

Top-ranked Bishop Miego ends Louisburg's season



Louisburg senior quarterback Grant Harding tries to find some running room as teammate Korbin Hankinson (31) looks to make a block Friday during the Class 4A Division I sectional game in Louisburg.

The Louisburg High School football team walked off the field at Wildcat Stadium and the disappointment was evident.

Louisburg saw its season come to an end with a 49-6 loss to No. 1 Bishop Miego on Friday in the sectional round of the Class 4A-Division I playoffs. Going into the contest, the Wildcats knew it was going to be difficult to knock the defending state champion Stags off their perch.

Still, the Wildcats were right with Bishop Miego toward the end of the first half as they nearly made it a one score game going into halftime. Louisburg just couldn't slow down Miego's high-powered offense in the second half.

"I'm really proud of these guys," Louisburg co-head coach Gary Griffin said of his team. "We fought our butts off and we didn't quit. Miego is just a really good team."

The Wildcats (8-3) cast some doubt in the outcome late in the second quarter as quarterback Grant Harding found Korbin Hankinson for a 28-yard pass that gave them the ball on the

Miege 5-yard line with 5 seconds left before half, down 22-6.

Harding tried to run it in on the next play, but the Stag defense corralled him for just a yard gain.

"Maybe if we get that touchdown in before halftime, we get a little momentum there," Griffin said. "They can just score from anywhere on the field at any time. You try to prevent them from throwing, you give up runs or if you try and stop the run you give up big passes. They are about as well-rounded as it gets."

Louisburg opened the game with a strong first drive as it converted three first downs down to the Miege 33-yard line, before turning the ball over on downs. The Stags scored a minute later when quarterback Carter Putz threw the first of his four touchdown passes for a 5-yard completion to Jafar Armstrong, then converted the 2-point conversion.

The Wildcat defense kept it 8-0 into the second quarter when they forced a Miege fumble on the goal line that was recovered by Thomas San Agustin.



Senior lineman T.J. Dover tries to bring down a Bishop Miege running back Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

Bishop Miege held the Wildcats on their next possession and responded with two touchdown drives that put the Stags up 22-0. Miege's defense also came up big as Landry Weber intercepted Harding twice in the first half to stall Wildcat drives.

Late in the second quarter, Louisburg got a 25-yard run from Harding and a 16-yard run from San Agustin that set up a 7-yard touchdown run from Harding to make it 22-6 after a failed 2-point conversion.

Louisburg's defense responded again as Desmond Doles sacked Putz to force a Miege punt and gave the Wildcats the ball near midfield with 57 seconds left. Harding's long pass to

Hankinson gave the Wildcats some life, but couldn't get the score before time ran out.

"We played hard," Griffin said. "We threw a couple picks in the first half, including one where they scored a couple plays later. I wish we had that back, but you have to take some chances. You can't just let them run over you. They kids really played hard in the first half and I thought they played hard the whole game. Miede is just so explosive and tough to defend."

It was all Miede in the second half as they responded with four touchdowns, including one in which it scored 90 seconds into the third quarter.

The Wildcats were able to move the ball at times on the Stags as they gained 330 yards of offense and Harding led the way with 112 yards on the ground to go along with his touchdown.

After it was over, it was all about reflection for the Wildcat players and coaches. It was a successful season for Louisburg as it snapped a playoff drought and racked up eight wins for the first time since 2012.

The Wildcats also said a final farewell to their senior class of Lyndon Smith, Connor Green, Grant Harding, Thomas San Agustin, Jake Hill, Korbin Hankinson, Jackson Ewalt, Nick Hull, Ben Hupp, Owen Staver, Dalton Frazier, Mason Koechner, Matt Rison, Dustyn Rizzo, T.J. Dover and Tommy Dalton.

"It is a great group of kids to work with," Griffin said. "The senior leadership was excellent. We had our ups and downs, but we played some good football. We held our own and competed hard."

LOU	0	6	0	0 – 6
BM	8	14	13	14 – 49

First quarter:

B: Jafar Armstrong 5 pass from Carter Putz (Putz pass)

Second quarter

B: Cameron Clark 7 run (kick good)

B: Landry Weber 7 pass from Putz (kick good)

L: Grant Harding 7 run (pass failed)

Third quarter

B: Brison Cobbins 5 run (2 pt failed)

B: Armstrong 34 pass from Putz (kick good)

Fourth quarter

B: Weber 66 pass from Putz (kick good)

B: Clark 40 run (kick good)

STATISTICS

OFFENSE

RUSHING – Grant Harding 13-112; Thomas San Agustin 15-58; Austin Moore 9-46; Will Ridley 8-29; Korbin Hankinson 9-28, Jake Hill 7-10.

PASSING – Grant Harding 4-13 47

RECEIVING – Korbin Hankinson 1-28; Dalton Ribordy 1-12; Jake Hill 1-7

DEFENSE

TACKLES – Connor Green 2; Austin Moore 2; Desmond Doles 2; Grant Harding 1; Thomas San Agustin 1; Jake Hill 1; Korbin Hankinson 1; Nick Hull 1; Ben Hupp 1; Dustyn Rizzo 1; T.J. Dover 1.

FUMBLE RECOVERY – Thomas San Agustin