

# Loss dampens Senior Night for Wildcats



Louisburg senior Savannah Reinhart shields a Spring Hill player from the ball Thursday during the Wildcats match on Senior Night in Louisburg. Reinhart scored a goal in the Wildcats' 4-2 loss to Spring Hill.

It wasn't the way it was supposed to go.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team had plans to send its four seniors – Bailey Belcher, Savannah Reinhart, Avery Barber and Shay Whiting – out with a bang with a win over the region's best team in Spring Hill.

And for 40 minutes, it looked like it was going happen.

The Wildcats held a one-goal lead at halftime, but unfortunately they couldn't hold it as Spring Hill scored four second half goals en route to a 4-2 win Thursday over Louisburg on Senior Night at Wildcat Sports Complex.

"We played hard enough to win," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We just didn't execute and they got a couple bounces and beat us to a couple balls in the middle and they came out on top. The girls played hard, did a good job and represented the school and their seniors well. We just couldn't get the ball to bounce the right way. We had one hit off the keeper's face and then another with a shot in the penalty box and we

just hit it right to her. It is what it is and we will get better."

The two teams went back and forth at each other in the first half as both had good looks at the goal. Whiting, the Wildcat goalie, turned Spring Hill away on three different occasions with diving saves and Spring Hill did the same on shots from Hannah Straub, Mackenzie Scholtz and Belcher.

With four minutes left in the first half, it was Reinhart's turn and her shot was able to find the back of the net. The Louisburg senior hit a line drive from near the 18-yard mark that curved into the corner of the net to give the Wildcats a 1-0 lead at halftime.

Spring Hill tied it all up with 25 minutes remaining in the second half and started what was a string of four goals in 15 minutes. Two minutes later, the Broncos took a 2-1 lead, but the Wildcats came roaring back when sophomore Erin Lemke took a shot that found the upper corner of the net to tie it all up.

"We came out and played hard, with intensity and we just played the right way," Conley said. "Then they just kept coming at us up the middle and we just struggled to stay disciplined in the back and we let them get loose. Then we just couldn't answer. We struggled to play to feet a little bit and we didn't do what I wanted them to, which was to come back to the ball and play a little give-and-go.

"I think we played hard and we played well. I thought Savannah's goal was really nice to get us started and I thought Erin's goal was great to get us back even and I thought we were in good shape right there. We just could not keep our shape and it got a little crazy."

Whiting continued her strong play in goal as she recorded a couple more big saves to keep it tied, but the Broncos continued their attack and placed their shots in the right

spots. Spring Hill took the 3-2 lead with 14 minutes left and sealed the win with another goal four minutes later.

“It was good to Shay bounce back with some confidence,” Conley said. “She played with a lot more heart, played better and was more assertive and aggressive. I think that she showed up and did her job and we needed that pretty bad.”



**Six Louisburg seniors were honored prior to Thursday's Senior Night match against Spring Hill. The seniors (from left) are manager Hannah Gurske, Avery Barber, Savannah Reinhart, Shay Whiting, Bailey Belcher and manager Jarod Rose.**

The loss ended the Wildcats' regular season with a 10-6 record as the four seniors walked off their home field with a bad taste in their mouths heading into regional action this week.

“All four seniors play their butts off and are committed,”

Conley said. "They buy in and they work hard. It is going to be a tough group to replace with Bailey in the middle, Savannah on the outside, Shay in the goal and Avery giving us good minutes at outside back.

"It is a good group, but we are not done yet. The best part is that we are in the playoffs and we will see how far we can go. They are just good kids and they are what you want your program to emulate and stand for. They play the right way, but unfortunately we just couldn't get a win for them."

The postseason starts today for Louisburg as it earned the No. 5 seed and will host No. 12 Basehor-Linwood (6-10) at 5 p.m. to start its regional tournament. If the Wildcats advance, they will meet the winner of No. 4 Sumner Academy (11-5) and No. 13 Bishop Ward (6-10) at 5 p.m. Thursday at Schlagle Stadium. Louisburg defeated both Basehor-Linwood and Sumner Academy earlier this season.

"We are all on the same page now and everyone is even," Conley said. "It would have been nice to be the No. 4 seed and hosting, but that isn't how it worked out this time. We will just see how it goes, let the chips fall and just do our job and do the best we can."