

Wildcats record second straight shutout with win over Ottawa



Louisburg's Mack Newell (10) celebrates his fumble return for a touchdown with teammate Jase Hovey (22) on Friday in Ottawa. The Wildcats shutout the Cyclones, 44-0.

OTTAWA – Louisburg head coach Drew Harding was a little concerned with how his team would come out in Friday's road contest at Ottawa.

The players had been out of school for two days, and for some teams, routine is everything.

Turns out, there was nothing to be worried about.

Louisburg jumped on the Cyclones from the start and never looked back in a 44-0 shutout. It was the sixth straight victory for the Wildcats and their second straight shutout.

"I thought we played well overall," Harding said. "We were a little out of our routine with parent-teacher conferences leading to the players being out of school the last two days. You always worry about a slow start when that happens, but I thought we started pretty fast."

The Wildcats (6-1) scored on their opening drive as senior Riley Van Eaton found the end zone on a 3-yard touchdown run and Louisburg jumped out to a 7-0 lead.

Louisburg added another touchdown a few minutes later when junior quarterback Declan Battle scored on an 11-yard run to put the Wildcats up 14-0.

That was more than enough for the Wildcat defense as the Cyclones never threatened to score. It was the second straight week with a shutout, and after their victory against Tonganoxie on Oct. 7, have now won the last two games by a combined score of 93-0.



Louisburg's Ashton Moore (21) and Will Hutsell (61) bring down an Ottawa player on Friday.

The Wildcats forced a lot of big plays to help themselves on defense.

Senior Nathan Vincent forced two fumbles on the night to go along with a sack. Carson Wade, Brady Hickey, Hunter Moore and Mack Newell all had fumble recoveries.

It was Newell's fumble recovery in the second quarter that led to a Wildcat touchdown.

Louisburg was up 17-0 after a 28-yard Layne Ryals field goal.

On the Cyclones' next possession, Vincent sacked the Ottawa quarterback and Newell picked it up and ran it in for the 7-yard touchdown to put the Wildcats up 24-0 at halftime.

In all, the Wildcats held the Cyclones to just 139 yards of total offense and forced four turnovers.

Sophomore linebacker Ashton Moore led the Wildcats with 12 tackles on the night, including two for a loss. Sophomore Caden Caplinger was second on the team with seven, while Nathan Apple and Vincent each had six.

"Defense has been playing well," Harding said. "They have been forcing turnovers to give the offense short fields and have done a good job reading their keys and flying around. I think we are getting closer to playing that complete game. There are always things you can improve on, but we are moving in the right direction."



Louisburg receiver Hunter Heinrich breaks free for a 20-yard reception Friday at Ottawa.

Van Eaton helped the Wildcats put the game away in the second

half with two touchdown runs of 11 and nine yards. He finished the game with 154 total yards and had three scores.

Battle scored his second touchdown of the night late in the third quarter on a 6-yard run. He finished with 89 yards rushing, along with 115 yards through the air.

Special teams also played a big role in the win as Ryals converted on five extra point attempts. He was 1 for 2 in field goal attempts, with the lone miss being blocked.

Ryals also set up Cyclones deep in their own territory with several touchbacks, including an 80-yard touchdown back where he kicked off from his own 20-yard line.

“I thought special teams were good,” Harding said. “One focus we had this week was we knew our kickoff team needed to be good. Ottawa has returned several kicks for touchdowns this year and several others into plus territory. We were able to limit that with either Layne kicking it out of the endzone or our coverage guys flying down and making tackles.”



Louisburg's J.R. Rooney (left) and Brayton Brueggen get off

the line for the Wildcat offense.

Louisburg will play to win the Frontier League title outright as the Wildcats host Spring Hill this Friday for Senior Night. The Wildcats are currently undefeated in league play and know they have a tough challenge ahead of them against the Class 5A school.

“Spring Hill is a team that just seems to keep getting better and better,” Harding said. “They are pretty big up front on both sides of the ball. They are able to platoon and keep people fresh so they will pose a big challenge for us. It’s a big week for us and we will need to have a good week of preparation.”

SCORING SUMMARY

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First quarter

L: Riley Van Eaton 3 run (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Declan Battle 11 run (Ryals kick)

Second quarter

L: Layne Ryals 28 FG

L: Mack Newell 7 fumble return (Ryals kick)

Third quarter

L: Van Eaton 11 run (kick failed)

L: Van Eaton 9 run (Ryals kick)

L: Battle 6 run (Ryals kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 16-102; Declan Battle 10-89; Jase Hovey 1-11; Darby Van Eaton 1-1; Ashton Moore 2-0

PASSING – Declan Battle 10-15-115

RECEIVING – Riley Van Eaton 3-52, Jackson Kush 3-30, Hunter Heinrich 1-20, Mack Newell 1-10, Corbin Hamman 1-9, Mason Dobbins 1-4

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 12, Caden Caplinger 7, Nathan Apple 6, Nathan Vincent 6, Wyatt Holland 5, Brady Hickey 4, Jase Hovey 4, Layne Ryals 4, Isaiah Whitley 3, Mack Newell 3, Will Hutsell 3, Christian Golladay 3, Hunter Heinrich 2, Carson Wade 1, Conlee Hovey 2, Hunter Moore 2, Brayden Yoder 2, J.R. Rooney 2, Mason Dobbins 1, Corbin Hamman 1, Reid McCaskill 1, Jackson Kush 1, Lane Cunningham 1, Erik Lien 1, Josh Holtzen 1.