

Wildcats put a scare into No. 1 Piper in home loss



Louisburg senior Michael Waldron stretches out for a rebound Friday during the Wildcats' home contest against Piper.

For two-and-a-half quarters Friday, the Louisburg boys basketball team had the upper-hand on the defending state champion and No. 1 team in Class 4A.

The Wildcats had Piper where they wanted them, but foul trouble and a few turnovers derailed their upset hopes as the Wildcats fell to the Pirates, 68-61, in the final game of 2019.

Despite the loss, the fact that Louisburg was able to hang with the state's No. 1 team for much of the game was something the Wildcats hope to use as a momentum builder over the holiday break.

"It gives our kids confidence," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "We played with the defending state champs and the No. 1 team in the state that has played some good teams already. Our kids have to be very confident that we can play with, and beat anybody. That is type of team we will have to play in sub-state and there are some very talented teams at the top. We are going to have to execute a game plan like we

did against Piper.”

That game plan was to force the Pirates to pull up for jumpers and keep them out of transition. Louisburg was able to do that for the most part as Piper was out of rhythm offensively and the Wildcats were able to take a halftime lead.

The Wildcats (1-3) extended that lead to seven points midway through the third quarter and all the momentum was in their favor.

“We played tough,” Pfannenstiel said. “Our kids played with such good energy, we created a good environment and our students were really good. We basically went punch for punch with them, and defensively, this was our best game of the year by far against a really dynamic offensive team. They can really handle the ball and they have shooters everywhere.”

“That is a good team that we played. To make them settle for pull-up jumpers, which was kind of our game plan, and I thought our kids did a really good job of making them play good help-side defense, packing the lane and making good close outs. It was a lot of fun out there.”

The Wildcats got a bulk of their scoring from three different players as junior point guard Weston Guetterman finished with a team-high 20 points. Sophomore Julian Margrave

finished with a double-double as he had 16 points and 10 rebounds, while junior Ben Guetterman added 17 points and seven rebounds.



Junior Weston Guetterman drives to the basket Friday against Piper.

Louisburg had to play with some adversity early in the third quarter as Weston Guetterman had to sit with four fouls, which is around the same time Piper went on a big run to take the lead back.

Piper went on a 16-4 run to end the third quarter as the Pirates were able to get out in transition and knock

down a couple three-pointers.

“It was definitely tough not having him out there because he is that important to our team,” Pfannenstiel said of Weston. “He is very comfortable with the ball in his hands and does a good job running the offense. He just needs to be a little smarter when it comes to being more aggressive. Maverick (Rockers) came in and did a good job handling the ball against very good defenders. We took care of the ball for the most part against some pretty talented defenders.

“Weston and Julian have been pretty consistent with what they have gotten every night so far this year and we need to find that third scorer and Ben can provide that. (Michael) Waldron can as well, but I think we all played to our strengths. We don’t need everyone to go off for 18 necessarily, even though that would be nice, but everyone knows their role offensively and I thought our kids played very well.”

Piper extended its lead to 12 points midway through the fourth quarter. Weston Guetterman scored five straight points to cut the lead to seven, but it would be as close as the Wildcats could get.

The Wildcats will try and bounce back in the new year when they travel to Turner on Jan. 7.

