Late comeback falls short in Wildcats’ loss to Spring Hill



Louisburg junior Ben Wiedenmann breaks through the line for a long run during the Wildcats’ season opener Friday in Spring Hill.

SPRING HILL – Four yards.

That is how far away the Louisburg football team was from completing what was already an impeccable comeback in its season opener Friday against Spring Hill.

Down three points with 50 seconds left, the Wildcats had a first and goal from the 4-yard line and were ready to steal the road win. Fate had other ideas, however.

Two penalties and two incompletions later, the Wildcats were forced to try a game-tying field goal. The kick fell short and Spring Hill survived a 27-24 contest that could have easily gone different way after Louisburg scored 18 unanswered points to tie it.

“Losing sucks, that is for sure,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “We had every chance to win it. The game really wasn’t lost at the end, the game was lost in the first half and I was glad to see us battle back like we did. I was very pleased with how they fought.

“We had chances to make plays.
Sometimes you make them and sometimes you don’t. There was a big learning curve
for us, and unfortunately some of the plays we learned on were scores for them.”

Spring Hill jumped out quickly as
the Broncos scored the game’s first 10 points before the Wildcats battled back
early in the second quarter.

Louisburg drove 80 yards and ended
with a 1-yard touchdown run from quarterback Madden Rutherford, and after a
missed extra point, the Wildcats trailed by just four.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats,
Spring Hill’s offense was difficult to get off the field as the Broncos engineered
two more scoring drives. Bronco running back Zade Barker scored on pair of
4-yard runs to go up 24-6 with under two minutes left in the first half.

“We had a lot of kids making first
starts out there on defense and we really weren’t assignment sound,” Ebenstein
said. “That is something we might have taken for granted the last couple of
years because we had kids who knew where to be and what to do. We will learn,
coach them up and be better next game.”

The Wildcats did take some momentum going into halftime as Rutherford led the Wildcats down the field and completed the drive with a 23-yard touchdown pass to Charlie Koontz with 24 seconds remaining.

After halftime, the Wildcats

dominated time of possession.

Louisburg ate up the first nine
minutes of the third quarter, which ended in a 36-yard field goal from Drake
Varns. The Wildcat defense then forced a three-and-out, and got the ball right
back. In all, Spring Hill ran just 15 plays from scrimmage the entire second
half.

“Keeping our defense fresh and
their quarterback off the field was big for us,” Ebenstein said.



Junior Weston Guetterman hauls in one of his eight catches on Friday. Guetterman had a career-best 184 yards receiving.

Late in the third quarter, and with Louisburg facing a third-and-long situation, Rutherford connected with junior Weston Guetterman on a 35-yard pass play to the Spring Hill 21-yard line. Then on the opening play of the fourth quarter, junior Justin Collins found a hole and scored on a 21-yard touchdown run to tie the game.

Spring Hill kicker Bear Gardner put the Broncos in front again with a 27-yard field goal with 5 minutes and 49 seconds left in the contest.

The Wildcats had their backs against wall, yet again, late in the fourth quarter as they faced a 4th down and 22. Rutherford again came through as he found running back Ben Wiedenmann on a 32-yard pass over the middle for a first down.

All that set up the first-and-goal from the 4-yard line, which would be as close as the Wildcats would get. An illegal procedure penalty, two incompletions and a delay of game stymied the Louisburg drive.

“We had every intention of coming back and winning that game,” Ebenstein said. “We had the ball on our fingertips twice in the endzone to win it, and then we had a good snap, good hold on the field goal but the kick just didn’t go through. We will learn from this and get better.”



Junior linebacker Andy Hupp brings down a Spring Hill player for a loss Friday.

Louisburg also had several players who were cramping up throughout the game, which forced players to play in different spots at times and limited the Wildcats on what they could do late in the game.

One of those was Rutherford, who despite the cramping issues, completed 12 of 27 passes for 251 yards and a touchdown. His favorite target was Guetterman, who had his best day in a Wildcat uniform with eight catches for 184 yards. Guetterman made several key catches late in the contest to keep drives alive.

“Both of those guys are talented, and with our running backs cramping up and everyone shuffling through, they were two of the consistent players for us,” Ebenstein said. “They knew their assignments. Madden was really hindered because he couldn’t roll out, and if he tried to, he would cramp up. Still, those two made some big plays for us.

“We have to take better care of our bodies and it seemed like every player was cramping out there. We were shuffling kids in and out that don’t play the right positions. We will take care of our bodies, learn and get better for next week.”

In the backfield, Wiedenmann led the Louisburg rushing attack with 81 yards on 15 carries and the offensive line of Brayden White, Garrett Harding, Ian McGuire, Andy Hupp, Eli Johnson and tight end Michael Waldron helped open holes for some of the big plays.

Defensively, Hupp led the way with a team-high eight tackles from his linebacker spot and sophomore Kolby Kattau finished with seven. Wiedenmann and Waldron both added six tackles, while Wiedenmann recorded a sack and two tackles for a loss.

The Wildcats will try and rebound this Friday when they host Tonganoxie in their home opener. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. at Wildcat Stadium.

LOU	**0**	**14**	**3**	**7 –**

24

SH 10 14 0 3 – 27

First quarter

SH: Gage Klutts 26 pass from Corbyn Meyers (Bear Gardner kick)

SH: Gardner 26 FG

Second quarter

L: Madden Rutherford 1 run (kick failed)

SH: Zade Barker 4 run (Gardner kick)

SH: Barker 4 run (Gardner kick)

L: Charlie Koontz 23 pass from Rutherford (Rutherford run)

Third quarter

L: Drake Varns 36 FG

Fourth quarter

L: Justin Collins 21 run (Varns kick)

SH: Gardner 27 FG

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ben Wiedenmann 15-81; Madden Rutherford 11-37; Charlie Koontz 8-37; Justin Collins 3-31; Kolby Kattau 6-15; Jay Scollin 1-3

PASSING – Madden Rutherford
12-27-251

RECEIVING – Weston Guetterman
8-184; Ben Wiedenmann 1-32; Charlie Koontz 1-23; Jay Scollin 1-7; Michael
Waldron 1-5

TACKLES – Andy Hupp 8; Kolby
Kattau 7; Ben Wiedenmann 6; Michael Waldron 6; Brayden White 5; Justin Collins
4; Charlie Koontz 4; Andrew Krause 3; Weston Guetterman 2; Jay Scollin 2;
Konnor Vohs 1; Drake Varns 1; A.J. Reed 1