

Wildcats overcome slow start to win season opener going away



Sophomore Colin McManigal scored two goals late in the first half to give the Wildcats some momentum Tuesday against Fort Scott.

FORT SCOTT- Through the first 30 minutes of Louisburg's season opener against Fort Scott, Wildcat coach Kyle Conley didn't recognize what he was watching.

It wasn't the same team that he had been accustomed to seeing at practice the last several weeks. Fort Scott took an early first half lead and the Wildcats all of sudden found themselves behind.

The Tigers' lead didn't last long as Louisburg scored eight unanswered goals, including six in the second half, to pull away for a comfortable 8-2 win over Fort Scott on Tuesday at Ellis Park.

"We had a nice conversation at halftime and the boys responded," Conley said. "We came out and pressed and played a lot quicker. The boys stepped up and created havoc. To be honest, I was expecting us to start the game that way. The second half, we just did a much better job of finishing our opportunities."

Ten minutes into the contest, the Tigers took the one-goal

lead despite the Wildcats having numerous chances on goal. In the game, Louisburg took 41 shots, 22 of which were on goal.

Late in the first half, it was sophomore Colin McManigal who got the Wildcats the momentum back as he scored back-to-back goals in the final five minutes, including one on an assist from sophomore Ethan Ptacek, to put Louisburg up 2-1 at halftime.

“The first 15 minutes of the game was wide open and we struggled to stay onside and to finish a ridiculous amount of breakaways,” Conley said. “The thing we need to remember is that we have 25 underclassmen on our team. Expectations are hard to live up to at times with young teams. It showed us we have a lot to improve and work out, but we also did some really good things with a scrappy, physical team like Fort Scott.”

The flood gates opened in the second half as senior Treston Carlson scored in the first 20 seconds and then followed it up with an assist to sophomore Cade Gassman as he made it 4-1. Gassman then sent a kick from the corner toward the goal and junior Hunter Rogers headed it in to extend the Wildcat lead.

Eight minutes into second half, junior Braden Yows scored on a penalty kick and then Yows assisted Carlson on a pass from the corner to make it 7-1. Gassman widened the lead even more with his second goal of the game and sealed the win for the Wildcats.

Although the Tigers were able to score twice, they didn't get many opportunities against the Wildcat defense as the back line of Rogers, Toby-Espina Roca, Luke Faulkner and Michael Seuferling limited shots and goalie Mack Newell recorded a save in his first varsity match.

“The boys did fine,” Conley said of his defense. “They worked really hard and communicated really well. I would like to see them mark tighter and be more aggressive with balls in the

air. Fort Scott plays different than most teams that we play, but it should give us things we need to work on.”

Louisburg will try and make it two in a row tonight when it hosts Basehor-Linwood in its home opener. It is also Senior Night for the Wildcats and the match will begin at approximately 6 p.m.