

# Wildcats fall to No. 1 ranked Rose Hill



Louisburg senior T.J. Svoboda battles a Fort Scott player for a 50-50 ball during the Wildcats first postseason game in Louisburg. The Wildcats traveled to Rose Hill for the state quarterfinals Tuesday, but saw their season come to an end in a 5-1 loss.

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ROSE HILL – The Louisburg boys soccer team knew it was heading into its most difficult situation of the season – on the road against the No. 1 team in the state with its season on the line.

No pressure, right?

The Wildcats didn't feel the pressure, in fact, they hung with defending state champion Rose Hill for much of the Class 4-3-2-1A state quarterfinal match Tuesday at Rose Hill High School. The match did get away from the Wildcats midway through the second half in their 5-1 loss, but coach Ben York saw some good things out of his team.

“Rose Hill was definitely as advertised,” York said. “They are a great team and they won state last season for a reason. They probably have 10-11 seniors on their team this year and all of those guys were a part of their state championship last

season.

“I am just proud of the way our guys didn’t back down and that we were able to put pressure on them and be physical. I think that caught them a little off-guard at first because I don’t think they expected a team with a losing record to come at them like we did.”

Louisburg didn’t have a shot on goal in the first half, but it made it difficult on Rose Hill defensively as it gave up two goals that took unfortunate bounces for the Wildcats.

Rose Hill scored its first goal early in the first half on a misplay by the Wildcat defense and the Rockets scored their second goal on a free kick that deflected off of a player and in the net to take a 2-0 halftime lead.

“The guys were feeling pretty good at halftime and there a lot of positives coming from the huddle,” York said. “We gave up two goals that we probably shouldn’t have and those were the only two they scored so we were still in the game.”

The Rockets took charge to start the second half and grabbed another goal to take a 3-0 lead, but the Wildcats didn’t go away.

Junior Noah Juarez got the ball at the top of the box, dribbled past a Rose Hill defender and hit a shot past the goalie to give the Wildcats some life.

It didn’t last long as Rose Hill answered with a goal in the next minute to all but seal the win and end the Wildcats’ season.

“That goal took the wind out of our sails for sure,” York said. “Noah just put in a great goal and we seemed to have some momentum and they came right back and scored. That is a tough thing to overcome at that point in the game.

“We left it all out on the field and our boys tried their best

and that is all a coach can ask for in these types of games. Other than maybe two positions, Rose Hill was more athletic and skilled than we were and that is tough to overcome sometimes.”

The Wildcats finished their season with a 7-11-2 record on the season that included three postseason victories and a regional championship. It also marked the final game for Louisburg seniors Cale Schneider, Jairus Brown, Hunter Mitchell, Parker Cates, Michael Minster and T.J. Svoboda.

“I am just so glad these boys got to experience a postseason run like we went on,” York said. “It had been awhile since we have gotten this far, but I always said that this team was better than our record showed. I didn’t care about wins and losses as much as playing well at the end of the season when it mattered most and I thought that we did that. This was a fun group to coach.”