

Wildcats shutout in season opening loss to Spring Hill



Louisburg junior running back Riley Van Eaton is engulfed by several Spring Hill defenders during the Wildcats' loss Friday at Spring Hill High School.

SPRING HILL – It wasn't the opener the Louisburg football team was hoping for.

Fletcher Pankey made sure of that.

The Spring Hill quarterback threw for 273 yards and four touchdowns as the Broncos handed the Wildcats a 31-0 setback Friday at Spring Hill High School.

The Wildcats, who were playing with number of underclassmen – some in their first varsity action – had to go up against a Bronco team that featured several returners from a season ago.

“Every loss is disappointing, but the first one always burns a little more because you have it in mind all summer long when you prep,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “Our kids played with good effort, but we made too many mistakes and our opponent was a senior-led team and they did not make many mistakes. Good thing is those mistakes are all correctible so we fill fix them.”

It was as defensive matchup to begin the game and neither team could move the ball effectively. But it was Spring Hill's defense that turned the tide.



Louisburg junior Layne Ryals (left) and Carson Wade team up to bring down a Spring Hill player Friday.

The Broncos sacked Wildcat quarterback Declan Battle and forced a fumble. Spring Hill recovered deep in Louisburg territory and found then end zone on a 22-yard pass from Pankey to Kameron Crotchett.

Louisburg mishandled a punt on its next possession, which gave the Broncos good field position. Still, Spring Hill had a third-and-long when Pankey hit Daniel Mitchell on a 35-yard touchdown with 1:07 left in the first half.

“The first half was a tale of two mistakes,” Ebenstein said. “We did not block our 70’s pass protection correctly and it led to a hit on our quarterback, causing a fumble and a fumbled punt. We made the mistakes and they scored and they did not make mistakes.”

The Wildcats appeared to have some momentum in the third quarter as they turned the Broncos over on downs inside the redzone. However, Louisburg was called for pass interference, which gave Spring Hill new life.

Pankey took advantage of the opportunity as he connected with Mitchell on a 14-yard touchdown pass to go up 21-0.



Louisburg cornerback Kaven Bartlett stretches out to try and bring down Spring Hill's Kameron Crotchett on Friday.

From there, the Wildcats had to change things up offensively and were never able to get in a rhythm against the Broncos defense.

“Spring Hill’s defense was very good,” Ebenstein said. “Our plan was good but we did have to shift it when we got down. We also had some drops which ended some drives. Again all things

that can be corrected and will be.”

Louisburg will try for that first win this Friday when it hosts Tonganoxie in its home opener. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

“Tonganoxie is a very well coached team so it will be a great challenge for Friday,” Ebenstein said. “Our guys will be ready to redeem ourselves from last week.”

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SCORING SUMMARY

Second Quarter

SH: Kameron Crotchett 22 pass from Fletcher Pankey (Rocco Russo) kick

SH: Daniel Mitchell 35 pass from Pankey (Russo kick)

Third quarter

SH: Mitchell 14 pass from Pankey (Russo kick)

SH: Rocco Russo 36 FG

Fourth quarter:

SH: Zach Knowlton 22 pass from Pankey

STATISTICS

LOUISBURG

RUSHING – Declan Battle 15-32, Kolby Kattau 6-17, Riley Van Eaton 10-16

PASSING – Battle 3-16-32

RECEIVING – Jackson Kush 1-16, Van Eaton 1-13, Isaiah Whitley 1-3.