

Wildcats lose back-to-back games to start new year



Louisburg junior Luke Hill goes up for a shot Thursday against Ottawa in the Wildcats' contest at Ottawa High School.

It wasn't the start to 2023 that the Louisburg boys basketball team wanted.

The Wildcats dropped their first two games from break with the second one coming Thursday on the road at Ottawa. Despite a fourth quarter rally, the Wildcats couldn't quite get over the hump in a 51-44 loss to the Cyclones.

Louisburg (4-3), which found itself down 12 points early in the fourth quarter, eventually cut the deficit to just three points, but couldn't get any closer.

"I was proud of how we battled back," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "We cut it to three and really gave us a shot at the end. My biggest concern was that we seemed to play with more energy in that fourth quarter. We have to get where we play with that energy for all four quarters."

The Wildcats were down 12 points with 5 minutes left in the game, when senior Mason Dobbins stole the ball and drove the length of the floor for a steal and score. Senior Colyer Wingfield then hit a pair of free throws to cut it to eight.

With two minutes remaining, Louisburg was still down eight, but Luke Hill knocked down a 3-pointer to make it a five-point

game.

Senior Isaiah Whitley stole an inbounds pass and found Wingfield cutting to the basket for two points to make it a one possession contest.

Ottawa drove the length of the court and scored on the ensuing possession to all but ice the game for the Cyclones.

Louisburg struggled to slow the Cyclones down in the second and third quarters as they built a 12-point lead. The Wildcats also turned the ball over 15 times and Ottawa scored 19 points off those mistakes.

"We are still struggling offensively," Pfannenstiel said. "We didn't have very many possessions where I would say that we ran good offense. Our defense is still keeping us in games but need to pick it up on the offensive end."

Hill led the Wildcats on the offensive end with 11 points, including three 3-pointers. Wingfield also finished in double figures with 10 points and a team-high three assists.

Senior Mason Dobbins also did a lot of work underneath the basket with eight points to go along with team-highs in rebounds (9) and steals (3).

Louisburg had a tough time slowing Ottawa's Caleb Hepner down as he scored a game-high 25 points, which included five 3-pointers. The Cyclones knocked down eight 3-pointers on the night.

"Hepner had a heck of a game," Pfannenstiel said. "He got some open looks and converted on them. He's a good, young player. Overall, Ottawa shot it pretty well from the perimeter and that made a big difference compared to how we shot it."

Louisburg will try and bounce back Tuesday when it hosts Spring Hill. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOU 10 10 8 16 – 44

OTT 8 15 17 11 – 51

LOUISBURG (4-3): Luke Hill 4-11 0-0 11; Colyer Wingfield 2-9 6-6 10; Mason Dobbins 4-5 0-2 8; Trey Myers 3-8 1-4 7; Cade Gassman 2-4 0-0 4; Conlee Hovey 1-3 0-2 2; Isaiah Whitley 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 17-42 6-10 44. 3-point field goals: 4, (Hill 3, Myers)

Wildcats drop home contest to Eudora

On Jan. 3, Louisburg hosted Eudora in its first game back from the holiday break and the Wildcats didn't have the warmest welcome.

Eudora jumped out to a seven-point lead after one quarter and extended that lead to 13 later in the contest. And while their defense got the Wildcats back in it, the offense struggled in a 41-34 loss to the No. 6 team in Class 4A.

Louisburg shot 3-for-19 from 3-point range and were just 7-for-16 from the free-throw line.

"Overall, I thought we played ok for our first game out after a long break," Pfannenstiel said. "Eudora is really good defensively so we struggled to get going on that end of the floor. We obviously needed some shots to fall. If we want to beat one of the best teams in the state, we can't go 3-19 from 3 and 7-16 from the free throw line. We have to be better offensively."



Louisburg senior Trey Myers draws a foul during the Wildcats' home contest on Jan. 3 against Eudora.

The Cardinals got a bulk of their scoring from two players. Logan Sullivan torched the nets for Eudora with a game-high 27 points and seven 3-pointers, while Cole Parker finished with 12. The two combined for 39 of the team's 41 points.

"Those two players are tough," Pfannenstiel said. "They actually have a really good group of guards, so even though we struggled to stop those two, overall we held them to 41. We should be able to win games when we hold a team in the 40s. That was Sullivan's first game back from injury. He was injured in the first game of the year, so he hadn't been in their lineup since week one. He really changes the dynamic of their team. He can score in bunches.

"We have to do a better job of playing team defense to contain a player like that. We definitely struggled early hedging the handoffs and switching screens. We just have to do a better job of communicating and all being on the same page. It wasn't a 1 on 1 matchup issue, we all have to take responsibility for getting the ball out of his hands."

Wingfield did a bulk of the scoring for Louisburg as he finished with 16 points, while senior Trey Myers finished with seven, including a pair of 3-pointers. Senior Mason Dobbins had a team-high eight rebounds and senior Isaiah Whitley finished with seven.

LOU 8 9 6 11 – 34

EUD 15 8 8 10 – 41

LOUISBURG: Colyer Wingfield 6-11 4-8 16; Trey Myers 2-6 1-4 7; Mason Dobbins 3-5 0-0 6; Luke Hill 1-7 0-0 3; Conlee Hovey 0-0 2-2 2. Totals: 12-36 7-16 34. 3-point field goals: 3, (Myers 2, Hill)