

Wildcats overcome miscues to defeat Spring Hill in opener



Louisburg senior Austin Moore runs through a big hole during the Wildcats' season opener Friday against Spring Hill at Wildcat Stadium. Moore rushed for a game-high 208 yards and also had two touchdowns in Louisburg's 21-17 win over Spring Hill.

Penalties, turnovers and miscommunication are all signs of a team playing its first game of the season and the Louisburg football team fit right into that category Friday.

Despite all those things going against them, the Wildcats also showed what they are capable of when things are going right. Down at halftime to Spring Hill, Louisburg regrouped and put together a long scoring drive in the second half to take the lead and then the defense took care of the rest.

The Wildcats held Spring Hill scoreless in the second half and Louisburg came away with a 21-17 victory at Wildcat Stadium.

"We did everything we wanted to do when we didn't shoot ourselves in the foot," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said of the team's 10 penalties and one turnover. "We knew exactly where they (Spring Hill) were going to be, and what they wanted to do, but we just had too many penalties and a couple fumbles that hurt us."

"We talked all week about how no one can stop us but ourselves, and we made so many mental mistakes. We are happy to get a win, but we know we are not anywhere near where we potentially should be, or could be, right now."

Offensively, when the penalties and mistakes weren't slowing them down, the Wildcats moved the ball down the field, including two scoring drives that had 11 plays or more, which also took Spring Hill out of rhythm offensively.

Louisburg (1-0) racked up 408 yards of total offense, including 358 yards on the ground and a bulk of those came from running back Austin Moore. The Wildcat senior rushed for 208 yards on 26 carries and 80 yards of that came on a touchdown run that gave Louisburg its first score of the season, and a 7-3 lead over Spring Hill in the first quarter.

The Wildcats also got a strong push from its offensive line of Noah Larson, Kiefer Tucker, Garrett Harding, Jonathan DePriest and Brayden White and helped Louisburg put together those long scoring drives.



Sophomore linebacker Andy Hupp brings down a Spring Hill runner Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

Following Moore's touchdown, the Broncos were able to answer right back when Spring Hill quarterback Corbyn Meyers connected with Easton Jones on a 63-yard touchdown pass. Spring Hill was able to move the ball through the air on the Wildcat defense, especially in the first half.

"Practicing against a team like us in practice and all preseason, where we just run the ball all the time is one thing, but to then come out against a passing team like Spring Hill in your first game is hard to prepare for," Ebenstein said. "The quarterback they have slings it pretty well and their receivers run nice routes. Coming out after two-and-a-half weeks of just practicing against the run, takes a minute to catch up to going up against a passing offense like theirs.

"We saw some stuff at halftime and we made some slight

adjustments. Coach (Jeff) Lohse is the best person we can have running our defense and he made the adjustments, stayed on our kids and we were able to shut them out in the second half.”

Louisburg answered right back late in the first quarter when the Wildcats completed an 11-play drive that ended on a 3-yard touchdown run by Moore to give Louisburg a 14-10 lead.

The Wildcats looked like they were going to score again as they drove into Spring Hill’s side of the field, but lost the ball on a fumble and the Broncos recovered. Spring Hill took advantage as Brennen Feedback scored on a 1-yard touchdown run and the Broncos took a 17-14 halftime lead.

After the Louisburg defense forced a Spring Hill punt to start the third quarter, the Wildcat offense put together a 14-play, 80-yard scoring drive that lasted nearly eight minutes as senior Brayden Gage scored on a 13-yard touchdown run to give the Wildcats a 21-17 advantage after a Drake Varns extra point.



The Wildcat football team runs onto the field before the start of their season opener with Spring Hill.

Quarterback Madden Rutherford reeled off several first down runs on the drive and even called a play of his own to keep the long drive alive on a third down.

"Madden owned the huddle," Ebenstein said. "There was one play in that drive where I got the play in late and he did what every quarterback should do. He owned the huddle and he called his own play and it got a first down on a third down play. He led like a leader should lead."

The Wildcat defense took care of the rest as it shut down the Spring Hill offense and Gage intercepted a Spring Hill pass late in the fourth quarter to help seal the win.

Louisburg will try and make it two wins in a row Friday when it travels to new Frontier League member, Tonganoxie, for a 7

p.m. kickoff.

"Spring Hill was ready to play, but coming out here and getting a gutsy 21-17 win is better for us long term with where we are at right now than getting a 50-0 win," Ebenstein said. "Now we can go back, look at things on film and we can grow. A win is a win, and I like the way that we fought, but we have to get a lot better.

"Tonganoxie was 9-1 last year and I know they will be ready to play. They have a new coach, but I don't know a lot about them. I just know that we need to be ready to go from the start."

LOU	14	0	7	0 –
21				
SH	10	7	0	0
– 17				

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

SH: Barret Gardner 47 FG

L: Austin Moore 80 run (Drake Varns kick)

SH: Easton Jones 63 pass from Corbyn Meyers (Gardner kick)

L: Moore 3 run (Varns kick)

Second quarter

SH: Brennen Feedback 1 run (Gardner kick)

Third quarter

L: Brayden Gage 13 run (Varns kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Austin Moore 26-208; Madden Rutherford 16-67; Brayden Gage 5-58; Blue Caplinger 6-25. Totals: 53-358

PASSING – Madden Rutherford 4-8-50

RECEIVING – Brayden Gage 2-39; Austin Moore 1-7; Josh Casey 1-4

TACKLES – Austin Moore 7, Andy Hupp 4, Brayden Gage 4, Kiefer Tucker 4, Garrett Harding 4, Gabe Rader 3, Jorge LeBron 3, Brian Houck 3, Noah Larson 3, Blue Caplinger 3, Beckett Rasmussen 2, Dylan Knipp 1, Eli Johnson 1, Brayden White 1.