

Paola ends Wildcats' season on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Ben Minster looks to get a block during a kick return against Paola on Friday during Senior Night at Wildcat Stadium. Minster was one of 10 Louisburg seniors that were honored before the game.

The Louisburg High School football team found itself one win away from making the state playoffs for the third straight season.

Leave it to rival Paola to dash those hopes.

On Senior Night in Louisburg, the Wildcats couldn't stop the Panther offense as Paola put together two long drives in the second half to pull away for a 34-12 win over Louisburg. The loss ended Louisburg's season with a 6-3 record.

The defeat also meant the Wildcats had to say goodbye to their 10 seniors: Will Ridley, Garrett Lowry, Matt Holloway, Christian Tosterud, Mitchell Drew, Will Smith, Gillin Newell, Desmond Doles, Ben Minster and Alec Maler.

"I am proud of our kids," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "They have fought all year and they grew a lot. I am happy for our seniors that were able to continue to grow as a family and as a team. I am also proud of the younger kids to support them in their efforts as seniors.

“Sometimes we put too much emphasis on certain parts of the game and there are a lot of ins and outs and stuff that doesn’t show on the scoreboard that nobody sees, so I really think our kids grew a lot.”

Louisburg got on the board first as it put together an 82-yard drive that resulted in a 6-yard touchdown run by junior Austin Moore. Although the extra point failed, the Wildcats still held a 6-0 lead late in the first quarter.



Senior Garrett Lowry makes a stop at the line of scrimmage Friday.

Paola answered quickly to start the second quarter on a 58-yard touchdown pass and then scored on a short touchdown run after the Panthers recovered a Louisburg fumble. Despite all that, the Wildcats trailed just 13-6 at halftime.

Penalties hurt the Wildcats through much of the game as they

were flagged eight times for 97 yards, which ended up stalling many of the Louisburg drives. The Wildcats also turned the ball over twice.

“It seemed like every play that was more than 2 yards came back because of a penalty,” Ebenstein said. “Sometimes you just don’t get the breaks and you have to find a way to make your own. Our kids hung tough, and it was a one possession game at half, but that third quarter was a killer.”

The third quarter was a rough one for Louisburg.

Paola opened the second half on a seven-minute drive that went nearly 80 yards and ended on another short touchdown run. The Wildcats got the ball back, but went three and out, only to see the Panthers put together another six minute drive that went 60 yards and got another touchdown.



Charlie Koontz makes a tackle on a Paola running back

Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

"We only ran like three offensive plays in the third and one of them was my fault because it was relayed in wrong," Ebenstein said. "Coach (Mike) Dumpert and the rest of the Paola staff are great coaches and they are going to find what works and go to it. Defensively, I think there was a point where we had four sophomores on the field and two of our seniors starters were out on defense due to an injury. We had some holes exposed, but hats off to Paola and they played well."

Louisburg snapped its scoring drought in the fourth quarter when quarterback Madden Rutherford found Doles for a 32-yard touchdown pass. Paola answered one more time with a touchdown scoring drive to seal the win and end the Wildcats' season.

It was an up and down year for the Wildcats, but Ebenstein, who is in his first year as head coach, saw a lot of growth from his team.

"Whether I am a head coach, or an assistant coach, I am going to do whatever I can for these kids and I just hope at the end of the day they grow as a family," Ebenstein said. "Before the game, I told them to just go play a perfect game. A lot of people think of a perfect game is doing everything right. I just wanted them to lay it all out there. I think our kids did everything they could. The scoreboard doesn't show a perfect game, but I don't think any of the kids left anything in the tank."

LOU	6	0	0	6
- 12				
PAO	0	13	7	14
- 34				

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Austin Moore 6 run (kick failed)

Second quarter

P: Brandon Wilkes 58 pass from Kurt Golubski (kick blocked)

P: Colton Gleghorn 4 run (Ryan Wokutch kick)

Third quarter

P: Gleghorn 5 run (Wokutch kick)

P: Drew Smith 3 run (Wokutch kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Desmond Doles 32 pass from Madden Rutherford (kick failed)

P: Golubski 1 run (Wokutch kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Will Ridley 9-38, Austin Moore 7-18, Blue Caplinger 1-16, Madden Rutherford 5-7. Totals: 22-79

PASSING – Madden Rutherford 6-14-133

RECEIVING – Ben Minster 4-95, Desmond Doles 2-38

TACKLES – Austin Moore 10, Charlie Koontz 9, Brayden Gage 5, Kohl Vogel 5, Will Ridley 5, Kiefer Tucker 5, Garrett Harding 5, Garrett Lowry 4, Desmond Doles 3, Blue Caplinger 2, Brayden White 2, Jorge Lebron 1, Noah Larson 1, Will Smith 1, Gillin Newell 1, Matt Holloway 1.