Short-handed Wildcats fall short against Piper



Running back Justin Collins looks for some running room Friday against Piper at Wildcat Stadium.

The thought of preparing a football game with just 15 players had never crossed Robert Ebenstein's mind.

The same could be said for the rest of his coaching staff.

But early last week, that is where Ebenstein found himself. All but 15 members of the Louisburg football team were forced to quarantine due to a positive COVID-19 result, and therefore, left the Wildcats a little short-handed for their game with Piper on Friday.

Despite all that, the Wildcats found themselves in a tie-game at halftime with the Pirates at Wildcat Stadium as they tried to defy the odds. In what was a defensive battle for most of the night, the Pirates used one big play to come out on top and handed Louisburg a 21-14 loss.

The thought of a moral victory wasn't on the Wildcats' minds when it was all said and done, but Ebenstein was pleased with his players and coaching staff.

"For the most part our effort was there, the part we struggled with was staying checked in to our assignments mentally in all three phases for the entire game," Ebenstein said. "Typically we have people who play special teams, and that is a mental

play off for the two-way guys, but we just didn’t have that.

“As for preparing with 15 players left, we did the best we could. We were right there. We were prepped for assignments, but Piper’s speed and size was something that a bunch of old coaches would not imitate. It took us a bit to catch up to their speed and our tackling looked like something we didn’t focus on all week.”

Defensively, the Wildcats stood tall at times as they held the Pirates under 300 yards of total offense and forced a turnover that Louisburg turned into a touchdown.

The game was tied at 14-all at halftime, and in the third quarter Piper quarterback Cory Macon broke free for a 53-yard touchdown run that turned out to be the difference in the game.

Senior linebacker Jay Scollin led the Wildcats with 13 tackles on the night and senior Andy Hupp had eight tackles to go along with a sack and a forced fumble.

Alec Younggren, a senior transfer from Olathe South who has been out with an injury, played his first game as a Wildcat and finished with 10 stops.

“The unfortunate thing about football is you can do so many things well, but that one bad play, or the one mental mistake can lead to a score,” Ebenstein said. “Their long run was a mixture of good execution by them, and us having a couple players with a mental lapse. That’s how it works, and their first drive they had some success because it took us a few plays to catch up to their speed. A bunch of old coaches can’t recreate that. Other that, we really played good defense outside of three drives. We will keep getting better.

“As for Alec I was really excited to see him get to play. He wants to be out there so bad. I am happy he is getting his opportunity to play this game. He is a good kid and is going

to do great things.”

Piper opened the game with a touchdown on its opening drive to go up 6-0, but the Wildcats bounced back with two straight scores to take the lead in the second quarter.

The Wildcats (2-2) put together a 14-play drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown run from senior Ben Wiedenmann, who carried the ball six times on the drive.

It was Wiedenmann who would come up big again just minutes later.

On Piper’s ensuing possession, Hupp stripped the Pirate ball carrier to force a fumble and Wiedenmann was there to scoop it up and return it 30 yards for a touchdown. Wiedenmann ran in the 2-point conversion and the Wildcats were up 14-6.

Piper answered just before halftime with a touchdown of its own to tie it at 14-all.

Offensively, it was tough for the Wildcats to move the ball on the Pirates as they totaled 182 yards of offense – all of which came on the ground.

“Piper’s defense was solid, but we honestly moved the ball and then we were killing ourselves with penalties,” Ebenstein said. “But they do have very skilled kids in the secondary, so throwing against them is always tough.”

Louisburg will try and bounce back this Friday when the Wildcats travel to Eudora. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOU	**0**	**14**	**0**	**0 – 14**
PIP	**6**	**8**	**7**	**0 – 21**

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

P: Kennon Malahki 24 pass from Logan Ladish (2-point fails)

Second quarter

L: Ben Wiedenmann 1 run (2-point failed)

L: Wiedenmann 30 fumble recovery (Wiedenmann run)

P: Cory Macon 10 run (2-point conversion)

Third quarter

P: Macon 53 run (kick good)

LOUISBURG STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ben Wiedenmann 19-94, Andy Hupp 8-40, Weston Guetterman 7-26, Kolby Kattau 8-21

TACKLES – Jay Scollin 13, Alec Younggren 10, Kolby Kattau 9, Ben Wiedenmann 9, Andy Hupp 8, Aiden Barker 7, Konnor Vohs 3, Justin Collins 2, Weston Guetterman 1