

Wildcats roll past Paola on road to get first victory of season



Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore squeezes through a hole for a touchdown thanks to the blocking of Jase Hovey (22) on Friday in Paola.

PAOLA – Louisburg couldn't have asked for a better start against its rival on the road.

The Wildcats scored two quick touchdowns against Paola on Friday, but that run was short-lived only to see Paola take the lead back in a matter of minutes.

It was a see-saw battle through the first quarter-and-a-half, but it was the Wildcats who dominated the rest of the way.

Louisburg scored 22 unanswered points and came away with a 35-14 victory over the Panthers. It was the Wildcats' first win of the season, and for head coach Drew Harding – who is also a Louisburg graduate – it was the perfect time for him to get his first career win as a head coach.

“It is a big time rivalry, so anytime you can beat Paola it feels good,” Harding said. “It is a little different playing them this early in the year, but it is still fun.

“We are never going to be sad about to win, but we know we have some things that we need to clean up. The good thing is

it is only the second game of the season and we can hopefully continue to get better.”

Louisburg (1-1) got the opening kickoff and drove right down the field. A 25-yard pass from quarterback Declan Battle to Mason Dobbins, set up a 4-yard touchdown run by sophomore Ashton Moore.



Mason Dobbins rises up for a catch early in the first quarter of Friday's game against Paola.

Senior Nathan Vincent recovered a Paola fumble on the Panthers first play from scrimmage and the Wildcats took advantage.

Battle hit Mack Newell for a 22-yard pass, which put the ball on the 1-yard line. From there, senior Jase Hovey ran the ball in for the touchdown, and after a failed extra point attempt, the Wildcats led 13-0.

Paola answered as they went on a 92-yard drive to score its first touchdown, then on the first play of the second quarter, quarterback Jett Osbern hit Landon Taylor for a 51-yard touchdown pass and the Panthers took the 14-13 lead.

“We came out hot and drove it right down the field,” Harding said. “We had success right off the bat, but then I felt like we let our foot off the gas pedal a little bit. Paola made some good plays too and you have to give them credit. We responded in the second half, and even though it was still a little sloppy, we were able to put drives together when we needed to.”

One of those drives came midway through the second quarter. Facing a fourth-and-1 on the Paola 36-yard line, Battle ran a bootleg around the left side and went untouched for a 36-yard score and running back Riley Van Eaton ran in the 2-point conversion.



Quarterback Declan Battle stiff-arms a Paola defender for a big gain Friday in Paola.

Louisburg’s defense rose to the occasion next as Hovey scored his second touchdown of the game, this time on a 46-yard interception return for a score. After a Layne Ryals extra point, the Wildcats took a 28-14 halftime lead.

“Jase plays that centerfield safety position for us and he is

big, athletic and he can run,” Harding said. “He can make a lot of plays for us and he made a couple big ones for sure.

“As a defense, we started off a little slow, and struggled against their pass a little bit, but we made some adjustments and I thought it was a good defensive game.”

The Wildcats shut out Paola in the second half as they held the Panthers to just 88 total yards in the final two quarters and just 56 yards on the ground.

Nathan Vincent led the Wildcat tacklers with 13 on the night, including a fumble recovery in the first quarter, and a sack. Junior Wyatt Holland and Moore also finished in double digit tackles with 11 and 10, respectively, while senior Will Hutsell added nine of his own.



Louisburg senior Nathan Vincent sacks Paola quarterback Jett Osbern on Friday in Paola.

Louisburg had success moving the ball down the field with their rushing attack – specifically Van Eaton and Moore.

Van Eaton broke several tackles on his way to 111 yards the

ground on 25 carries. Moore had four carries for 56 yards, while Battle had 57 yards rushing.

The offensive line of Vincent, Hutsell, J.R. Rooney, Jaymes Melton and Brayton Brueggen provided the open holes to run through.

“We challenged them and we told them that we wanted to see them run the football downhill and for the most part we did that,” Harding said. “Offensive line was firing out and hitting people, so overall it was a good game for us.”

Louisburg will try and make it back-to-back wins this Friday when it hosts Baldwin for its home opener.

“I like where we are,” Harding said. “We are nowhere near a finished product and we aren’t close to our potential. We just have to keep getting better and it will be nice to finally be at home. It feels like we haven’t played a game there in so long, so it will be fun.”

LOU 13 15 0 7 – 35

PAO 7 7 0 0 – 14

SCORING SUMMARY

First Quarter

L: Ashton Moore 4 run (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Jase Hovey 1 run (XP failed)

P: Landon Taylor 11 pass from Jett Osbern (kick good)

Second quarter

P: Taylor 51 pass from Osbern (kick good)

L: Declan Battle 36 run (Riley Van Eaton run)

L: Hovey 46 interception return (Ryals kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Riley Van Eaton 26 run (Ryals kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 25-111; Declan Battle 7-57; Ashton Moore 4-56; Jase Hovey 1-1

PASSING – Battle 10-16-119

RECEIVING – Van Eaton 3-36; Mason Dobbins 2-32; Mack Newell 2-27; Moore 2-23; Caden Caplinger 1-1

TACKLES – Nathan Vincent 13, Wyatt Holland 11, Ashton Moore 10, Will Hutsell 9, Carson Wade 5, Jase Hovey 5, Layne Ryals 5, Mason Dobbins 3, Hunter Heinrich 3, Mack Newell 3, Brady Hickey 3, J.R. Rooney 3, Caden Caplinger 2, Declan Battle 1, Jackson Kush 1, Brayton Brueggen 1