

Different look Wildcats excited for start of season



Ben Wiedenman breaks free for a long run thanks to a block from teammate Kolby Kattau (26) during a game last season. Both are returning starters on both sides of the ball.

In what has been a crazy summer for the Louisburg football team, that has featured them wearing masks, social distancing as much as possible and having to lift weights outdoors – the day they have been working for has finally arrived.

Louisburg opens its season tonight when it hosts Spring Hill at Wildcat Stadium. Just like the summer, this Friday Night Lights matchup will be a little different.

There won't be quite as many fans in the stands due to limited tickets, the players have new uniforms and the Wildcats will also be celebrating Senior Night – an event that is usually scheduled for the end of the year.

Most of that can be attributed to the spread of COVID-19 and the lingering aspects of that will be hanging over the 2020 season.

Still, the Wildcats are looking forward to the opportunity, to not only take the field again, but also heal wounds from some of the tough times the town has experienced the last few months.

"I am super excited," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said.

"I think these kids have done everything we have asked of them. They have worn the masks, they've worn the glasses, they've separated themselves and have stayed away from certain social events. I think they deserve it.

"Honestly, I think the town deserves it as well. They have supported us in getting back to this and I wish everyone in the world could come watch this. Hopefully there will be enough tickets spread around that people that want to come to the game, can come and watch. I am just excited to get back to it and getting back to small town unity. From everything that has gone on from April to August, and issues that arise in this town, I am just ready for something to help unify everyone back together and get behind these kids and support them."

With all the changes that are happening on the field, the Wildcats will also have a different look to it on the field, especially on the offensive side of the ball.

Louisburg is changing up its offense from the past and running something that fits more of their personnel. Gone are the big offensive linemen, so Ebenstein decided to take a different route this season.

The Wildcats will be smaller up front and return only one player who saw varsity action a year ago. JR Rooney, who filled in as a starter last year as a freshman, will return to center for his sophomore season, but will have four new players up there with him.

Senior Jay Scollin and sophomore Nathan Vincent will move from the running back spot to guard, while junior Aiden Barker will move from tight end to tackle. Junior Dominic Owens, who started one game as freshman before missing his sophomore year to injury, will play the other tackle spot.



Senior Weston Guetterman, who was an all-league receiver a year ago, is now the starting quarterback for the Wildcats.

Louisburg also moved its All-Frontier League receiver, Weston Guetterman, inside to take over the quarterback spot, which frees up senior Konnor Vohs and sophomore Mason Dobbins to play wide receiver and junior Brandon Doles will move from running back to tight end.

“We changed our philosophy a little bit, so we are just going to kick it old school,” Ebenstein said. “We are trying to put our focus at being fast up front, because we are not very big compared to what we’ve had in year’s past. We don’t have the 6-2, 250-pound guys anymore, so we wanted to make a big change to our philosophy and that is all about being quick. I hope teams say we are small, but we can fire out fast, they fire out low and fire out hard. We’ve been focusing on the littlest things, and when those guys fire out fast, I think we can be

pretty tough.”

Even with a lot of players in new spots, the Wildcats will feature the same faces in the backfield.

Seniors Ben Wiedenman, Andy Hupp, Justin Collins and junior Kolby Kattau will return to lead the running back group as both Wiedenmann and Hupp were both second-team all-league players last season. Sophomore Jase Hovey will also see time in the backfield to add to their depth.

“We are going to mix it up a little bit,” Ebenstein said. “We are going to keep it simple and focus on execution. One of our strengths is probably going to be our back field. You have Weston there at quarterback, that is where he played in the playoffs for us last year on two days of practice. It is great to have Andy, Ben, Kolby and Justin back after they did some really good things last year, plus we add a sophomore in Jase who will see some time as well. There are a lot of weapons that we have.”

Guetterman started at quarterback last season for the Wildcats in their lone playoff game as a last minute replacement due to injuries. Now, since the summer began, he has embraced that starting role and Ebenstein likes what he brings to the huddle.

“Honestly, Weston is a natural leader,” he said. “He does all the little things right. He is always in the right position and he is always taking care of his business on and off the field with school. The kids follow his leadership and they see the type of person that he is and the type of player that he is. He will do a great job leading us.”



Linebacker Brandon Doles is one of several returning starters on the defense.

Most of the Wildcats' experience can be found on the defensive side of the ball as they return many of their back-seven starters from a year ago. Wiedenmann, Kattau and Doles will lead the linebacker group.

Vohs and Collins will take the starting role at cornerback, while Guetterman and Hovey will play at the safety spot.

Up front, Hupp will lead the defensive line on the outside and will be joined by Barker and Owens on the other side. Rooney, along with a combination of Will Patterson, Vincent and Trace Eslinger will see time on the inside.

"The strength of our defense is going to be the back seven," Ebenstein said. "I say that, but probably one of our best players will be up front. We moved Andy Hupp to defensive end

to kind of shut down that side of the field because he is just a monster. Our back seven probably has the most experience as we return all of our linebackers and most of our secondary from a year ago."

One of the Wildcats' better players will begin the year on the sideline due to injury. Senior Alec Younggren, who transferred from Olathe South, is recovering from an injury, but when healthy he will be able to make an impact on the line of scrimmage.

Younggren was a state medalist on the Olathe South wrestling team at 220 pounds last season and Ebenstein says he has been a great fit with their team.

"When he gets healthy, I really think he can be a force for us on the inside," he said. "Alec moved here in the summer, but we are excited to have him. He is coming off a broken foot that he injured in the summer. He was a starter at Olathe South and was a state medalist in wrestling. He is a smart kid and I think he fits in really well with us."

The Wildcats have spent their entire summer preparing for their season opener against Spring Hill and they are looking forward to what can be a successful season, despite the distractions around them.

"This year is different with everything being so fluid and changing all the time," Ebenstein said. "Our goal is to win, and I know this sounds cliché, but our goal is to win every game. We have one game a week and that is the one we are trying to win. We need to do it the right way and have the right approach to every game and get better. We are taking it one game at a time, and whatever it takes to win that game, and whatever system and personnel that it takes, is what we are going to do. Right now it is Spring Hill."