive on its next drive as it drove 92 yards to tie the game. Then following a Louisburg interception, the Bobcats took the ball again as McPherson scored his third touchdown of the night on an 18-yard touchdown pass to put Basehor up a touchdown.

The Wildcats had the ball for one more possession with 1 minute and 18 seconds remaining, but Basehor intercepted a Terry pass down the sideline to seal the win for the Bobcats.

"We didn't execute like we should," Littrell said. "My hats off to them. They came to play all four quarters and they are a well-coached ball team. Those kids played their butts off and they deserved to win."

Junior linebacker Jake Hill led the Wildcat defense with eight tackles, while Anders Vance, T.J. Dover, Alex Dunn and San Agustin each finished with seven. Vance had two tackles for a loss and lineman Dustyn Rizzo had a sack to go along with his five tackles.

The loss also meant the final game for 12 Louisburg seniors. 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 suited up for the final time.

"I hate that these seniors have to go out like this year," Littrell said. "I don't think they will ever know how much that I love them. They were the heartbeat of this team, they were amazing leaders and kept us focused on the task at hand. It is a fun group to coach and I am going to miss that."

LOUISBURG	0	14
12	8 – 34	

BASEHOR	7	13
7	14 – 41	

FIRST QUARTER

BL: Austin Ettinger 9 run (Parker Rusk kick)

SECOND QUARTER

BL: Jackson Brimblecom 7 pass from Justin Philllips (kick failed)

L: Grant Harding 21 pass from Austin Terry (Alex Dunn kick)

BL: Jahron McPherson 82 kickoff return (Rusk kick)

L: Mitchell McLellan 68 pass from Terry (Dunn kick)

THIRD QUARTER

L: Thomas San Agustin 34 run (kick failed)

BL: McPherson 47 run (Rusk kick)

L: Terry 1 run (run failed)

FOURTH QUARTER

L: San Agustin 1 run (Terry run)

BL: Ettinger 22 run (Rusk kick)

BL: McPherson 18 pass from Phillips (Rusk kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Thomas San Agustin 20-88; Austin Terry 12-55; Alex Dunn 11-37; Austin Moore 4-26

PASSING: Austin Terry 7-14-129-2-2

RECEIVING: Mitchell McLellan 4-90; Grant Harding 2-29; Cole Kramer 1-10