

Trick plays, defense help Wildcats to road win over Bonner Springs



Louisburg sophomore Caden Caplinger celebrates a touchdown in the second half of Friday's game at Bonner Springs.

BONNER SPRINGS – Every football team has a bag of tricks they like to pull out on occasion.

Louisburg almost emptied its bag Friday on the road at Bonner Springs. Whether it was an onside kick, fake punt or a halfback pass – the Wildcats pulled out all the stops against the Braves.

It worked like charm as Louisburg pulled out a 29-7 victory for its first road victory of the season. The Wildcats also won back-to-back games for the first this year and improved their record to 3-3 on the season.

“This was huge for us, especially since we haven’t won on the road yet,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “Coming out on someone else’s field and having to come out and execute in a different environment was big for us, especially with some young kids in some key spots.”

Kicker Layne Ryals was the main “instigator” in the trickery as he tried two onside kicks, one of which Ryals recovered himself. He also completed a pass on a fake punt to go along with a 24-yard field goal in the second quarter to open the

scoring.

Ryals, who is also the team's starting safety, was a big part of the Wildcats' success Friday.



Louisburg kicker Layne Ryals converts a 24-yard field goal in the first half Friday at Bonner Springs.

“He is a stud safety and he is the smartest kid out there,” Ebenstein said. “Layne is a football player. He broke his wrist, casted it up and was back at practice that day. He didn’t miss a practice and he does it all. The one time I wanted to yell at him, he came over and told me what he did wrong. He kicks really well and could have a future in that for sure.”

Louisburg tried two onside kicks in the first half and recovered the second one after Ryals’ field goal.

Although the Wildcats couldn't score on the drive, Ebenstein was happy to see his special teams come through.

"We literally said we were going to keep doing it (onside kicks) until they put a fifth guy up on the front line," Ebenstein said. "The first one was there and Layne was a little too juiced and get kicked 16 yards instead of nine. We squibbed it again and we executed and it was nice."

The next trick came with seconds left in the first half. The Wildcats ran out of bounds to stop the clock, but the clock kept running and Bonner Springs was flagged for a penalty.

It took awhile for the officials to sort it all out, which gave the Wildcats coaches a little bit of time to think of something to catch the Braves off-guard.

Then came the halfback pass as quarterback Declan Battle pitched the ball to Kolby Kattau, who found Mason Dobbins for a wide open 56-yard touchdown pass with 27 seconds left. After a blocked extra point, the Wildcats led 9-0 at halftime.



Sophomore Wyatt Holland returns a fumble 45 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter Friday at Bonner Springs.

“We actually ran that play in practice the day before just goofing around,” Ebenstein said. “On Thursdays, coach (Kade) Larson gives us a 2-minute drill situation and the situation was being on our own 44-yard with 29 seconds and one timeout. We ran that play yesterday against our defense and scored. Coach (Ty) Pfannenstiel said we should the run the play and it worked great.”

Defensively, the Wildcats held the Braves offense in check the entire night as they pitched a shutout. Bonner Springs’ lone scored was a fumble return for a touchdown in the third quarter.

Louisburg held Bonner Springs to just 134 yards of total offense on 56 plays. The Wildcats also forced a fumble as Aiden Barker sacked the Braves quarterback and Wyatt Holland

returned it 45 yards for a touchdown to seal the win.

Linebacker Nathan Vincent led the Wildcats with 10 tackles on the night, while Holland and junior J.R. Rooney each finished with nine. Barker had eight tackles along with a sack and a forced fumble.

“They played lights out on defense and we gave up the score on offense and that is on us,” Ebenstein said. “Overall, we executed for the most part and we beat a good, scrappy team who plays hard.”

The Wildcats pulled out another trick play early in the third quarter when Ryals found Caden Caplinger for a 19-yard pass on a fake punt. Caplinger then hauled in another 19-yard pass, this time from Battle, for a touchdown.



Freshman running back Ashton Moore tries to break a tackle

Friday against Bonner Springs.

Battle, who led the Wildcats with 106 yards on the ground, scored on a 5-yard touchdown early in the fourth quarter to widen the lead even more.

The one setback the Wildcats had was turnovers as they fumbled twice on drives they were about ready to score, along with an interception.

“We were moving the ball, interception, moving the ball, fumble for a touchdown and then fumbled the ball again,” Ebenstein said. “The good thing about it was all those kids came back and made plays after those turnovers. Mason had a drop for a touchdown early in the game, but I told him we were going to come back to him and then caught a touchdown later.”

Freshman Ashton Moore had a strong game on the ground with 90 yards on 14 carries and the Wildcats totals 232 yards rushing and 147 through the air.

The Wildcats will hit the road again as they try for three straight wins this Friday when they travel to Ottawa. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

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SCORING SUMMARY

Second Quarter

L: Layne Ryals 24 FG

L: Mason Dobbins 56 pass from Kolby Kattau (kick blocked)

Third quarter

L: Caden Caplinger 19 pass from Declan Battle (2-point failed)

B: Brandon Andrew 35 fumble return (kick good)

Fourth quarter

L: Battle 5 run (Ryals kick)

L: Wyatt Holland 45 fumble return (Ryals kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 22-106, Ashton Moore 14-90; Kolby Kattau 13-35

PASSING – Battle 6-17-78; Kattau 1-1-50; Ryals 1-1 19

RECEIVING – Caden Caplinger 5-82; Mason Dobbins 2-59; Jackson Kush 1-6

TACKLES – Nathan Vincent 10, Wyatt Holland 9, J.R. Rooney 9, Aiden Barker 8, Brandon Doles 7, Jase Hovey 7, Tom Koontz 4, Jackson Howard, Layne Ryals 3