

Wiedenmann's big day not enough as Wildcats fall to St. James



Louisburg senior running back Ben Wiedenmann carried the ball 34 times for 297 yards and two touchdowns, but the Wildcats saw their season come to a close with a 41-19 loss to St. James Academy.

One by one, the six seniors that suited up for Friday's first round playoff game against St. James Academy came off the field and were congratulated by their coaches.

It was a bittersweet moment for the eight Louisburg seniors as they got a chance to complete their season, but it came to an end quicker than they would have hoped. The Wildcats didn't go down without a fight and a couple late touchdowns, but fell to St. James 41-19 at Wildcat Stadium.

"St. James is a good team and they do a lot of things really well," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "Our kids played their heart out, but unfortunately we had the ball three times when it was still a game in third quarter and two of them ended in penalties. We just lacked the explosive touch on offense to make up for those.

"The effort was there, the passion was there and I am glad these kids got to experience their season. We have a great group of kids who are going to be leaving, but a lot of great kids coming up through the program."

One of those seniors was Wildcat running back Ben Wiedenmann, who saved his best performance for last. Wiedenmann carried the Louisburg offense as he racked up 297 yards on 34 attempts and scored two touchdowns.

Wiedenmann and the Wildcat coaches were able to expose a weakness in the St. James defense. With the help of senior lineman Alec Younggren, and senior fullback Andy Hupp, Wiedenmann found some holes to run through.

“Ben ran hard, and honestly we put Younggren in the spot to be the key blocker, Hupp in the spot to be the key second blocker and Ben ran the ball hard,” Ebenstein said. “As coaches, we kind of thought they were weakest in A and B gaps and that is where we tried to focus. Ben had a great game and executed very well.”

St. James opened the game with a touchdown on its opening possession and the Wildcats had a tough time slowing down the Thunder offense as quarterback Dakota Burritt and running back La’James White accounted for more than 400 yards.



Louisburg linemen Nathan Vincent (left) and JR Rooney (right) open up some running room Friday against St. James.

Burritt threw his first of three touchdown passes to Jacob Boone to go up 7-0 in the first quarter, but the Wildcats (4-5) didn't take much time to answer.

Wiedenmann broke free for a 77-yard run that set himself up a 1-yard touchdown run. Louisburg went for 2 points, but the pass fell incomplete.

The Thunder would go on to score two more touchdowns in the first half and take a 20-6 halftime lead. Louisburg was still in the game, but its offense wasn't able to get going and was hurt by penalties that allowed St. James to expand its lead even more.

Defensively, sophomore Jase Hovey led the Wildcats with seven stops on the night and also blocked an extra point on special teams. Senior Justin Collins and junior Aiden Barker both had six stops, while senior Weston Guetterman and Younggren had

five. Guetterman also recorded an interception.

Guetterman, Younggren, Wiedenmann, Collins, Hupp, Konnor Vohs, Jay Scollin and Will Patterson all played their final game for the Wildcats, but Ebenstein was happy these seniors were able to have a season despite all the restrictions placed on them.



Louisburg senior Andy Hupp and the rest of the Wildcat team say 'Thank You' to the fans one final time.

"It has been crazy," Ebenstein said. "I am so over COVID right now, but I am glad the kids got these opportunities. I feel bad these seniors had a season where there was less than 500 people in the stands and all the extra stuff that went with it. At the same time, they are going to grow up to be resilient men and fathers. They will be productive members of society, I have no doubt. It is all part of the process."

LOU	6	0	0	13
– 19				
SJA	14	6	7	
14 – 41				

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

S: Jacob Boone 12 pass from Dakota Burritt (Joshua Kirby kick)

L: Ben Wiedenmann 1 run (pass failed)

S: La'James White 1 run (Kirby kick)

Second quarter

S: Tyler Claiborne 28 pass from Burritt (kick blocked)

Third quarter

S: White 4 run (Kirby kick)

Fourth quarter

S: Claiborne 2 pass from Burritt (Kirby kick)

L: Wiedenmann 21 run (Layne Ryals kick)

S: Tiave Watts 9 run (Kirby kick)

L: Kolby Kattau 9 run (run failed)

LOUISBURG STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ben Wiedenmann 34-297; Weston Guetterman 8-12; Kolby Kattau 2-8; Justin Collins 2-8; Andy Hupp 5-6.

TACKLES – Jase Hovey 7, Justin Collins 6, Aiden Barker 6, Weston Guetterman 5, Alec Younggren 5, Andy Hupp 4, Kolby Kattau 4, Konnor Vohs 3, Ben Wiedenmann 3, Isaiah Whitley 1, Tom Koontz 1, JR Rooney 1, Wyatt Holland 1, Declan Battle 1.