

Carlson's goal gives Louisburg thrilling overtime win over Paola



Members of the Louisburg boys soccer team rush the field Thursday in Paola to surround teammate Treston Carlson, who scored the game-winning goal in overtime to give the Wildcats a 3-2 victory.

PAOLA – Through the first 45 minutes of the match with rival Paola, nothing seemed to go right for the Louisburg soccer team.

Paola jumped out to a two-goal lead early in the second half and the Wildcats had a hard time getting much going offensively. Louisburg was staring at its first loss of the season.

“We just didn’t play well at all, especially in the first 20 minutes,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Paola had pressure, took it at us and they got a penalty kick early and all of a sudden we were shocked. Then they got up 2-0 on us early in the second half and Paola had all the momentum. We needed to make something happen.”

Then – all of a sudden – something changed. In a game where the Panthers had everything going it way, Louisburg got some momentum of its own to steal a win on the road.

The Wildcats rallied to notch a 3-2 result in overtime thanks to a header from junior Treston Carlson that sealed the comeback win for Louisburg. That finish capped a turn of events that led Louisburg to its second consecutive win to start the season.

“It was a great win because we are a young team still trying to figure out how to play,” Conley said. “It was awesome to see them finish the game and I am so proud of my kids. They just grinded and battled. They could have easily put their head down when it was 2-0, but to be quite honest, 2-0 is the worst lead to have in soccer. Once we got a goal, the momentum just shifted and all of a sudden we were playing like gangbusters.”

It did, indeed.

Paola took a 1-0 lead in the first half on a penalty kick, and then in the opening minutes of the second, went up two on a goal from senior Ryan Wokutch.

With 27 minutes left in the match, the tide started to turn for the Wildcats. Paola’s Gabriel Luna was issued a red card and the Panthers were forced to play a man down the rest of the way.

It gave Louisburg the spark it was looking for as the Wildcats put pressure on the Panther defense and were eventually awarded a penalty kick with 22 minutes left in regulation. Freshman

Cade Gassman converted the opportunity to cut the Paola lead in half and the Wildcats were off and running.



Freshman Cade Gassman goes up for a header Thursday against Paola.

Another freshman, Ethan Ptacek, got in on the fun six minutes later when he tied the match on his first varsity goal.

“The worst thing was, Ethan was wide open for a long time and we just couldn’t get it to him,” Conley said. “We were able to get it to him and he was pretty excited to score his first varsity goal for sure. The game really turned after that. Paola was pinging on empty and were trying to gut it out, but we just had the fresher legs and the momentum.”

Paola also had to deal with cramping with several of their players throughout the second half and the Panthers were forced to shuffle players in and out. It all led to a thrilling finish in overtime for the Wildcats.

“Hats off to Paola because they played down a man for a long time,” Conley said. “They had kids fighting through cramps all night and they played their butts off. I think the difference was we were just a little deeper than they were and it paid off.”

Four minutes into overtime, the Wildcats were able to finish it off when sophomore Braden Yows crossed the ball into the box, and it eventually found the head of Carlson, who put it away for the win.



Louisburg defender Toby Espina Roca clears the ball away from the goal Thursday against Paola.

The entire Louisburg bench stormed the Panther Stadium field in celebration of a win they hope turns into plenty more down the road.

"This is what rivalry games are all about," Conley said. "Paola played really hard and fought through a lot of adversity, but I am so proud of our kids and how they kept fighting and battling through it all. When you win tough games like this it is a heck of a confidence builder and I am glad we just had enough gas left in the tank to get the win. It became more of a game of attrition than anything

else.”

Louisburg will try for its third straight win today when it travels to Basehor-Linwood. Varsity is set to begin at 6 p.m.