

# Wildcats bounce back for first district win



Louisburg linemen Matt Holloway (left) and Kiefer Tucker open a running lane for quarterback Madden Rutherford on Friday in Ottawa. The Wildcat offensive line helped pave the way for 372 yards on the ground, including a 228-yard and five touchdown performance from junior running back Austin Moore in their 42-19 win over Ottawa.

OTTAWA – Following the district opening loss to Fort Scott, the Louisburg football team knew there was little room for error.

Another setback would make it difficult for the Wildcats to advance to the Class 4A-Division 1 state playoffs, as the top two teams in each district get in. That is why Friday's contest against Ottawa was as close to a must-win as Louisburg has had all season.

The pressure didn't seem to faze the Wildcats as they opened the game with a pair of touchdowns and didn't look back in a 42-19 victory at Ottawa High School. The win put Louisburg at 1-1 in district play and 6-2 on the season.

"It was a really big win," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "We preached all week that we needed to even out our district record and everything we did was with that in mind. We had a great week of practice, played really well and gave

ourselves a chance for next week. I am very excited.”

Louisburg set the tone offensively as it scored on its first two possessions of the game and the Wildcats were able to run the ball right at Ottawa. The Wildcats amassed 372 yards rushing, with a lot of those coming from one back.

Junior running back Austin Moore had a big performance for Louisburg as he carried the ball 28 times for 223 yards and five touchdowns.

The Wildcats were able to control the line of scrimmage as Noah Larson, Matt Holloway, Kiefer Tucker, Garrett Lowry, Garrett Harding and Brayden White opened up a lot of holes for Moore, as did backs Blue Caplinger and Will Ridley.

“Austin ran hard, but I think there was probably four or five times where I don’t think anyone touched him until he was like five or six yards deep,” Ebenstein said. “That offensive line, along with Will and Blue getting in there, they are getting better at blocking every single week. They are finding those linebackers, putting their head on the right side, turning their butts and just sealing a wall. As an offensive unit, they were really sharp out there.”

Louisburg’s offense opened it up early when quarterback Madden Rutherford connected with Desmond Doles for a 26-yard pass, which helped set up a 6-yard touchdown run by Moore.



**Senior tight end Christian Tosterud finds a lot of running room during the first half of Friday's game in Ottawa.**

Moore then recovered an Ottawa fumble on the Cyclones' first possession and the Wildcats turned that into points as Rutherford scored on a 45-yard touchdown run. Moore then ran in the 2-point conversion and the Wildcats had a quick 15-0 lead.

The Wildcats' confidence came through late in the second quarter. When faced with a fourth and goal at the 4, Louisburg went for it and Moore ended up scoring on a 4-yard run to give Louisburg a 22-7 halftime lead.

"When we were down there, I wanted to just try and draw them offsides, but I had two linemen tell me no and they just wanted to go on 'Set' and just go at them," Ebenstein said. "When those guys are feeling it like that, you just go with

it.”

Defensively, the Wildcats were able to slow the Ottawa offense at times with several backups playing starting roles. Louisburg was able to force the Cyclones into three turnovers, including fumble recoveries by Moore and Tucker, a forced fumble by Ridley and an interception by Brayden Gage.

Christian Tosterud and Ridley each led Louisburg with nine tackles on the night.

“I thought we played pretty well all the way around,” Ebenstein said. “Defensively, we had two new safeties in, a new linebacker in and then we have Christian (Tosteurd) get hurt. We have new guys in and out against a team that wants to throw the ball, can throw it and has athletes, so I thought we did OK. They did well for their first time getting out there.”



**Defensive backs Kohl Vogel (left) and Brayden Gage break**

**up a pass in the endzone Friday against Ottawa.**

Moore continued his string of touchdowns in the second half as he scored on runs on 21, 15 and 34 yards to help put the game away.

The victory sets up an elimination game with rival Paola this Friday in Louisburg. Fort Scott, which has beaten Louisburg and Paola, has already wrapped up the district title, leaving one spot left.

That spot will go to the winner of the rivalry matchup, which is also Senior Night in Louisburg. The two teams were in the same scenario last season when the Wildcats went on the road to knock off Paola.

“This is what you play high school football for – Louisburg/Paola, last game of the year, Senior Night and a chance to go to the playoffs – that is good stuff,” Ebenstein said. “We will be excited and ready to go for sure. I know Paola will be as well. We were in the same situation last year, and we got the better end of it, so I am sure Paola remembers that and will be ready. It is going to be a lot of fun.”

<b>LOU</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>- 42</b>				
<b>OTT</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>- 19</b>				

**SCORING SUMMARY**

**First quarter**

L: Austin Moore 6 run (Drake Varns kick)

L: Madden Rutherford 45 run (Moore run)

### **Second quarter**

O: Kennontae Savage 8 pass from Kaleb Shaffer (kick good)

L: Moore 4 run (Varns kick)

### **Third quarter**

L: Moore 21 run (kick failed)

O: Savage 5 pass from Shaffer (kick failed)

### **Fourth quarter**

L: Moore 15 run (Varns kick)

O: Elias White 29 pass from Shaffer (run failed)

L: Moore 34 run (Varns kick)

## **STATISTICS**

RUSHING – Austin Moore 28-223, Madden Rutherford 10-100, Charlie Koontz 3-16, Will Ridley 4-13, Brayden Gage 2-11, Blue Caplinger 2-9. Totals: 49-372

PASSING – Madden Rutherford 4-6-83

RECEIVING – Desmond Doles 2-32, Christian Tosterud 1-30, Blue Caplinger 1-21

TACKLES – Christian Tosterud 9, Will Ridley 9, Blue Caplinger 7, Brayden Gage 6, Austin Moore 4, Kiefer Tucker 4, Jorge Lebron 3, Garrett Harding 3, Garrett Lowry 3, Kohl Vogel 2, Michael Waldron 2, Tanner Belcher 2, Noah Larson 2, Will Smith 2, Desmond Doles 2, Alec Maler 1, Beckett Rasmussen 1.