

Wildcats pick up first league win at Baldwin



Louisburg senior Sam Guetterman saves the ball from going out of bounds Friday against Baldwin. The Wildcats defeated Baldwin on the road with a 68-58 victory.

BALDWIN CITY – Playing back-to-back games against the top two teams in the Frontier League gave the Louisburg boys basketball team some perspective going into the holiday break.

The Wildcats had a chance to right those wrongs in practice from those two losses against state-ranked Eudora and Ottawa, and learn from their mistakes to prepare them for the grind of the next two months.

The first challenge was against Baldwin on the road Friday and the Wildcats passed it with flying colors. Despite a late charge from the Bulldogs, Louisburg held on for a 68-58 win to snap that two-game losing streak and win its first Frontier League contest.

“They boys were fantastic,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said of his team. “Defensively, we were fantastic. Offensively, we asserted ourselves really, really well. To Baldwin’s credit, they got hot at the end and couldn’t miss, but to our kids’ credit, they responded. Free throws really won the game for us, which is an anomaly for us, but shows progress.”

Louisburg was able to overcome a hot-shooting fourth quarter from the Bulldogs after building a 17-point lead to end the third. Baldwin scored 24 points thanks to five 3-pointers in the fourth, but the Wildcats won the game at the free-throw line and on the boards.

The Wildcats (3-4) converted on just 16 of 31 from the free-throw line, but hit several down the stretch to keep the lead at double digits.

Louisburg also did work on the glass. The Wildcats got three offensive rebounds off missed free throws in the final three minutes thanks to junior Dalton Ribordy and senior Dalton Stone that gave Louisburg more chances at the line.

“It was a nine-point game and you could feel the momentum start to switch, but those offensive rebounds by Ribordy and Stone were huge,” Nelson said. “All that momentum then went back to us. We built a big lead up and we knew Baldwin was streaky and was a scrappy team, but we were able to hold on and the guys never panicked.”

Offensively, the Wildcats were efficient most of the night as they had four players score in double figures, despite having to deal with some early foul trouble. Senior Grant Harding led all scorers with 22 points as he was able to get to the free-throw line several times in the fourth quarter.



Dalton Stone goes in for a layup Friday against Baldwin at Baldwin High School.

Senior forward T.J. Dover, who was saddled with two quick fouls to start the game, came alive in the third quarter as he scored 12 of his 16 points in the frame. Senior guard Jayce Geiman helped get the Wildcats off to a good start as he scored 10 of his 15 points in the first half and fellow senior Sam Guetterman also had a good night with 10 points.

“Our ball movement was fantastic,” Nelson said. “I don’t think that we forced much of anything. We had two-and-half weeks over break to kind of beat up on each other, and we focused on moving the ball around and getting the open shot and not just settling. Hopefully this game will give them some confidence moving forward.”

The Wildcats opened the game on a 7-0 run on baskets from Dover, Guetterman and a 3-pointer from Geiman. Baldwin eventually cut the lead to 10-7, but Harding knocked down a basket, was fouled and converted the 3-point play at the free-throw line.

Harding then stole a Baldwin pass two possessions later for a dunk and a 15-7 Louisburg advantage. The Wildcats then hunkered down defensively as they held Baldwin to just four points in the second quarter and eventually took a 29-16 halftime lead.

Louisburg built a 20-point lead late in the third quarter that was challenged by the Bulldogs. Baldwin, which hit 12 3-pointers in the contest, connected on five in the fourth quarter alone.

Baldwin eventually cut the lead to nine points with under three minutes left in the game, but the Wildcats kept the Bulldogs at bay from the free-throw line.

“They wouldn’t die,” Nelson said of Baldwin. “We were denying the ball and they just seemed to make everything. I think that was the best thing about this win is we were able to overcome the storm and stay with the game plan. The boys reaped the rewards of what we have been working on.”

Louisburg returns to action with a pair of home games this week. The Wildcats will host Frontenac on Tuesday and then will play De Soto on Friday for homecoming.

LOU	15	14	22	17 -
68				
BAL	12	4	18	24
- 58				

LOUISBURG (3-4): Grant Harding 22, T.J. Dover 16, Jayce Geiman 15, Sam Guetterman 10, Dalton Stone 2, Dalton Ribordy 2, Jake Hill 1. Totals: 27 16-31 68. 3-point field goals: 3, (Geiman 3)