

Wildcats shutout Pittsburg on the road in season opener



PITTSBURG – It may have taken a little while to shake off the rust, but once it did, Louisburg showed what it is capable of accomplishing.

The Wildcats, who led Pittsburg by just a goal at halftime, scored three times in the second half, en route to a 4-0 shutout Tuesday at Pittsburg High School.

A trio of seniors led the Louisburg attack as Colin McManigal and Gavin York each scored a pair of goals, while Cade Gassman earned assists on both McManigal scores.

In the process, Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird picked up his first varsity win.

“Before the game, we talked about the keys to winning: communication, mindset, moving to the pockets, and knowing our purpose on the field,” Bovaird said. “It took a little while to get into the groove, but I feel the game wasn’t as close as the score suggested.

“Colin and Cade were connecting really well up top, and that’s one of the key things we’re looking to make happen. Gavin was a solid player up top as well, maintaining composure and showing the team what tough soccer looks like. Both Colin and Gavin earned some pretty nice goals for our first game of the season.”

McManigal broke open the scoreless contest on a goal from about 18 yards out on an assist from Gassman.

The Wildcats took the 1-0 lead into halftime, before McManigal scored again, thanks to another Gassman assist eight minutes into the second half.

York then got into the action with 17 minutes left in the match, then a minute later, scored again on a free kick to all but seal the win for Louisburg.

Senior goalie Brecon Klugman, who started his first varsity game, earned the clean sheet with four saves.

Klugman got some help from his defense as the back line of Matthew Sword, Owen Barber and Caden French held strong and limited the Purple Dragons' shots on goal.

Although the Wildcats may have won convincingly, it was a rough contest from start to finish.

"It was a physical game, and after the game, one of the officials complimented our team for their sportsmanship and respectfulness," Bovaird said. "It could have gotten ugly – physical tackles from behind, contact after the play, and a lot of little comments from the other team – but I'm very proud of how our guys carried themselves."

Louisburg will try for win No. 2 today as the Wildcats hit the road again, this time at Gardner-Edgerton. The Wildcats will battle the 6A program in a 7 p.m. start.

"One thing we're going to stress early on in the season is the style of soccer that will win us the key games, like any postseason game," Bovaird said. "Our style from the beginning needs to be solid and how we play against our competition early on will set the precedent for how we'll respond later in the season. It's not about playing to rack up the goal count; it's about polishing our style so it's second nature when we

face the toughest competition.”