

Louisburg nearly upsets No. 2 ranked Piper



Louisburg junior Madden Rutherford battles two Piper players for a rebound Friday during the Wildcats' road contest at Piper High School. The Wildcats pushed the No. 2-ranked Pirates, but fell 57-44.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – The Louisburg boys basketball team found itself in a situation Friday that not a lot of teams in the state will find themselves in.

Louisburg went on the road to Piper High School and the Wildcats held a two-point halftime lead over the No.2-ranked Pirates and were on the verge of one of the biggest upsets of the season.

Although it was a one-point game in the fourth quarter, the Wildcats couldn't hang on in a 57-44 loss to Piper. As good as the Wildcats' effort was, they didn't want to talk about the silver linings when it was all over.

"Our expectations are really high," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "There is no one in that locker room that is happy about a moral victory. We said that we aren't into moral victories anymore. They were disappointed because they knew if they played well for two halves that we had a chance to beat a really good team.

"I really do think our kids are confident players and they are going to continue to work hard every day. Playing as well as

we did should make us a confident team and know that we can go toe-to-toe with any team that we play.”

The Wildcats did that for much of the game, especially in the first half, as they slowed the Pirates down offensively. Louisburg ran a lot of set plays to get good looks at the basket.

On the defensive end, Louisburg forced Piper to knock down shots from the outside and took advantage of the Pirates slow start offensively. The Wildcats (3-2) jumped out to a 7-2 lead on baskets from Kohl Vogel and Madden Rutherford.



Louisburg senior Kohl Vogel puts up a shot in the second half of Friday's game at Piper.

Late in the first quarter, Piper went on a 7-2 run to take the lead back, but senior Noah Hill scored back-to-back baskets to put Louisburg back up 13-10.

The Wildcats went up six after a 3-pointer from Rutherford and held that lead after another 3-pointer from Vogel. Piper knocked down a 3-pointer late in the second quarter to cut

Louisburg's lead to 25-23 at halftime.

"We knew they were a good team," Pfannenstiel said of Piper. "We knew they were a confident team and they have a lot of athleticism. We knew we were going to have to slow them down because they like to get out and run. I feel like we did a really good job of that the entire game. We played very well defensively and our plan the whole time was to try and keep them in front of us, make them shoot from the outside and get every rebound and I thought we executed that really well."

Piper went on a 11-1 run to start the second half to get out to an eight-point lead, but the Wildcats were able to battle back early in the fourth quarter. Baskets from Vogel and Hill were able to trim the Pirate lead to one with six minutes remaining.

However, the Pirates finished the game on an 18-6 run that included several late free throws that were able to seal the win for Piper.

"I told them at the end of the third quarter that we weathered the storm and we eventually got down eight," Pfannenstiel said. "For us to fight back and answer there was really good to see. I think if we just knock down a few more shots then maybe it is a little bit different. The final score really wasn't indicative of how close the game was. It was just kind of slugfest.

"The second half our shots just didn't fall. Piper got a little more aggressive defensively and we turned the ball over a little bit. We did a really good job in the first half with only six turnovers and then we turned it over about 11 times in the second half and that gave them a few more opportunities and gave them some confidence. Plus, we didn't shoot it really well in the second half, either."

Vogel led the Wildcats in scoring with 17 points and Rutherford nearly had a double-double with nine points and 10

rebounds. Hill and senior Dylan DeShazer each finished with six points and Hill added six rebounds.

Louisburg will try and bounce back tonight when it hosts Turner for a 7:30 p.m. tipoff, in what is the Wildcats' final game before the holiday break.

LOU	13	12	9	10-
44				
PIP	10	13	16	18-
57				

LOUISBURG (3-2): Kohl Vogel 7-15 1-3 17; Madden Rutherford 3-12 2-2 9; Dylan DeShazer 1-6 4-7 6; Noah Hill 3-5 0-0 6; Weston Guetterman 2-7 0-1 4; Brayden Gage 1-8 0-4 2. Totals: 17-53 7-13 44. 3-point field goals: 3, (Vogel 2, Rutherford).