

# St. James ends Louisburg's season in first round of playoffs



ROELAND PARK – After finishing the regular season with a .500 record, Louisburg had a chance to start a new season – playoff football.

The Wildcats, however, got maybe the toughest draw in the Class 4A bracket.

No. 9 Louisburg ventured to play No. 8 St. James Academy – the defending state champion from a season ago. The Wildcats saw just how tough of a test it was from the opening kickoff.

St. James scored six unanswered touchdowns in the first half and the Thunder handed Louisburg a 56-22 loss at Bishop Miege High School.

“St. James is very good,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “In my opinion they are much better than they were last season when they won a state championship. They got a few new players on both sides of the ball that can really play. I would expect them to make a run here and put up some major points.

Despite being down 42 points at halftime, the Wildcats answered with three consecutive touchdowns in the third quarter to try and get back in the game.

Louisburg (4-5) opened the third with an 11-play drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown from quarterback Declan Battle. He then went on to convert the 2-point conversion

The Wildcats also converted a pair of onside kick opportunities, thanks to kicker Layne Ryals, to give the Wildcats the ball right back.

Battle scored on a 17-yard touchdown run that was set up by a 30-yard pass to Mason Dobbins. Ryals' extra point made it 42-15.

Louisburg recovered another onside kick and then Battle found Dobbins for a 29-yard touchdown to cut the Thunder lead in half.

"Our kids have created an atmosphere where they will battle all game long, week in and week out," Ebenstein said. "I am very proud of their resilience and their determination to continue to fight and play hard. Our seniors set that example and our underclassman have received the message and will battle with anyone. Just as an example, our backfield on Friday was two sophomores and a freshman and never once did they back down."

St. James responded with two more touchdowns in the fourth quarter to pull away and ended the Wildcats' season.

Battle completed 17 of 35 passes for 206 yards and a touchdown. He also led the Wildcats with 82 yards on the ground.

His favorite target was Dobbins who had a season-high six catches for 158 yards.

On defense, the Wildcats had three players that finished with double digit tackles. Junior linebacker Nathan Vincent led the Wildcats with 19 stops, while senior Brandon Doles finished with 14.

Junior lineman J.R. Rooney finished with 10 stops, including three tackles for a loss. Junior safety Jase Hovey added nine tackles.

Not only did it end the Wildcats' season, but they also had to say goodbye to their 10 seniors, including starters Aiden Barker, Kolby Kattau, Doles and Tom Koontz.

"These seniors have had quite a ride over the past three seasons of Louisburg football," Ebenstein said. "I am honored to be their coach and they will be greatly missed. With the life skills they have developed in this program, I know they will step out into this world ready and able to conquer anything they set their mind to."

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**SJA 28 14 0 14 – 56**

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

### **First quarter**

S: Jackson House 5 run (kick good)

S: Blake Boydston 39 interception return (kick good)

S: Tiave Watts 28 run (kick good)

S: Ben Wheeler 20 pass (kick good)

### **Second quarter**

S: House 13 run (kick good)

S: Watts 1 run (kick good)

### **Third quarter**

L: Declan Battle 1 run (Battle run)

L: Battle 17 run (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Mason Dobbins 29 pass from Battle (Ryals kick)

#### **Fourth quarter**

S: Watts 5 run (kick good)

S: Watts 78 run (kick good)

#### **STATISTICS**

RUSHING – Declan Battle 24-82; Ashton Moore 6-6

PASSING – Battle 17-35-206

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 6-158, Caden Caplinger 6-34, Jase Hovey 3-14

TACKLES – Nathan Vincent 19, Brandon Doles 14, J.R. Rooney 10, Jase Hovey 9, Tom Koontz 7, Carson Wade 6, Wyatt Holland 5, Layne Ryals 4, Jackson Howard, Aiden Barker 3, Hunter Heinrich 2, Ashton Moore 1