

Moore, Wildcats run over Spring Hill for homecoming shutout



Louisburg running back Austin Moore gets a block from receiver Desmond Doles for a big run Friday at Wildcat Stadium. The Wildcats defeated Spring Hill 33-0 in their homecoming game and Moore carried the ball for 274 yards with three touchdowns.

It would have been an easy for members of the Louisburg High School football team to lose focus with everything going on around them.

The game ended what was a busy homecoming week and the Wildcats took an emotional stance when they joined Spring Hill in coming out of the locker room and standing for the national anthem – something they normally stay inside for.

Despite all that, concentration wasn't a problem for Louisburg as it recorded its second consecutive shutout with a 33-0 victory over Spring Hill on Friday and improved its record to 5-1 on the season.

"I was very impressed with our kids focus," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "We have grown a lot this season and we are still getting better. With everything going on this week, and the atmosphere of the game, our kids kept their heads and

just played football.”

Football took a back seat for a few minutes and both teams stood in the back of the endzone together to stand during the national anthem. Earlier in the week, Ebenstein brought up an idea to his team of coming out of the locker room for the anthem and he asked the Spring Hill coaches if they would like to join together.

Ebenstein got a quick response from the Bronco staff and the two teams united, even if it was just for a few moments.

“This was something that we saw as an opportunity to teach our kids about how grateful we are to even get the opportunity to play this great game,” Ebenstein said “We know that our society is not perfect, but paying our respects to the people who have laid the foundation for this country is something that is important to us. So after a unanimous decision as a team, it was something we wanted to do.

“I reached out to (assistant) Coach (Tucker) Woofter from Spring Hill who I know through the wrestling community, and who is a great guy and competitor. I told Tucker it was something we were thinking about and offered to extend the invitation to them. He spoke with (head) Coach (Jason) Feeback, and called me back the next day and said it was something they would love to do as well. So we shuffled some things around and decided to come out for the national anthem for just this game.”



Members of the Louisburg and Spring Hill football teams stood together in the endzone for the national anthem.

On the football field, the Wildcats made a statement as well.

Ebenstein reinforced the message with his team earlier in the week to be physical up front offensively and the Wildcats appeared to have gotten the message. Louisburg's offensive line of Garrett Lowry, Garrett Harding, Noah Larson, Kiefer Tucker and Brayden White paved the way for 353 yards on the ground, with a bulk of those yard coming on the legs of junior running back Austin Moore.

Moore made it difficult on the Spring Hill defense as he carried the ball 31 times for 274 yards and three touchdowns as he reeled off several big runs. Fellow backs Blue Caplinger and Will Ridley also opened some holes for Moore.

"Offensively, I challenged our team to be the most physical they had been all season and we did a great job blocking up front as well as on the perimeter," Ebenstein said. "Austin obviously ran very well, but the down field blocking by Will and Blue was the best of the season thus far."

The Wildcats were just as strong defensively as they played with a bend, but don't break mentality. Although Spring Hill drove the ball down the field on a couple different occasions, the Wildcat defense came up with big plays as it forced two first half fumbles, preventing a score.

Louisburg held Spring Hill to 168 yards of total offense and made the stops when it needed to.

“Spring Hill found some things that were working, but we were able to shut down the inside run game and trap game,” Ebenstein said. “They found a little room on the edges with zone read stuff, but ultimately the shutout is something to be very proud of. Coach (Jeff) Lohse again had a great plan. I was very pleased with some of the kids who got into the game with nearly five minutes left and were able to keep the shutout. That is very impressive.”



Kris Light and Chloe Philgreen were crowned fall homecoming king and queen before Friday’s contest at Wildcat Stadium.

After a slow start, the Wildcats got on the scoreboard late in the first quarter with the help of its defense.

Tucker recovered a Spring Hill fumble on the Bronco 10-yard line and the Wildcats answered on the next play with a Caplinger 10-yard touchdown run.

Midway through the second quarter, the Wildcat defense turned the Bronco defense over on downs at midfield and Louisburg drove down the field and ended with a 1-yard touchdown by Moore.

Late in the first half, Louisburg rose to the occasion on defense once again. Caplinger recovered a fumble on the Louisburg 7-yard line as it appeared the Broncos were going in for a score.

Moore reeled off a 57-yard run to go into Spring Hill territory, then followed it up with a 21-yard touchdown run. After a Drake Varns extra point, the Wildcats took a 19-0 halftime lead.

Moore added a 20-yard touchdown run early in the fourth quarter and the Wildcat defense sealed the win with their third turnover of the night. Desmond Doles intercepted a Spring Hill pass and returned it 40 yards for a touchdown.

"I was pretty pleased with our play," Ebenstein said. "We made some mental mistakes early in the game on offense, which we need to get cleaned up. We left some points on the field with a turnover on downs inside the 10 yard line, as well as a fumble inside the 5. With districts approaching, these are mistakes we need to take care of and get cleaned up. Defensively we gave up some yards, but locked in on big downs and were able to get off the field."



Lineman Kiefer Tucker pressures the Spring Hill quarterback in Friday's shutout of the Broncos.

After winning five of its first six games to start the season, the Wildcats will put that behind them as they begin district play Friday at Fort Scott. The top two teams in each district will advance to the Class 4A playoffs.

"Going into districts at 5-1, and winning the last three games with two shutouts, is a great way to go into districts," Ebenstein said. "But at this point everyone in 4A is 0-0 and we have a tough Fort Scott team this week, so we will need to be ready to go."

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SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Blue Caplinger 10 run (kick failed)

Second quarter

L: Austin Moore 1 run (2-point conversion failed)

L: Moore 21 run (Drake Varns kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Moore 20 run (Varns kick)

L: Desmond Doles 40 interception return (Varns kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Austin Moore 31-274, Will Ridley 6-43, Blue Caplinger 3-34, Madden Rutherford 4-8, Brayden Gage 1-(-3).
Totals: 45-353.

PASSING – Madden Rutherford 1-5-16

RECEIVING – Ben Minster 1-16

TACKLES – Austin Moore 7, Christian Tosterud 7, Will Ridley 5, Garrett Harding 4, Noah Larson 4, Blue Caplinger 2, Mitchell Drew 2, Garrett Lowry 2, Desmond Doles 2, Ben Minster 1, Josh Casey 1, Brayden Gage 1, Beckett Rasmussen 1, Michael Waldron 1, Tanner Belcher 1, James Foote 1, Will Smith 1, Jonathan DePriest 1.