

Wildcats' rally not enough in home loss to Piper



Louisburg safety Jase Hovey wraps up Piper quarterback Blake Porter, while linebacker Bryce Gage tries to knock the ball loose with his helmet Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

For most of the game's 48 minutes, Louisburg's offense couldn't gain any traction.

However, the final six minutes gave the Wildcats some hope in their home contest against Piper. Louisburg came through with a pair of touchdowns, but time eventually ran out on the Wildcats.

Piper scored 23 unanswered points to start the game and held on to hand Louisburg its second-straight loss, 23-15.

It proved to be too little, too late for the Wildcats.

"All the credit to Piper's defense for sure, but we just kept shooting ourselves in the foot," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "We had some inexcusable mistakes on the offense line for a Friday night, a lot of penalties and turnovers. It was a lot of self-inflicted wounds, but Piper played a great defensive game.

"Our kids have a lot of fight. I have never doubted their character. We just need to find a way to put it all together."

The Pirates caused the Wildcats fits for most of the night as they forced three Louisburg turnovers, including one that was

an interception return for a touchdown to begin the second half.



Freshman running back Ashton Moore stiff arms a Piper defender Friday.

Piper starting quarterback Logan Laddish left early in the game with an injury, but the Pirates were able to move the ball in the first half.

Running back JJ Jarrett broke free for a 30-yard run in the first quarter and then quarterback Blake Porter hit Divante Herrig-Britton for a diving 9-yard touchdown to put the Pirates up 14-0 at halftime.

Then right after halftime, the Pirates made it a three-score game when Terrel Anderson intercepted a Declan Battle pass and returned it 42 yards for a touchdown.

“That was tough,” Ebenstein said. “We actually shouldn’t have motioned on that play. It was just one of those inexperience things. You have me talking to two sophomores and a freshman. That motion brought the linebacker into the play and that really falls on me. I should have made sure we didn’t motion there.”

Still, the Wildcat defense held down the Piper offense for the rest of the second half, allowing just a field goal in the final two quarters to help keep Louisburg in it.

Junior safety Jase Hovey, senior linebacker Brandon Doles and senior lineman Aiden Barker all made plays for the Wildcat defense. Hovey led everyone with 18 tackles on the night, including a forced fumble and a sack.



Brandon Doles brings down Piper quarterback Blake Porter for loss Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

Doles finished with 16 tackles and four tackles for a loss, while Baker added 13 and five tackles for loss. Nathan Vincent recovered a fumble and junior lineman J.R. Rooney had nine stops.

“Defense played a great second half,” Ebenstein said. “They bailed us out multiple times on offense. I don’t know that we fixed anything, but we just need to realize that the game will slow down and go out and make plays. We have a lot of young kids in some pretty big spots, so we are just trying to get them up to speed.”

With just under six minutes left in the game, the Wildcats were able to find the end zone when Battle broke free for a 68-yard touchdown run. He then ran in the 2-point conversion to make it 23-8.

The Wildcat defense forced another Pirate punt and Louisburg went to work again.

Battle engineered another drive with several big passes to Mason Dobbins and topped it off with a 1-yard touchdown run by Kolby Kattau. Layne Ryals’ extra point made it 23-15 with 47 seconds remaining.



Senior running back Kolby Kattau finds a hole to sneak in the endzone Friday against Piper.

Louisburg tried the onside kick, but was unsuccessful and the Pirates were able to run out the clock.

Battle led the Wildcat offense with 106 yards on the ground to go with 70 yards through the air. Dobbins also had five catches for 61 yards to lead Louisburg.

The Wildcats will try to stop their losing skid this Friday when they host Eudora for homecoming. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

“I know Eudora is getting to where their younger kids are upperclassmen now and they have three kids that have gotten some national attention when it comes to recruiting,” Ebenstein said. “We are just going to study film, and no disrespect to Eudora, we need to focus on ourselves. We need

to fix our mistakes.”

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SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

P: JJ Jarrett 30 run (kick good)

Second quarter

P: Divante Herrig-Brittian 9 pass from Blake Porter (kick good)

Third quarter

P: Terrel Anderson 42 interception return (2-point failed)

P: 26 yard field goal

Fourth quarter

L: Declan Battle 68 run (Battle run)

L: Kolby Kattau 1 run (Layne Ryals kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 17-106; Kolby Kattau 3-4

PASSING – Battle 7-21-70

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 5-61; Ashton Moore 2-9

TACKLES – Jase Hovey 18; Brandon Doles 16; Aiden Barker 13; J.R. Rooney 9; Nathan Vincent 8; Wyatt Holland 7; Kolby Kattau 6; Layne Ryals 5; Jackson Howard 3; Tom Koontz 2; Hunter Heinrich 2; Trace Eslinger 2; Bryce Gage 1; Carson Wade 1; Ashton Moore 1.