

Battle's five touchdowns lift Wildcats in rout of Heritage



Louisburg senior quarterback Declan Battle celebrates in the endzone with linemen Miles Meek and Johnny Hendrickson following one of his five touchdowns Friday against Heritage.

It may have been just the first game of the season, but Louisburg senior Declan Battle left a lasting first impression Friday.

The Wildcats hosted Rogers Heritage (Ark.) in their season opener in what was a return game following last year's close loss on the road. Battle and the Wildcats made sure history didn't repeat itself.

The Louisburg quarterback scored five touchdowns and led the Wildcats to a 48-14 victory over the War Eagles. It was exactly the start to the season the Wildcats wanted.

"It was a very fun win for us," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "We have preached all week in doing our jobs. In the first game, sometimes you go kind of brain dead and do some really weird things, but (Friday) we went out and got a stop our first time out and then we just went to work from there."

Battle led the Wildcats with 235 total yards, including 135 on the ground to go along with his five scores.

In all, Louisburg tallied 449 yards of total offense against the War Eagles. It also marked the end of a three-game losing

streak against regular season non-league opponents, something Battle and his teammates have remembered.

“It feels really good,” Battle said. “Every year I have been in high school, we have always lost these non-league games like Smithville, Rock Creek and last year to Heritage. We wanted to finally win one of those games and we were able to get it done and it feels great.”

Louisburg was able to get a lot of that accomplished thanks to a new-look offensive line that had to replace four starters from a season ago.

Along with returning center Jaymes Melton, the Wildcat line of Jackson Howard, Miles Meek, Brayden Yoder and Johnny Hendrickson provided a lot of running room to help account for their 340 yards on the ground.



Louisburg senior linebacker brings down a Heritage player Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

“We will know for sure when we watch film, but in the moment I thought the line played really well out there,” Harding said. “They came out and established themselves and I thought they executed pretty well for the most part. We had a few mental errors here and there, but it was a good night for them.”

Battle was the recipient of a lot of those yards and he liked what he saw from his new group.

“Coming into the season, I don’t know that anyone really knew how the line was going to shape up since we lost a lot of seniors last year,” Battle said. “The first game is really when you see what it will be like and I thought they did really good. They performed really well.”

Defensively, the Wildcats held the War Eagles to just one touchdown for much of the contest until they were able to add a late score with a running clock.

Louisburg didn’t give up many big plays and it started at the linebacker spot. Senior Wyatt Holland led the way with a team-high 12 tackles, including two for a loss, while junior Ashton Moore finished with nine stops and one tackle for a loss.

Senior cornerback Brady Hickey also had his best game as a Wildcat as he was third on the team with six stops – but more importantly – came away with two interceptions.



Louisburg senior Brady Hickey goes in for one of his six tackles Friday against Heritage. He also pulled down two interceptions.

“They were flying around out there,” Harding said of his defense. “Coach G(Gentges)really preached 11 hats to the ball all night and I felt like that is what we did. We had a really good week of preparation, came out and played well.”

After the Wildcats forced a punt to start the game, they were able to score on their first possession. Moore found the end zone on a 26-yard touchdown run, and after a Blaise Vohs extra point, made it 7-0. Moore finished the game with 87 yards on the ground on 11 carries.

Battle then added touchdown runs of 6 and 12 yards to put the Wildcats up 20-0 going into the second quarter.

Heritage scored its first touchdown of the game to begin the

second quarter, but the Wildcats responded with two more scores from Battle. After a 9-yard score put the Wildcats up 20 again, Battle broke free for his fourth touchdown on a 52-yard run on what was a 4th and 2 for Louisburg near midfield.

Battle added another 17-yard touchdown run to begin the third quarter and wrapped up a memorable night for the Wildcat senior.



Louisburg junior Conlee Hovey grabs on to the Heritage quarterback for a sack Friday.

“Last year we felt like we needed to limit his carries a little bit, but he is going to run the ball for us this year,” Harding said of Battle. “He is a really good runner and he has good speed and strength. When you add something like that to the offense, it is nice to have.”

The Wildcats will try for back-to-back wins this Friday when

it hosts Paola for their Frontier League opener.

“Paola is always the biggest week,” Battle said. “From Monday on, everyone is just super excited and there is just a whole different energy at practice. Then on Friday night, it is just go time.”

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SCORING SUMMARY

First Quarter

L: Ashton Moore 26 run (Blaise Vohs kick)

L: Declan Battle 6 run (Vohs kick)

L: Battle 12 run (kick failed)

Second Quarter

R: Amere Dingle 1 run (kick good)

L: Battle 9 run (Vohs kick)

L: Battle 52 run (Vohs kick)

Third quarter

L: Battle 17 run (Vohs kick)

L: Darby Van Eaton 2 run (Vohs kick)

Fourth Quarter

R: Cohen Smith 37 pass from Domenic Castaneda (kick good)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 9-135; Ashton Moore 11-87; Darby Van Eaton 9-73; Blaise Vohs 5-27; Alex Saad 2-18. Totals: 36-340

PASSING – Declan Battle 11-15-100; Alex Saad 2-3-9. Totals: 13-18-109

RECEIVING – Conlee Hovey 5-49; Caden Caplinger 3-40; Brock Vohs 1-14; Ashton Moore 2-10; Hunter Heinrich 2-(-)4.

TACKLES – Wyatt Holland 12, Ashton Moore 9, Brady Hickey 6, Conlee Hovey 4, Caden Caplinger 3, Brayden Yoder 3, Declan Battle 2, Russell Wiseman 2, Myles Vohs 2, Lucas Swartz 2, Darby Van Eaton 1, Jackson Howard 1, Brock Vohs 1.

INTERCEPTIONS: Brady Hickey 2, Logan Henry 1