

# Louisburg falls in short notice contest with Rock Creek



*Louisburg seniors Brandon Doles and Aiden Barker (54) team up for a tackle Friday during the Wildcats' 35-28 loss at Rock Creek High School.*

SAINT GEORGE – It wasn't your typical Friday night lights for the Louisburg football team.

Louisburg was scheduled to play Baldwin in its annual Frontier League matchup, but just two days prior, Baldwin had to cancel due to a low-number of healthy players.

It left the Wildcats scrambling trying to find a week three opponent. Louisburg was able to find one just in time as Rock Creek had a cancellation the next day.

Louisburg had one day to prepare for the Mustangs and their high-powered offense.

It turned out to be a game full of twists and turns, but the Wildcats came up just short to the Class 3A program in a 35-28 loss at Rock Creek High School.

"It is tough, but it is not an excuse," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said of the short turn-around time. "Rock Creek had one day to prepare for us as well. It was the same way last year with Smithville. I will say with what we were planning

for with Baldwin, Rock Creek is the polar opposite. These guys run quads, trips and empties all game and Baldwin is more tight sets. That is just part of it, but it is a tough turnaround.”

Ebenstein had the option of taking the forfeit against Baldwin for a win instead of finding an opponent. The Louisburg coach was looking for a way to get his team better and Rock Creek was a good fit for the Wildcats to find in a short period of time.

“It was big for us to be able to get a game,” he said. “We have a lot of areas where we need to grow, and taking a forfeit and just getting a win doesn’t make us any better. It was good to play and this will help us out more in the long run than taking a forfeit.”



***Quarterback Declan Battle breaks free for one of his four***

### ***touchdown runs Friday against Rock Creek.***

The Rock Creek offense was an explosive one for the Wildcats to try and contain. The Mustangs ran a spread offense and were pass heavy.

The Mustangs were also very aggressive in other areas as they went for an on-side kick to begin the game and recovered it. It eventually led to a 29-yard touchdown run and they led the Wildcats 7-0 going into the second quarter.

It was a defensive contest going into the second quarter when the Wildcats forced a Rock Creek punt deep in its own territory. The punt hit off the back of one of the blockers and the Wildcats sacked the punter on the Rock Creek 2-yard line.

From there, quarterback Declan Battle ran in the 2-yard score to tie the game.

Rock Creek answered right back on a 55-yard slant from quarterback Dalton Whitworth to Yanci Spiller that resulted in a touchdown.

The Whitworth and Spiller combination was difficult to handle for Louisburg. Whitworth threw for 307 yards and three touchdowns and ran for another. Spiller caught those three touchdowns passes and had 7 catches for 107 yards.

"They threw the ball well," Ebenstein said. "We have seen a couple a teams here now that throw the ball well and that is something we have struggled with stopping so far. We have to get better and learn how to defend it. The goal is to figure it out by the time playoffs come."





***Louisburg junior Riley Van Eaton leaps over a player after getting a block from teammate Ashton Moore on Friday.***

Still down a score late in the quarter, the Wildcat defense came up with a big stop as Brandon Doles forced a Rock Creek fumble and Kaven Bartlett recovered to give Louisburg good field position.

On a third and long, Battle scrambled for a 19-yard touchdown run to tie the game again.

However, just like the last score, Rock Creek answered quickly. The Mustangs put together a 2-minute drive that resulted in a 5-yard touchdown pass to take a 21-14 lead at halftime.

Louisburg played with a purpose in the third quarter as the Wildcats stole all the momentum.

It started on defense as Jase Hovey intercepted a Whitworth pass to set up another Wildcat scoring drive. Battle took it himself again, this time on a 7-yard score to tie the game.

The Wildcat defense once again stepped forward as Aiden Barker and J.R. Rooney teamed up for a sack that forced another Rock Creek punt.



***Senior offensive lineman Reid Justesen signals for a touchdown early in Friday's game at Rock Creek.***

Battle hit Riley Van Eaton for a 33-yard pass that set up the Wildcats' fourth score. Battle scored his fourth touchdown of the game on a 23-yard run and the game was tied after a Layne Ryals extra point.

Battle ran for 118 yards on the night and also threw for 80. He also got good blocking from his line in Barker, Nathan Vincent, Scott Thornton, Reid Justesen, Will Hutsell and tight

end Isaiah Whitley.

With under eight minutes left in the fourth, Whitworth scrambled around for a 25-yard touchdown pass to Spiller, but after a failed 2-point conversion, the Wildcats still had a 1-point lead.

Penalties and a sack forced a Louisburg punt on its next drive. Rock Creek then started its own 17, but drove the length of the field and Whitworth eventually scored on a 26-yard quarterback draw to give the Mustangs a one score lead.

The Wildcats got the ball back with under two minutes remaining, but their drive was halted on an interception.

"We challenged them to answer at halftime and they did," Ebenstein said of his team. "The fourth quarter was a competitive one, but Rock Creek just made the plays at the end to seal it. We had some opportunities, but we just didn't make them. That is the way football works sometimes."

Louisburg will try and bounce back this Friday at home when it hosts No. 7 Piper. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

**LOU 0 14 14 0 – 28**

**RC 7 14 0 14 – 35**

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

### **First Quarter**

R: Jaydon Winans 29 run (kick good)

### **Second quarter**

L: Declan Battle 2 run (Layne Ryals kick)

R: Yanci Spiller 55 pass Dalton Whitworth (kick good)

L: Battle 19 run (Ryals kick)

R: Spiller 5 pass from Whitworth (kick good)

### **Third quarter**

L: Battle 7 run (Ryals kick)

L: Battle 23 run (Ryals kick)

### **Fourth quarter**

R: Spiller 17 pass from Whitworth (2-point failed)

R: Whitworth 26 run (2-point good)

## **STATISTICS**

RUSHING – Declan Battle 21-118, Kolby Kattau 8-31, Riley Van Eaton, 5-20

PASSING – Battle 5-13-80

RECEIVING – Van Eaton 2-34, Mason Dobbins 2-32, Kolby Kattau 1-14

TACKLES – Brandon Doles 12, Aiden Barker 9, Kaven Bartlett 8, Jase Hovey 8, Tom Koontz 8, Nathan Vincent 8, Layne Ryals 6, Jackson Howard 4, J.R. Rooney 4, Carson Wade 2, Declan Battle 1, Lucas Swartz 1