

# Caplinger excited to join NAIA national runner-up Benedictine



Louisburg senior Blue Caplinger, who earned first-team all-league defensive honors last season, is excited for his new challenge after he recently signed with Benedictine College.

Blue Caplinger played a lot of positions during his time with the Louisburg football team.

Caplinger saw some time at quarterback, was used as a blocking back – and then for his senior year – had some snaps at running back. However, the place where he felt right at home was at safety.

The Wildcat defensive back loved to hit the opposition whenever he had the chance and he thrived at that position. However, now that his time as a Wildcat is over, he needed to find a new place to bring the pain.

Caplinger found the perfect spot with one of most successful programs in the NAIA. In front of family and friends last month, the Louisburg senior made it official as he signed his letter of intent to play at Benedictine College next season.

“They are a really awesome football program,” Caplinger said. “Their campus is great and academically they just really fit me well. They have a great group of coaches and they were honest with me. I am looking forward to getting to work when I get down there.”

Benedictine is coming off one of the best seasons in its program’s history as the Ravens advanced to the NAIA National Championship game and finished second in the nation.

The Ravens have had a lot of success in the Heart of America Conference under head coach Larry Wilcox and his staff. Wilcox just finished his 40<sup>th</sup> season as the Ravens’ head coach and has won more than 250 games during that span.



Louisburg senior Blue Caplinger recently signed his letter of intent to play football at Benedictine. Sitting next to Blue are his parents Wade and Sirena Caplinger and his sister, Toni. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head football coach Robert Ebenstein and head wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird.

“In a way, their success played a part in my decision,” Caplinger said. “I was looking at Baker too, and they are both really good programs, and both have had a lot of success, but Benedictine was a great option for me and it was hard to pass up.

“They have an older group of coaches, but they are all great guys. Coach Wilcox and his defensive coordinator have been there for over 40 years so they definitely have the experience and they have a great program. I feel it is a great fit for me.”

Caplinger was a key figure in a Wildcat defense that helped Louisburg to a 10-1 finish and a regional championship this past season. From his safety spot, he finished with 31 tackles, two for a loss, two fumble recoveries and an interception.

That performance helped him earn first-team All-Frontier League honors on defense and Caplinger was also a second team selection at running back after racking up 544 total yards and six touchdowns.

It’s his experience with the Wildcat football program that helped him mature as a player and get ready for the collegiate level.

“Louisburg football has done everything for me,” Caplinger said. “Growing up as a kid and getting all that football experience with my friends, and then getting into high school and having awesome seasons is something that I will always remember.”

As much fun as his high school football days were, Caplinger is looking forward to the challenges of playing

college football at one of the NAIA's best programs.

"I don't expect to play right away and I will probably redshirt, which is fine for me because their engineering program is five years," Caplinger said. "After that, hopefully I can make my way onto special teams and maybe get a starting position one day. That is the goal. I am really excited for the opportunity and can't wait to get down there."