

Battle scores four touchdowns as Wildcats roll Baldwin in home opener



Louisburg junior quarterback Declan Battle scored four touchdowns Friday against Baldwin as the Wildcats cruised to a 41-13 win at Wildcat Stadium.

It had been almost 11 months since the Louisburg football team had a chance to play a game on its home field.

After going out on the road in the playoffs last season, and then starting the first two weeks on the road this year, the Wildcats were looking forward to a return home.

The Wildcats got the homecoming they were hoping for as they rolled to a 41-13 win over Baldwin on Friday at Wildcat Stadium in a game that featured a running clock in the fourth quarter.

“It felt really good to finally play at home,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “With going on the road for our jamboree, and then first two games away, it seemed like it had been forever. We had a really good crowd and it was an awesome environment for us to play in.”

“Overall, I thought we played pretty well. We definitely played sloppy at times and still had some self inflicted wounds with penalties and mental errors. We need to continue to work on limiting those types of mistakes.”

Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle made his presence known early as he hurt the Bulldogs with his legs and his arm.

Battle scored four touchdowns, including two on the ground, to lead the Wildcats. He finished the game with 142 yards through the air and another 137 yards rushing.

"I felt like we had a lot of individuals play well and Declan was one of those," Harding said. "He did a good job with his reads and he ran the football well when the opportunity presented itself. He threw some good balls and hit his receivers in stride so they could make yards after the catch."

Battle got the Wildcats going early as they scored on their first drive that ended on a 44-yard touchdown pass to senior Mason Dobbins.

The Louisburg special teams got involved next. The Wildcats forced Baldwin to punt on its first possession and had the Bulldogs pinned near the goal line.

Louisburg senior Carson Wade and junior Wyatt Holland converged to block the punt. Junior Brady Hickey then picked up the loose ball in the endzone for the Wildcats' second score of the game.



Louisburg offensive linemen Will Hutsell (left) and J.R. Rooney take on a pair of Baldwin defenders Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

In the second quarter, Battle struck again, this time on a 49-yard touchdown run to put the Wildcats up three scores. Senior Riley Van Eaton added a 12-yard touchdown to put the Wildcats up 28-0 at halftime.

For the game, the Wildcats amassed more than 400 yards of total offense, thanks to its offensive line. Nathan Vincent, Brayton Brueggen, Jaymes Melton, J.R. Rooney and Will Hutsell, along with tight end Mack Newell.

“To have over 400 yards of offense is a testament to how the offensive line played,” Harding said. “They did a really good job adjusting to what Baldwin was trying to do up front. I thought they played physical all night. Our perimeter blocking was better as well. In order to have some of those big plays you have to have backs and receivers blocking down field and I thought they did a better job of that this week.”



Senior punt returner Jackson Kush runs for some extra yards Friday against Baldwin.

The Wildcats (2-1) scored two more touchdowns in the second half. Battle opened the third quarter with a 34-yard touchdown run and then connected with senior Corbin Hamman for a 26-yard score to go up 41-0.

Senior kicker Layne Ryals also had a good night as he was 5-for-6 on extra points.

The first string defense pitched a shutout for Louisburg as the Bulldogs didn't score until late in the third quarter.

Sophomore linebacker Ashton Moore led the Wildcats with 10 tackles on the night, while Vincent finished with seven. Vincent also had the team's lone sack, while Holland forced a fumble and Ryals earned the recovery.

"I thought we were in a much better position against the pass this week," Harding said. "We were in their hip pocket for most of the night. We can still improve on playing the ball, but our positioning was much better. There were a few missed

tackles here and there, but overall I thought we played the run pretty well. We were also able to score on special teams this week, which is huge.”



Senior Hunter Moore drags a Baldwin runner down by his jersey late in Friday's game.

Harding also had the opportunity to empty his bench and give his reserves some well-earned varsity time.

“I thought it was really good to get some of those younger players in the game,” Harding said. “They work their butt off on the scout team all week, so it was nice for them to get some playing time on Friday. It is good experience for them and hopefully benefits us down the road.”

Louisburg will try for its third straight win this Friday when it hosts Bonner Springs. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOU 14 14 13 0 – 41

BAL 0 0 7 6 – 13

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Mason Dobbins 44 pass from Declan Battle (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Brady Hickey 0 punt return for TD (Ryals kick)

Second quarter

L: Battle 49 run (Ryals kick)

L: Riley Van Eaton 12 run (Ryals kick)

Third quarter

L: Battle 34 run (Ryals kick)

L: Corbin Hamman 26 pass from Battle (kick failed)

B: Jack Harvey 66 run (kick good)

Fourth quarter

B: Jaiden Michael 6 run (kick failed)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 9-137; Riley Van Eaton 9-97; Russell Wiseman 2-10; Darby Van Eaton 2-9; Wyatt Holland 2-5; Jase Hovey 1-1

PASSING – Declan Battle 7-11-142; Lane Cunningham 3-4-10

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 2-72; Caden Caplinger 2-26; Corbin Hamman 1-26; Mack Newell 1-11; Myles Vohs 1-9; Ashton Moore 1-7; Brock Vohs 1-1.

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 10, Nathan Vincent 7, Isaiah Whitley 6, Wyatt Holland 6, J.R. Rooney 6, Carson Wade 4, Hunter Heinrich 3, Erik Lien 3, Reid McCaskill 2, Brady Hickey 2, Jase Hovey 2, Darby Van Eaton 2, Hunter Moore 2, Brayden Yoder 2, Will

Hutsell 2, Declan Battle 1, Mason Dobbins 1, Logan Henry 1,
Layne Ryals 1, Brayton Brueggen 1.