

Ottawa dampens Louisburg senior night with sweep



Louisburg senior Blake Ruder runs down a fly ball in right field Tuesday during the Wildcats' game with Ottawa at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats lost both games to the Cyclones on Senior Night, 15-1 and 7-2.

It wasn't the night the seven Louisburg baseball seniors hoped for when they stepped onto the Lewis-Young field for the final time.

Louisburg celebrated Senior Night on Tuesday, but Ottawa decided to dampen those plans. The Cyclones, who are ranked No. 5 in Class 4A-Division I, downed Louisburg 15-1 in the opener and 7-2 in the nightcap.

Despite the loss, it was a special night for seniors Korbin Hankinson, Dalton Stone, Grant Harding, Ben LaJoie, Sam Guetterman, Blake Ruder and Kylan Harper as they were each honored in-between the doubleheader games.

"This senior class brings a lot of experience with them," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "They are a hard working group that strive for the best in everything they do. These seniors are a talented group and are passionate about the games they play. These young men will be successful in their pursuits because of the traits that they bring with them."

In the opener, the Wildcats (7-11) took a 1-0 lead into the second inning before the Cyclones scored two in the second and third innings, and then five runs in the fourth and fifth to pull away.



Louisburg seniors (front row, from left) are Blake Ruder, Ben LaJoie, Kylan Harper, Grant Harding, Dalton Stone, Sam Guetterman and Korbin Hankinson.

Louisburg junior Christian Tosterud was perfect at the plate for the Wildcats and drove in their only run. Tosterud, who finished the game with three hits, tripled home Hankinson after he led the first inning off with a double. Hankinson added a pair of hits in the loss.

Stone started the game for Louisburg and pitched three innings, before Harper and Nate Swenson came in for relief. However, none of the three Wildcat pitchers could cool off the Ottawa bats.

“In the first game we started out well, we got on the board

first and had some success at the plate,” McGhee said. “Then the struggle to find the strike zone began. Once we started walking batters we couldn’t find our way out of the hole. Ottawa is a solid team and took care of business at the plate and in the field.”

The nightcap started off like the first as Louisburg opened the scoring in the first inning, but this time the Wildcats held their one-run lead into the fifth inning. Ottawa answered with four runs in the fifth and three more in the seventh to earn the sweep.

Harding, Stone and Swenson each had a pair of hits, while Harding added a double to his line. Harding and Mitchell Drew both had RBIs as well for Louisburg.

It was Harding who kept Ottawa scoreless through the first four innings, before Ottawa came through with fourth runs in the fifth. Guetterman came on in relief for the final two frames.

“Ottawa got the hits they needed to get runners on,” McGhee said. “We were unable to get the hits we needed and had several quick innings which helped to build momentum for Ottawa. We responded late in the game, but were unable to overcome the deficit.

“Ottawa is a good team and they take advantage of the little mistakes that are made throughout a game. They executed the plays they were asked to and put us in some spots where a tough play had to be made.”

Louisburg will wind down its regular season today when it travels to Spring Hill for a doubleheader. The Wildcats will then compete in the regional tournament next week at Ottawa.