

Wildcats roll past Baldwin on homecoming



Louisburg running back Thomas San Agustin forces his way across the goal line for one of his two touchdowns Friday at Wildcat Stadium. San Agustin had 148 yards on the ground in the Wildcats' 36-8 win over Baldwin.

As Korbin Hankinson took the opening kickoff, the Louisburg senior raced down the sideline untouched for a touchdown.

It would be a sign of things to come for the Wildcat football team Friday against Baldwin. Louisburg found the endzone four more times and rolled to a 36-8 victory over the Bulldogs in the Wildcats' annual homecoming contest.

Despite the 28-point win, Louisburg left Wildcat Stadium knowing the game didn't go exactly as it wanted. Penalties, empty trips in the redzone and offensive mistakes had the Wildcats lamenting not being able to play a complete game.

"We are still focusing on playing well for four quarters and we have yet to do that," Louisburg co-head coach Gary Griffin said. "Normally it is the second half where we haven't played well, but this time it was the first half. The last few years we haven't played very well on homecoming, so it is nice to get this one out of the way."



Louisburg senior lineman T.J. Dover brings down a Baldwin player Friday.

Even with all the homecoming distractions, the Wildcats (5-0) were still able to play well at times and it started on the opening kickoff as Hankinson had a wall of blockers that escorted him to the endzone and the Wildcats were rolling early.

Quarterback Grant Harding broke free for a 55-yard touchdown run early in the second quarter to put Louisburg up 14-0. Then following a Baldwin score, the Wildcats marched down the field in less than two minutes to score on a 3-yard touchdown from sophomore Austin Moore.

Louisburg running back Thomas San Agustin had a 37-yard run on the drive and Dalton Ribordy caught a 15-yard pass from

Harding that set up Moore's score to put the Wildcats up 21-8 at halftime.

Still, the first half left the Wildcats frustrated as they came up empty on three trips in the redzone. The Louisburg defense set up one of those opportunities.

Linebacker Nick Hull and lineman Dustyn Rizzo pressured Baldwin's quarterback late in the first quarter and forced an interception by Moore, but the Wildcats were unable to convert.

"It is very frustrating," Griffin said of the empty redzone opportunities. "There are a lot of reasons why that happened. I didn't call a very good game in the first half and that is on me. We didn't execute very well either. Baldwin just played harder than we did for a while."

At the end of the first half, and into the third quarter, the Wildcats were able to move the ball better and resulted on a San Agustin 4-yard touchdown run in the third. A bad snap on the extra point turned into two points for Louisburg as Harding gathered the ball, rolled out and found Moore for the 2-point conversion.

San Agustin scored his second touchdown of the night in the fourth quarter on a 5-yard run to seal the win for the Wildcats. The Louisburg senior had a big night on the ground with 148 yards on 12 carries to go along with the two touchdowns.

The Wildcat offensive line of Garrett Lowry, Dalton Frazier, T.J. Dover, Mason Koechner and Rizzo did a good job opening holes for the Louisburg backs as they tallied 357 yards on the ground.

"Baldwin has a history of having tough kids and they came out in the first half and I thought they played really well and tough football," Griffin said. "Offensively I don't think we

executed very well. I think they won the line of scrimmage the first two-thirds of the first half. Then that last third and all of the third quarter I thought we got back to doing what we do. We have some inconsistencies that we have to overcome.”



Louisburg wide receiver Christian Tosterud stretches out for a pass in the endzone Friday.

Other than allowing the one touchdown in the second quarter, the Louisburg defense came through again with another stout performance. Louisburg limited Baldwin to just 94 yards of total offense and held the Bulldogs to just 30 yards rushing on 29 carries.

Koechner led the Wildcat defense with five tackles and a sack, while Harding and Moore each recorded an interception. Senior Lyndon Smith also had a team-high five tackles.

The Louisburg defense has been strong all season as the Wildcats have held their opponents to a combined 31 points, which has been a big reason to their perfect start to the year and their No. 4 ranking in Class 4A-Division I.

"Defensively I thought we played real well outside of the one drive they scored on," Griffin said. "In this league and the competition that we have to go up against, I am happy with 5-0. I am not satisfied and I don't think the kids are either. That is the good part is they aren't happy with the way they played and they know they can do better."

Louisburg will go for its sixth consecutive win Friday when it travels to Spring Hill for its final game before district play. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOU	7	14	8	7 – 36
BAL	0	8	0	0 – 8

First quarter

L: Korbin Hankinson 80 kickoff return (Nick Hull kick)

Second quarter

L: Grant Harding 55 run (Hull kick)

B: Justin Howard 2 run (pass good)

L: Austin Moore 3 run (Hull kick)

Third quarter

L: Thomas San Agustin 4 run (Harding pass to Moore)

Fourth quarter

L: San Agustin 5 run (Hull kick)

STATISTICS

OFFENSIVE

RUSHING – Thomas San Agustin 12-148; Grant Harding 8-92; Korbin Hankinson 6-49; Austin Moore 11-47; Jake Hill 5-20; Will Ridley 1-2.

PASSING – Grant Harding 3-7-22

RECEIVING – Dalton Ribordy 1-15; Austin Moore 1-7

DEFENSIVE

TACKLES – Lyndon Smith 5, Mason Koechner 5, Jake Hill 4, Korbin Hankinson 4, Connor Green 3, Will Ridley 3, Nick Hull 3, Christian Tosterud 2, Austin Moore 2, Garrett Lowry 2, Grant Harding 1, Blue Caplinger 1, Kiefer Tucker 1, Dustyn Rizzo 1, T.J. Dover 1, Dalton Ribordy 1

SACKS – Mason Koechner 1

INTERCEPTIONS – Grant Harding 1, Austin Moore 1