

Wildcats bounce back for win over Baldwin



Louisburg senior Grant Ryals puts a shot on goal Thursday during the Wildcats' match with Baldwin at Baldwin High School. The Wildcats used a late goal to pull away for a 2-1 victory over the Bulldogs.

BALDWIN CITY – For the first time this season, Louisburg boys soccer coach Kyle Conley got a chance to see how his team would respond to a loss.

Although Conley wasn't pleased with the style of play at times during Thursday's match against Baldwin, he – and the rest of the Wildcats – will certainly take the result.

Louisburg got a late goal from Brock Bila that broke open a tie game and the Wildcats got a 2-1 win at Baldwin High School. The victory also pushed the Wildcats' record to 5-1 on the season as they continued their strong start after a disappointing loss to De Soto last Tuesday.

“I think we struggled a little bit with the time change and playing first,” Conley said. “We struggled to handle their possession in the first half. To be honest, Baldwin dominated the first half in possession. We talked about their possession and how they will possess a ton, but we needed to limit their dangerous scoring opportunities. I was not overly pleased with how much we allowed them to possess because it really

challenged out fitness.

“It was great to see how gritty and tough our kids were. The second half, the game really opened up and allowed us to possess the ball a little bit and attack them. It was a great team effort. It was not the prettiest game for us by any means, but sometimes you need to win the ugly ones too.”

The Wildcats got the scoring started early as sophomore midfielder Landon Johnson found the back of the net to give Louisburg a 1-0 lead. From there, Baldwin really put the pressure on the Wildcat back line.

Baldwin gave the Louisburg defense a test early as it put several shots on goal. The Bulldogs outshot Louisburg 13-11 and kept goalie Ambrose Stefan busy. Late in the first half, Stefan kept Louisburg on top with a diving save right in front of the net.



Louisburg goalie Ambrose Stefan makes a diving stop at the net Thursday against Baldwin.

As time was ticking down before halftime, Stefan was awarded a yellow card as he tried to stop a Baldwin player from breaking free toward the goal. Baldwin converted the penalty kick and the two teams were tied at halftime.

Despite that, the Wildcats got good play from its back line of Will Frank, Kris Light, Kyle Allen and Scott Murphy.

“The defense was pretty solid the entire match,” Conley said. “They did a variety of things to us to try to change our focus, but the boys stayed positive and did a very nice job of doing their job and playing as a team. I was very proud of their grit and determination.

“That play at the end of the half with Ambrose was very interesting, because neither official actually called the original foul, but in the end I believe it was the right call. I was really excited how the boys responded and actually picked their game after the call. Our mental toughness was very apparent.”

Baldwin shifted its formation to a 3-5-2 in the second half to put more pressure on Louisburg, but instead, the Wildcats used the Bulldogs’ aggressiveness to their advantage. With a minute left in regulation, senior Raistlin Brewer fed the ball to Bila who shot it past the Baldwin keeper for the game-deciding goal.

“That formation actually helped us counter attack them,” Conley said. “Baldwin was pushing so many people into the attack, that it actually made our counter-attacking style more effective. The game was kind of at a point where it could go either way. I was just extremely proud of how the boys fought and finished the game.”

Louisburg was set to have a busy week as it was scheduled to have three games in four days. Unfortunately, the Wildcats’ game tonight with Piper has been postponed, which will lighten their load a little bit.

Still, the Wildcats will host Eudora at 6 p.m., Tuesday and then travel to Bonner Springs for a match Thursday.

“We will be prepared for each and every game and it will show us, and everyone else, how mentally tough we are,” Conley said. “The expectation is that we will play incredibly hard regardless who we play. This week will show us what we are made of. It is really big week for us.”

De Soto downs Louisburg in overtime for first loss

It had all started out so promising for the Louisburg boys soccer team last Tuesday against De Soto.

Louisburg had jumped out to a two-goal lead in the first half and appeared to have taken control of the match.

De Soto had other plans, however. De Soto answered with two goals in the second half to force overtime, and in the extra time, scored another to come away with a 3-2 win over Louisburg. The loss was the Wildcats’ first defeat of the season.

“Once again, in the second half, we just didn’t come ready to go,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We couldn’t execute, couldn’t find feet and we just didn’t play well. We gave up two really soft goals, but that third goal was just a lazer. Kudos to them. Their backup goalie came in and did his job and made some huge saves against us. We just struggled to put them away.”



Senior Christian Scholtz heads the ball near the goal last Tuesday against De Soto.

The match started off well for Louisburg as it got on the board early. Senior midfielder Grant Ryals sailed a pass that traveled close to 50 yards, landed right in front of forward Brock Bila and Bila put it past the De Soto goalie for an early 1-0 lead.

Senior midfielder Christian Scholtz struck again two minutes later as Scholtz scored his first goal of the season to put Louisburg up 2-0.

In the second half, De Soto score a pair of goals to tie the match, but both teams had a chance to take the lead late in regulation. With 17 minutes left in the second half, Ryals took a shot near the top of the box that hit off the top of the cross bar, hit the De Soto goalie and rolled out.

Junior Eli Minster and Bila both had shots saved on diving stops, but the Wildcats couldn't get back on top. De Soto had a hard time as well as the Wildcat defense turned the De Soto opportunities away, which eventually forced overtime.

De Soto's Rohan Singh sent a line drive into the upper right corner of the net three minutes into the overtime to give De Soto the win.