

Wildcats come up big in victory over Burlington



Louisburg senior Dylan DeShazer puts up a shot Tuesday during the Wildcats' home contest with Burlington. DeShazer scored eight points and pulled down four key rebounds late in Louisburg's 58-51 win.

The Louisburg boys basketball team needed something big to happen when its game with Burlington was tied with under three minutes remaining Tuesday at Louisburg High School.

Enter the Wildcats' two "biggest" players.

Forwards Noah Hill and Dylan DeShazer rose to the occasion as Hill converted two late baskets and was fouled on both to give the Wildcats the lead. DeShazer did the work on the glass as he pulled down four rebounds in the final two minutes to keep possessions alive and help give Louisburg a 58-51 victory.

"I think Dylan had three or four consecutive offensive rebounds and we know that we have to crash the boards because there are a lot of opportunities to get seconds chances for us," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "You could say that it was the turning point of the game was that sequence there with those two guys, and for Dylan to come down with those was big. We have some good size kids, and when you play a team that doesn't have a ton of size, you have to take advantage of that."

With the game tied at 43-all with 2 minutes and 47 seconds left, the Wildcats rose to the occasion as they went on an 8-0 run to help put the game away despite a mini-Burlington run at the end to help keep it close.

Hill scored two baskets during that run, while Brayden Gage converted an open lay-up on a drive to the basket. Gage and Weston Guetterman also connected on free throws to give them a 51-43 lead with 1:31 left.

Burlington went on an 8-3 spurt to cut the Wildcat to three with 23 seconds left, but Gage and Madden Rutherford went 4-for-4 from the free-throw line to put the game away.

“It was not a great shooting night by either team,” Pfannenstiel said. “They made some plays and hit some shots and put the pressure on us again. I think the kids did a good job taking care of the ball and we made plays when we needed to. Brayden made some big free throws and we were able to find a way to win.”



Louisburg sophomore Weston Guetterman goes up for a layup Tuesday against Burlington.

Tuesday's victory was the Wildcats' second straight win to start their season and have already tied last year's win total with two. It is a mark that the Wildcats are happy to put behind them now.

"We've talked about that and we know how important it is to get off to a good start in these six games before Christmas," Pfannenstiel said. "Our kids are excited about that, but now we can put it in the rear view mirror. People are going to say those comments, but now it is a new season, it is a new team and we don't have talk about last season anymore."

Burlington put a lot of pressure on the Wildcat offense from the start, which made it difficult for them to get in a rhythm. Still, the Wildcats were able to hit big shots when they needed them.

Louisburg trailed by three points late in the first quarter, but junior Michael Waldron tied it up on a 3-pointer with 10 seconds left. Burlington took a 22-19 lead early in the second quarter, but the Wildcats went on a 9-1 run to go up 28-22 on a couple baskets from Guetterman and Hill.

Rutherford gave the Wildcats some momentum as he hit a 3-pointer with five seconds left to give Louisburg a 31-27 lead at halftime.

Offense slowed down for Louisburg in the third quarter as they went five minutes without a point, but the Wildcats managed to hang around thanks to two baskets from Kohl Vogel and another from Waldron. Hill put the Wildcats up four as he gathered an offensive rebound and recorded the putback with one second left in the third.

"We went through a little dry spell there in the third quarter, but we were able to stay in it," Pfannenstiel said. "They missed a couple shots that could have easily taken the wind out of our sails and we were able to bounce back and get good possessions. We preach that every possession is important, whether it is the first one or the last. Every loose ball is important, every free throw and I think our kids are playing hard for four quarters."

Hill led the Wildcats in scoring with 14 points and also finished with 11 rebounds to record his first double-double of the season. Louisburg had balanced scoring throughout as Rutherford added 10, while DeShazer, Guetterman and Vogel each finished with eight. DeShazer also had seven rebounds.

Now the Wildcats will try to make it three in a row Friday when they hit the road for the first time this season. Louisburg will travel to Garnett to face off with Anderson County and Pfannenstiel knows these early games are important for his team.

"It was a huge win for us," he said. "We talk about that this

game was kind of a turning point in our season for us last year as early as it was. Our second game of the year, we got out and beat Baldwin and then we lose a close game to Burlington and had a lead against Anderson County and gave it up in the end. Once that happened, we were never able to get that confidence the rest of the season and we never got any momentum going.

“We knew this was going to be an important week for us. We played well and got a win against Burlington and now we have a couple days to prepare and get ready for a very good Anderson County team. It was an important game and I was proud of the effort that our kids gave and executing at the end.”

LOU	17	14	11	16 –
58				
BUR	17	10	11	13 –
51				

LOUISBURG (2-0): Noah Hill 6-8 2-5 14; Madden Rutherford 3-9 3-6 10; Kohl Vogel 3-9 2-5 8; Weston Guetterman 3-6 2-4 8; Dylan DeShazer 4-8 0-0 8; Brayden Gage 1-5 3-4 5; Michael Waldron 2-3 0-0 5. Totals: 22-48 12-24 58. 3-point field goals: 2, (Waldron, Rutherford)