

# Busy week leads to pair of losses, injuries for Wildcats



***Louisburg's Caleb Feldkamp pushes the ball up the field during a home match last week. The Wildcats fell to Bonner Springs in overtime on Thursday.***

The Louisburg boys soccer team just finished up a stretch of three matches in four days – quite the haul for a team with just two returning starters from a year ago.

After losing the first of those three against Pittsburg last Wednesday, the Wildcats hosted Bonner Springs the very next day in hopes of getting back on track. Unfortunately, the Wildcats fell short following a 2-1 loss in the second overtime.

The hardships continued Saturday when the Wildcats made the trip to Kansas City to face off with Harmon and lost 10-0 to the Class 6A school.

It definitely took its toll on the Wildcats as they suffered several injuries during that span, including losing starting forward John Powls for the season with a knee injury.

“Three games in four days is tough, and this week, we’re looking at three more games in five days,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “The athletes’ bodies need recovery time, but this year we were constrained with scheduling conflicts as we rebuild our competition schedule. We’re getting dinged up pretty good, and there are some bugs floating around. The kids just get back in school, and I don’t think their immune systems are strong enough to battle some of the bugs and sicknesses.

“In a perfect world, we would be able to play the appropriate level teams and have the appropriate amount of rest in between games. Hopefully, the guys were able to take Sunday off and let their bodies rest.”

Against Bonner Springs, the Wildcats jumped out in front late in the first half when Powls scored the opening goal on an assist from Colton Blue. Powls’ shot was from just outside the box that found the corner of the net.

Bonner Springs answered with a goal of its own right before halftime to tie it at 1-all. The game then went to double overtime, and it was there the Braves scored with 50 seconds left on a Louisburg own goal to hand the Wildcats the setback.

“The Bonner game was a heart-breaker,” Bovaird said. “To go the distance of a full game and almost all the way through both overtimes, and then to have the game-winning-goal scored with less than a minute left was devastating for the guys. Before the game started, we talked about the key to the game being a mindset of bouncing back. I told the guys to keep a tight hold on their confidence and to trust in the process.

“The Pittsburg game was a victory for us everywhere except for on the scoreboard, so we needed to bring that same confidence against Bonner. I really felt we did just that. Things happened beyond our control, however. We had two starters go out with serious injuries and you could tell that a few of our

other starters were battling some nagging injuries and sickness.”

The Wildcats (1-4) had their chances in the match as Powls and Blue each had two shots on target, while Emmett White and Caleb Feldkamp each had one.

Sophomore keeper Evan Moreland was busy guarding the net with seven saves and five blocked shots in the match, including three saves in the two overtimes.

Against Harmon, the Wildcats were playing catchup from the opening whistle as Harmon scored six goals in the first half and ended the game with four more in the second.

“After the Harmon game, I told the guys that this was a new experience for me,” Bovaird said. “I’ve never been on the other end of a game being called due to the mercy rule. It’s humbling, that’s for sure, and I can only imagine how they were feeling. But that’s life, you know? You can’t go through life taking the easy path, and you can’t build a program by scheduling competitions against lesser opponents. You have to be willing to step out there and scrap with the big dogs sometimes, and sometimes you’re gonna get your tail kicked. It hurts and it’s so hard on your pride, but at the end of the day, it’s just a high school sport.

“I told the guys that they’ll go home and get some rest, and they’ll wake up the next morning and their parents and families will still love them and be proud of them. We’ll get back on the field Monday after school and get ready for the next challenge. Harmon was an incredibly disciplined team on the field. They moved with precision, they passed and moved off the ball better than any team we’ve seen this season or last season, they were patient with their tackles, and they kept their shape and listened to their coach very well.”

Louisburg will try and rebound Tuesday when the Wildcats travel to Lansing. Varsity is slated to begin at 6 p.m.