

Wildcats take sole possession of Frontier League with shutout of Tonganoxie



Louisburg seniors Isaiah Whitley (left) and Nathan Vincent celebrate a big play during Friday's 49-0 homecoming win over Tonganoxie.

With just one team left between Louisburg and being all alone atop the Frontier League standings, the Wildcats made sure they got that top spot all to themselves.

By time Friday's game with Tonganoxie was over, the Wildcats left no doubt who is the top team in the league.

Both Louisburg and Tonganoxie entered the Wildcats' homecoming contest undefeated in league play, but it was the Wildcats who stayed that way as they rolled to a 49-0 rout of the Chieftains.

"One of our goals was to win a league title," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "This was an undefeated league team that came in and obviously we had to win to keep those hopes alive. The boys really stepped up to the challenge."

It started on the defensive end for the Wildcats as they pitched a shutout and never gave the Chieftains a good look at the endzone. Louisburg forced two turnovers and also had two sacks on the night.

Senior safety Jase Hovey recorded an interception, while senior Nathan Vincent got a sack and a forced fumble, that was recovered by Mack Newell. Vincent led the Wildcats with 10 tackles, including four for a loss, and Newell also finished with sack.

Junior linebacker Wyatt Holland was second on the team with eight stops. As a team, the Wildcats also had 11 tackles for a loss.



Louisburg junior Wyatt Holland brings down a Tonganoxie runner Friday.

“I think we are negative this year in the turnover battle, so this week we made it a priority to win the turnover battle,” Harding said. “We got a lot of short fields out of it and that obviously helps the offense.”

Special teams also played a factor as Holland got a hand on a punt that gave Louisburg a short field to work with. Kicker Layne Ryals was 7-for-7 on extra points and also had a punt downed inside the 5.

Combine that with more than 350 yards of offense, and the Wildcats put together one of their more complete performances of the season.

“I think it is close,” Harding said of his team playing a complete game. “We still have things that we can improve upon, but that has been our goal all year is to play a complete game. We played well tonight on offense, defense and special teams. We started the game strong in the first half and just carried it over in the second.”

The Wildcats forced a punt to open the game and Holland tipped the ball to give Louisburg good field position to start. Quarterback Declan Battle put Louisburg up early with a 5-yard touchdown pass to senior Mason Dobbins.



Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle breaks free for a long run Friday. Battle rushed for 204 yards in the contest.

It was the first of several touchdowns for Battle and the Wildcats. Battle, along with senior running back Riley Van Eaton, finished with three touchdowns each as Louisburg took control early.

Battle broke free for several runs and finished 204 yards on the ground on 10 carries and two rushing scores. Van Eaton had 82 yards rushing to go along with his three touchdowns.

Louisburg controlled the line of scrimmage despite missing starting right tackle, Will Hutsell, who was out with an injury. Senior Christian Golladay filled in and joined J.R. Rooney, Jaymes Melton, Brayton Brueggen, Vincent and Newell paved the way for the Wildcat attack.

The Louisburg defensive front did the same as the Wildcats were able to control all the action at the line.

“Offensive line did a good job of firing out and we were able to just run down hill,” Harding said. “Defensively, I think we really controlled the line of scrimmage and limited their ability to get explosive plays in the run game. The big boys up front played well.”

The Wildcats took a 21-0 lead at the end of the first quarter on scores that were helped by two Tonganoxie turnovers. The Hovey interception led to a 5-yard touchdown by Van Eaton.



Louisburg's Ashton Moore (left) and Jase Hovey team up to bring down a Tonganoxie player Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

Vincent's strip sack would help set up a 10-yard touchdown by Van Eaton and the Wildcats had a firm hold of the game from there.

In the second quarter, Battle broke free for a 45-yard run that set up a 3-yard score by Hovey, and after another Van Eaton touchdown, the Wildcats took a 35-0 halftime advantage.

Battle had a big third quarter as he scored on runs of 65 and 27 yards to ice the game for Louisburg.

"We had some really good individual performances, but as a team we played really well," Harding said. "Our defense played phenomenal and really complemented our offense. Special teams was phenomenal and I just felt like our guys were selfless. They were excited for the team success over their individual success and if we keep doing that then I think we can be pretty good.

Louisburg, which has now won five straight, will try to make it six this Friday when the Wildcats travel to Ottawa. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

"We still have work to do," Harding said. "We are getting closer to the playoffs and it is time for us to peak. I think we took a step in that direction."

SCORING SUMMARY

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First quarter

L: Mason Dobbins 5 pass from Declan Battle (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Riley Van Eaton 5 run (Ryals kick)

L: Van Eaton 10 run (Ryals kick)

Second quarter

L: Jase Hovey 3 run (Ryals kick)

L: Van Eaton 1 run (Ryals kick)

Third quarter

L: Battle 65 run (Ryals kick)

L: Battle 27 run (Ryals kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 10-204; Riley Van Eaton 15-82; Jase Hovey 1-3; Darby Van Eaton 2-1

PASSING – Declan Battle 9-14-67

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbin 4-35; Jackson Kush 1-13; Caden Caplinger 1-10; Mack Newell 1-5; Riley Van Eaton 2-4

TACKLES – Nathan Vincent 10, Wyatt Holland 8, Ashton Moore 6, Brayden Yoder 6, Isaiah Whitley 5, Mack Newell 5, Erik Lien 5, Reid McCaskill 4, Brady Hickey 4, Carson Wade 3, Conlee Hovey 3, Mason Dobbins 2, Layne Ryals 2, Christian Golladay 2, Hunter Heinrich 1, Jase Hovey 1, J.R. Rooney 1