

Wildcats punch ticket into playoffs



Louisburg senior Anders Vance brings down a Spring Hill runner during the Wildcats' final regular season contest Friday at Wildcat Stadium. Vance was one of 12 seniors honored before the Wildcats' senior night game.

As the rain poured on the Wildcat Stadium field Friday, it seemed as if Mother Nature was trying to throw one more obstacle in the way of the Louisburg football team.

The Wildcats needed to beat Spring Hill on Friday to earn a berth into the state playoffs – a position the same Bronco team took away from them a season ago. A little water and mud didn't seem to bother the Wildcat players much.

Louisburg used two fourth-quarter touchdowns to pull away from Spring Hill in a 37-19 victory and continued its season for at least another week.

The victory was even more special for the Wildcats as they did it on senior night as they honored the 12 Louisburg seniors and their families before the game. 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 their

final regular season home contest.

"We have been through quite a bit with this senior group," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. "I am just so proud how these seniors have grown and committed themselves to the program. Their love for Louisburg football is undeniable. I love these seniors.

"They have provided more leadership for this program than I could have ever imagined. They just come to work every day with a good attitude and ready to accept the game plan. They are a great group to be around and I love them to death."

As for the game itself, that was something Littrell didn't love as much. Don't get him wrong, Littrell was pleased to extend the season, but he wasn't happy with some of what happened against the Broncos.



Senior Alex Dunn tries to keep his footing in the rain to get some extra yards while he gets blocks from teammates Jarod Woodward (63), Dustyn Rizzo (60) and T.J. Dover (70) on Friday in Louisburg.

Spring Hill, which finished the season 2-7, opened the game

with a 70-yard kickoff return for a touchdown to quickly give the Broncos the lead and put the Wildcats on their heels. The Broncos also broke open another big play with a 49-yard touchdown run in the second quarter.

"I don't think we were prepared mentally and that falls 100 percent on my shoulders," Littrell said. "We didn't play our best, but we played well enough to punch our ticket into the playoffs. If we have another performance like this though, then it will be a short stay in the playoffs."

However, the weather conditions seemed to play in Louisburg's favor as the Wildcats were able to use their stable of backs to pound away at the Spring Hill defense. The Wildcats (7-2) finished with two backs who rushed for more than 100 yards in the contest.

Junior Thomas San Agustin took a brunt of the load as he tallied 167 yards on 31 carries to go along with two touchdowns. Freshman Austin Moore also made a name for himself the first time this season as he carried the ball 20 times for 137 yards and two touchdowns.

Both players had big nights on the ground despite the Broncos doing their best to stop Louisburg's strength.

"They were putting nine or 10 guys in the box against our heavy bone stuff," Littrell said. "We are used to seeing eight or nine, but not 10. That is something we are going to have to get used to."

Despite the two big scoring plays from Spring Hill, the Wildcat defense was able to hold their own and made the stops when they needed them. Louisburg held the Broncos to just 157 yards of total offense.



Freshman Austin Moore races into the endzone during the Wildcats' 37-19 win over Spring Hill.

Junior lineman Dustyn Rizzo led Louisburg with seven tackles on the night, while Vance and Mason Koechner each finished with six tackles. Koechner also had a forced fumble.

Fellow junior T.J. Dover added five tackles and had a fumble recovery to help out the Wildcats.

Following the kickoff return for a touchdown from Spring Hill, the Wildcats were able to tie it up on their first possession when San Agustin scored on a 7-yard touchdown run.

Early in the second quarter, the Wildcat defense forced the Broncos to punt from their own endzone, but the snap sailed out of the endzone for the safety to give Louisburg a 9-7 lead.

On its next possession, Louisburg faced a fourth down near the redzone. The Wildcats went for it and Moore did more than get the first down. He broke several tackles for a 21-yard touchdown run to put Louisburg up 16-7.

Spring Hill then used its speed to cut the Wildcat lead to three points on the 49-yard touchdown scamper, but Louisburg answered right back before halftime when San Agustin scored on

a 1-yard run.

Late in the third quarter, Spring Hill once again cut into the Louisburg lead when it scored on a 10-yard touchdown pass, and after a blocked extra punt, the Wildcats still led 23-19.

The Wildcats put it away in the fourth quarter and it started with arm of Terry, the senior quarterback. Terry found Grant Harding in the middle of the field and Harding broke away from the defense for a 45-yard touchdown pass.

Then later in the fourth, the Wildcats faced a fourth down again, and once again Moore came through. Moore scored on a 17-yard run this time to seal the win for the Wildcats with under two minutes left in the contest.

Louisburg begins its quest toward the state title game this Friday when it travels to Basehor-Linwood for a bi-district matchup. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. Should the Wildcats advance, they will play the winner of Eudora and Fort Scott next week.

LOUISBURG	7	16	0	14 –
37				
SPRING HILL	7	6	6	0
– 19				

First quarter

SH: 70 kickoff return (kick good)

L: Thomas San Agustin 7 run (Alex Dunn kick)

Second quarter

L: Safety (punt sailed out of endzone)

L: Austin Moore 21 run (Dunn kick)

SH: 49 run (kick blocked)

L: San Agustin 1 run (Dunn kick)

Third quarter

SH: 10 yard touchdown pass (kick blocked)

Fourth quarter

L: Grant Harding 45 pass from Austin Terry (Dunn kick)

L: Moore 17 run (Dunn kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Thomas San Agustin 31-167; Austin Moore 20-137; Alex Dunn 6-28; Will Ridley 6-15

PASSING: Austin Terry 2-2-48-1

RECEIVING: Grant Harding 1-45; Will Ridley 1-3