

Wildcats rally for split against Prairie View



Louisburg shortstop Nate Swenson tries to turn a double play during Friday's home opener against Prairie View at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats lost the first game 5-2, but came back to take the nightcap, 8-5.

It was already on the wrong end of one game and was well on its way to chalking up another in the loss column.

After falling 5-2 to Prairie View in the first game of a doubleheader Friday, the Louisburg High School baseball team was staring another loss in the face. The Wildcats were down five runs and their bats had gone silent.

That was until the third inning when the Wildcats answered with three runs, then added two more in the fifth and three more in the sixth to rally for an 8-5 victory in the nightcap of their home opener at Lewis-Young Park.

"We showed great resilience," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "We had some key hits that kept things going and made some solid defensive plays to get momentum on our side. Once things started rolling, we fed off of the energy."

Louisburg (1-3) was able to string several hits together to get the rally going in the third inning as junior Christian Tosterud came through with a 2-run single and later scored on

a double from freshman Madden Rutherford.

Down a pair of runs two innings later, the Wildcat bats struck again. Junior Nate Swenson came through with an RBI single and came around to score himself when Rutherford reached on a Prairie View error and tied the game at 5-all.

The Wildcats broke the game open in the sixth as senior Korbin Hankinson doubled home a run and fellow senior Blake Ruder drove home Sam Guetterman to cut the lead to one. Hankinson later came around to score on a ground ball from Grant Harding.

Hankinson, Ruder, Swenson, Tosterud and Dalton Stone all had two hit games for Louisburg, while Tosterud and Rutherford each led the way with 2 RBIs.

“The hits gave us the confidence that we needed offensively,” McGhee said. “We are capable of doing some good things and I think we needed to prove it to ourselves. Once runners are on base, we have potential to do some good things, we just have to give ourselves the opportunity by starting with a solid approach at the plate.”



Junior Mitchell Drew tracks down a ball in left field Friday against Prairie View.

Harding, a senior, picked up the win in relief as he pitched the final four innings to give Louisburg a chance. He gave up just two hits and struck out four during that span.

“Grant came in and had a solid performance,” McGhee said. “He attacked the zone, worked hitters and executed several plays

that led to key outs. His performance helped us build the momentum we needed. He cut Prairie View's offense down, making quick work of the batters that he faced."

Louisburg got off to a good start in the opener as it struck first for two runs in the bottom of the first. Hankinson led off with a single, stole second and third and later scored on a Harding ground out.

Swenson followed with a double and then junior Mitchell Drew scored Swenson with a double of his own to give Louisburg a 2-0 lead.

Prairie View took advantage of a Wildcat miscue to start the third inning and led to a five-run frame. After the error, five of the next six Buffalo hitters reached on a hit to account for the five runs.

Stone started for the Wildcats, pitched five innings and held Prairie View scoreless in four of those frames. He gave up the four earned runs, but also had six strikeouts on the day. Guetterman came in for the final two innings and didn't allow a run.

"The mistakes we made in the third inning hurt us, but that was not our only struggle," McGhee said. "Stone was throwing good stuff and then the mood changed once we made the errors. We also struggled to make solid contact and had some very quick at-bats which hurt us offensively."

Louisburg will try for another win today when it hosts Eudora for a 4:30 p.m. first pitch at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats will also host Wellsville on Thursday.