

Wildcats fall to Paola, Piper; ready for fresh start at regionals



Louisburg junior Mack Newell makes a pitch last Tuesday at Paola. The Wildcats lost both games to the Panthers, and on Thursday, lost two at home to Piper.

The Louisburg baseball team had hoped to gain a little momentum in its final week of the regular season.

The Wildcats had doubleheaders against Paola and Piper to end the season, but the Wildcats couldn't gain much traction.

Last Tuesday, Louisburg fell to Paola 10-0 and 12-6 and then hosted Piper on Thursday in its regular season finale. The Wildcats had the same result as they lost to the Pirates, 12-9 and 9-2.

The losses to Piper were a tough one, especially in the first game. Piper scored four runs in the final inning that broke open a tie game and the Wildcats weren't able to recover.

Piper opened the contest with four unanswered runs, but the Wildcats struck for four in the bottom of the third to tie it up.

Sophomore Jackson Howard delivered the big hit as he doubled with the bases loaded to make it a 4-3 game. Howard later scored on a passed ball to even the score.

The Wildcats answered with a run in the fourth and fifth inning to take the lead, but Piper scored four in the top of the sixth. Louisburg answered with two in the bottom of the sixth to tie the game again, but Piper's 4-run seventh was too much to overcome.

"I thought we played well minus a few mistakes," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "The guys never gave up and we had our opportunities, but we just couldn't finish it. In game one we really swung it well. I liked seeing our guys have a great approach and find a way to get runs on the board. We got down 4-0 but we never stopped competing and finding ways to get runs on the board. Piper swung the bats really well too. We struggled keeping them off the scoreboard all night."

Louisburg (7-13) put together a 14-hit performance, that included a 3-hit outing from sophomore Declan Battle. In all, the Wildcats had six extra base hits, including doubles from Howard, Battle, Jackson Kush, Kolby Kattau and Brody McGreer. Kattau also finished with a triple.

Piper never gave the Wildcats a chance to get in it in the nightcap as the Pirates jumped out to a 8-2 lead in the fourth inning and never looked back.

Junior Corbin Hamman and Kattau each finished with a triple, while Battle and senior Brandon Doles each drove in a run.

Against Paola, the Wildcats went up against the Frontier League's top pitcher in Caden Marcum. The Paola senior gave up just two hits and struck out 14 batters to shutout Louisburg.

The Wildcats had a better chance at winning the nightcap and the game was tied at 6-all late, but the Panthers scored five runs in the bottom of the sixth to pull away.

Senior Maverick Rockers led the Wildcat offense with three hits, including a double. Junior Mack Newell also had a pair of hits, including a solo home run.

Howard added an RBI double, while Hamman finished with two hits and a run driven in.

"Definitely disappointed in how game 2 turned out," Larson said. "We had some very untimely mistakes that didn't help us down the stretch. Marcum threw really well and kept us off balance the all game."

Now the Wildcats will try and erase what happened last week and focus on the postseason. Louisburg is the No. 15 seed and will travel to No. 2 Atchison today to compete in the Class 4A regional semifinal.

It is scheduled to start at approximately 4 p.m. with the championship game to follow after.

"I'm excited to get regionals going," Larson said. "We definitely wish we were a higher seed, but we can throw the records out and just go try to win one game at a time. We've started figuring things out at the plate and I like our chances if we can play a clean game in the field."