

Wildcats handle Wyandotte in season opener



Louisburg senior Ben Minster looks for some running room during Friday's season opener against Wyandotte at Wildcat Stadium. Louisburg took care of business against the Bulldogs with a 41-14 victory.

With only a handful of players returning who started a game on the varsity level last season, it is hard to know what to expect from the Louisburg High School football team in 2017.

At times, the Wildcats showed some of that inexperience Friday against Wyandotte with penalties and miscues.

Then there were other moments – like totaling more than 500 yards of total offense – where the Wildcats looked like a veteran team.

It was more the latter Friday as Louisburg trounced Wyandotte 41-14 as it showcased some new players and a new offense in front of its fans.

“I am pretty excited,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “We only had five kids on our roster that started a game last year. We had 18 kids get their first actual Friday night light football opportunity, so we were excited for them just to come out and experience the speed and play the game at this level.

“The first quarter was a little rough and you could tell. It

was just a new offense and a bunch of kids that are excited and nervous. We did a lot of things that we just need to clean up and luckily those are fixable.”

Not only was the win memorable for the players, but for Ebenstein as well, as he earned his first head coaching victory.

“I was nervous,” he said. “I didn’t sleep the night before and my stomach was in a knot the entire day. I feel better now, for sure – at least until I watch it on film.”

What Ebenstein will see on film is a team that racked up a lot of yards – especially on the ground. The Wildcats tallied 500 rushing yards on the night, including several big runs from tailbacks Austin Moore and Ben Minster.

Moore carried the ball 16 times for 175 yards and had two touchdowns, while it only took Minster two carries to hit the century mark. Minster scored on a 92-yard touchdown run late in the game and rushed for 100 yards on the night. Brayden Gage also found the endzone for a touchdown.

The Wildcat backs were able to find those big gains thanks in part to the offensive line of Garrett Lowry, Kiefer Tucker, Garrett Harding, Noah Larson and Brayden White.



Louisburg junior Noah Larson bears down on the Wyandotte quarterback Friday.

“Wyandotte was bigger than us all across the board and I think our kids (linemen) are coached good technique and they use it well and they are in good shape,” Ebenstein said. “It was a good first game for them.

“We tried to spread the ball around with all the backs. I think we got everyone a carry in and the line opened some holes. There were times where the backs made the line looked good, broke some tackles and made some good plays.”

Louisburg (1-0) also played two quarterbacks throughout the night as junior Blue Caplinger and sophomore Madden Rutherford each got reps. Caplinger finished with a pair of touchdowns and 66 yards on the ground, while Rutherford led the Wildcats on a pair of scoring drives as well as he accounted for 74 yards of total offense.

“They are both great kids and great competitors,” Ebenstein said. “Some people could call it a controversy, but I think it is a blessing that we have two kids that can play quarterback very well.”

On the flip side, the Wildcat defense was able to keep Wyandotte in check despite a pair of long Bulldog touchdowns in the first and fourth quarters.

Louisburg held Wyandotte to 161 yards of total offense and 125 of those were on the Bulldogs’ two scoring plays. The Wildcats also forced three turnovers, including a forced fumble by Will Ridley and fumble recovery by Moore, an interception by Desmond Doles.

Moore was also all over the place from the linebacker spot as he led the Wildcats with 14 tackles, while Tucker and Ridley each added seven in the win.

“We wanted the linebackers to play aggressive and sometimes when you play aggressive you lose your assignment and it was a good play for Wyandotte on their first score of the game,” Ebenstein said. “Besides that, (defensive) coach (Jeff) Lohse had them pretty drilled up on where they needed to be and what they needed to do and we are proud of them.”



Louisburg senior Garrett Lowry drags down a Wyandotte player from behind.

Penalties and some miscues on offense hurt the Wildcats early on and they were forced to punt on their opening possession. Wyandotte took the punt and returned it for a long touchdown, but was called back due to a Wyandotte penalty.

The Wildcat defense was able force a Wyandotte fumble on its first possession and Louisburg took advantage when Caplinger scored on a 1-yard touchdown run. Drake Varns added the extra point to give Louisburg a 7-0 lead as Varns connected on 5 of his 6 extra points.

Wyandotte responded with a 65-yard touchdown pass to tie it up, but two second quarter touchdowns by Moore, including one on a 36-yard run, gave Louisburg a 21-7 halftime lead.

Rutherford had a 16- and 19-yard run on each drive, and also a

16-yard pass to Moore that helped set up both scores.

The Wildcats opened the second half with 20 unanswered points and ran away with the season opener.

Louisburg will try for its second straight win to start the season Friday when it travels to Piper. The Pirates fell to Paola in its opener, 35-21. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

WYAN	7	0	0	7 -
14				
LOU	7	14	14	6 -
41				

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Blue Caplinger 1 run (Drake Varns kick)

W: 65 yard pass (kick good)

Second quarter

L: Austin Moore 36 run (Varns kick)

L: Moore 11 run (Varns kick)

Third quarter

L: Blue Caplinger 1 run (Varns kick)

L: Brayden Gage 2 run (Varns kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Ben Minster 92 run (kick failed)

W: 60 yard touchdown run (kick good)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Austin Moore 16-175; Ben Minster 2-100; Blue Caplinger 11-66; Charlie Koontz 6-52; Madden Rutherford 5-47; Brayden Gage 3-37; Will Ridley 2-36; Jakob Krause 1-1. Totals: 48-500

PASSING: Rutherford 3-7-27

RECEIVING: Moore 1-16; Gage 1-10; Ridley 1-1

TACKLES: Austin Moore 14, Will Ridley 7, Kiefer Tucker 7, Christian Tosterud 4, Blue Caplinger 4, Mitchell Drew 4, Garrett Lowry 4, Desmond Doles 4, Noah Larson 3, Brayden Gage 2, Garrett Harding 2, Beckett Rasmussen 1, Matt Holloway 1, Brayden White 1.