

Louisburg knocks off undefeated Eudora in overtime thriller



Louisburg senior Nathan Vincent celebrates with his teammates after the Wildcats earned a 28-27 overtime victory Friday at Eudora.

EUDORA – As Layne Ryals took the field with just seconds left in regulation Friday in Eudora, he was ready to convert the ultimate walk-off.

Louisburg drove down the field against Eudora to set up what would be a game-winning 55-yard field goal to cap what would be an epic win for the Wildcats. Ryals lined it up and gave it his best shot.

“I have made a 55-yard field goal in practice, so I knew I had the capability to do it so I went out there telling myself I can make it,” Ryals said. “If you don’t believe in yourself being able to do it then you definitely won’t make it.”

The belief was there, but the kick sailed just wide to the right and the game – which had big Frontier League implications – went to overtime. It wasn’t more than 10 minutes later and Ryals had the chance again to win the game for his team.

After Eudora scored first in the overtime and failed on its 2-point conversion, Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found

Mason Dobbins in the corner of the end zone for a 4-yard touchdown pass to tie it up.

It gave Ryals one more chance to win it for his team, this time from a much closer distance. The Louisburg senior converted the extra point and the Wildcats captured the 28-27 overtime win and gave the Cardinals their first loss of the season.



Kicker Layne Ryals celebrates with holder Corbin Hamman (4) after making the game-winning extra point.

“Standing on the sideline, it’s nerve racking for sure, but once I step out on the field and take a couple of practice swings I forget everything and just focus on kicking the ball,” Ryals said.

The kick put the Wildcats (4-1, 3-0) atop the Frontier League standings as they vie to get their first league title since 2018.

“This game wasn’t easy and it was a challenge for both teams,” Dobbins said. “Eudora is a really good team and we came in

knowing that. We just had to play sound defense and play well on offense and that is what we did.

“It is an amazing feeling, almost surreal. I wanted to win really badly and I know the rest of the team did as well. To make that come true, it really meant a lot.”

It was a contest full of big plays, twists and turns and a number of opportunities – for both teams – to win the game. For awhile, it didn't appear to be the Wildcats' night.

Louisburg turned the ball over three times, had a number of penalties and couldn't take advantage of a Eudora muffed punt late in the fourth quarter. It had all the markings of a game the Wildcats weren't supposed to win.

“It felt like we were spoiling opportunities that were given to us,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “We had like three turnovers, there was a muffed punt that we couldn't take advantage of and there were so many things that weren't going our way. For our players to keep battling, for our coaches to keep battling, it was awesome and I'm very proud of all these guys.”



Louisburg's Isaiah Whitley (7) and Will Hutsell (61) teammate up to bring down Eudora's Octavius Lyles.

Despite the mistakes, the Wildcat defense kept Louisburg in the game as they held Eudora to just one touchdown in the final three quarters. Louisburg came up with big stops and limited the Cardinals' explosive plays.

Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore led the team with tackles from the linebacker spot with 18 on the night, including 11 solo stops. Junior Wyatt Holland also registered double digit tackle numbers with 11.

Senior Nathan Vincent finished with nine tackles and a sack, while senior Mack Newell also recorded a sack. Battle and Ryals each forced a Eudora fumble.

"We gave up some big plays and they are a really explosive team," Harding said of Eudora. "Their backs are fast and their offensive is such where all 11 guys on defense have to do their job, and if you don't, they are going to get a big play. That happened a couple times, but for a majority of the night the defense did a phenomenal job. Coach (Ty) Pfannenstiel and

the rest of the assistants did a good job preparing them and getting ready for his test.”

Eudora scored on the first play of overtime as tight end Jaden Hamm made a juggling 10-yard catch in the corner of the end zone on a pass from quarterback Kole Manley to give the Cardinals the lead. Eudora, however, failed on its 2-point conversion, and left the door open for Louisburg.



Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore dives into the endzone for a touchdown Friday at Eudora.

The Wildcats took advantage, and after a pair of Jase Hovey runs, Battle found Dobbins on the 4-yard touchdown to tie it on a third down.

“Coach called the play, and at first I thought that I was going to have to run it in,” Battle said. “But Mason really sold the post corner on that and I was just able to float it into his arms and he made the play.”

Dobbins wasn’t about to drop the pass in what was pivotal moment in the contest.

“When coach called the pass play, I knew I had the talent to beat the corner,” Dobbins said. “When Declan threw that ball up, I just told myself that this was game. I practice every day to catch balls and make big plays like that. Before the game, our group always breaks down on ‘playmakers’ and that is what I was trying to be.”

Then came Ryals’ extra point, which to many of the players and coaches, seemed more like a formality than anything else.

“I knew we won,” Dobbins said. “I trust Layne 100 percent and he is a great kicker. It was great to celebrate after he made it.”

Still, there might have been a little uneasiness with the game on the line.

“I was very nervous,” Harding said. “Eudora usually gets a good rush and they have some athletic kids over there, but to see it go through and see all the kids celebrating, was a lot of fun.”

Eudora opened the game with the touchdown when Manley found Hamm for a 32-yard touchdown pass to put the Cardinals up 7-0. The Wildcats put together a drive of their own late in the first quarter, and after a couple of long completions to Dobbins, scored on a 1-yard run by Hovey to tie it up.

The Cardinals quickly grabbed the lead back as Octavius Lyles broke free for a 77-yard touchdown run as time expired in the first quarter.



Louisburg senior receiver Mason Dobbins stiff arms a Eudora defender for some extra yards Friday.

Louisburg would tie it up again in the second quarter when Moore scored on a 7-yard touchdown run to even the score at 14-all and it remained that way till halftime.

The Wildcats opened the second half with another strong drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown by Riley Van Eaton and gave Louisburg a 21-14 advantage. It was also the first time Eudora had trailed all season.

Late in the third, the Cardinals responded when Manley found Brayden Hoobler for a 33-yard touchdown pass to tie it 21. It stayed that way till the overtime.

There was still big moments in the fourth quarter when a Louisburg punt hit off the back of a Eudora player and Moore recovered the loose ball to give the Wildcats new life.

Although they wouldn't score, the Louisburg defense held firm and gave the offense another chance to score on Ryals' long field goal attempt to the end the fourth quarter.

“We felt like we had a better chance of him making that than trying a Hail Mary,” Harding said. “I think he had the leg on it, but it was just a little bit to the right. That is obviously a really tough kick to make, but to bounce back and make the extra point with everything on the line was huge.”

The Wildcats will try for their fifth straight win this Friday when they host Tonganoxie (3-2) for homecoming, who is also unbeaten in the league standings.

“Hopefully this just gives us more confidence,” Harding said. “We have not played a complete game yet and that is something we are striving to do. We have another great test against Tonganoxie coming up, and they are also undefeated in league, so another big game next week and we have to be ready to go.”

SCORING SUMMARY

LOU 7 7 7 0 7 – 28

EUD 14 0 7 0 6 – 27

First quarter

E: Jaden Hamm 32 pass from Kole Manley (kick good)

L: Jase Hovey 1 run (Layne Ryals kick)

E: Octavius Lyles 77 run (kick good)

Second quarter

L: Ashton Moore 7 run (Ryals kick)

Third quarter

L: Riley Van Eaton 1 run (Ryals kick)

E: Braylen Hoobler 33 pass from Manley (kick good)

Overtime

E: Hamm 10 pass from Manley (2-point failed)

L: Mason Dobbins 4 pass from Declan Battle (Ryals kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 17-58; Jase Hovey 10-54; Ashton Moore 5-23; Declan Battle 5-17

PASSING – Declan Battle 11-19-123

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 5-77; Riley Van Eaton 2-22; Caden Caplinger 2-16; Jackson Kush 1-5; Mack Newell 1-3

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 18, Wyatt Holland 11, Nathan Vincent 9, Jase Hovey 6, Isaiah Whitley 5, J.R. Rooney 5, Caden Caplinger 4, Declan Battle 3, Layne Ryals 3, Mason Dobbins 2, Carson Wade 2, Mack Newell 1, Will Hutsell 1.