

Pitching, offense comes through for Wildcats



Louisburg senior Kylan Harper makes a pitch Thursday during the first game of the doubleheader with Wellsville at Lewis-Young Park. Harper got the win in the first game and freshman Madden Rutherford earned the victory in the nightcap.

Heading into Thursday's doubleheader against Wellsville, the Louisburg High School baseball team was backed into a corner.

The Wildcats had lost five of their first six games coming in and two of their top starting pitchers were unavailable after going two days earlier. Louisburg was going to need a lot of offense and good work on the mound.

It got both.

Louisburg got two strong starting performances in both games and the offense followed suit as the Wildcats came away with a much-needed 8-5 and 4-3 sweep of Wellsville.

The Wildcats (3-5) got off to a positive start in the opener with three runs in the first inning. Blake Ruder singled home Korbin Hankinson to get Louisburg on the board and Ruder later came around to score on a Wellsville error.

Mitchell Drew singled home Grant Harding a little later to give the Wildcats a 3-0 lead. Wellsville scored a run in the third, but the Wildcats broke the game open in the fourth.

With the bases loaded, Ruder cleared them with a triple to right field as Ben LaJoie, Sam Guetterman and Hankinson all came around to score to make it 6-1. Ruder finished the day with two hits to go along with 4 RBIs.

It turned out to be a big hit as Wellsville scored four times to cut the Louisburg lead to one in the next inning, but the Wildcats responded with two more runs in the fifth to give them enough cushion to close it out.

Senior Kylan Harper got the start in the opener for the Wildcats and allowed just one run in four innings before running into some trouble in the fifth. In all, he allowed five runs but also had five strikeouts.

Guetterman, another senior, came on in relief for the final two innings and picked up the save after giving up just three hits and struck out two.



Senior Korbin Hankinson sends a hit into the outfield Thursday against Wellsville.

The Wildcats got another big pitching performance – this time it was from a freshman. Madden Rutherford threw a complete game and allowed three runs on four hits and struck out seven in the winning effort.

Louisburg scored on a run in the first on an RBI single from Nate Swenson that scored Ruder and the Wildcats scored again in the second when Rutherford helped his own cause with a sacrifice fly that scored Christian Tosterud.

Wellsville responded to cut the Louisburg lead to 2-1 in the third, before the Wildcats added another run in the bottom of the inning when Ruder scored again on an RBI grounder from Swenson.

The Eagles tied the game at 3-all in the fourth, but the Wildcats scored the go-ahead run in the fifth when Hankinson led the inning off with a double and then came around to score on a Wellsville error.

It was all Rutherford needed as he struck out four in the final two innings to earn his first high school victory.

Louisburg will try for its third win in a row today when it ventures to Baldwin for a doubleheader. The Wildcats will then travel to Osawatomie for two games Thursday.