

# Wildcats down rival Paola to earn second straight win



*Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle stretches out toward the pylon for one of his two rushing touchdowns Friday against Paola.*

It has been 13 years since Louisburg had gotten a chance to celebrate a win over rival Paola on its home turf.

Louisburg ended that drought Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

The Wildcats got another five touchdown performance from quarterback Declan Battle, and the Louisburg defense came through with big stops in the second half as it picked up the 35-20 victory.

“It is your rival, so you always want to win,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “We haven’t beaten Paola on this field since 2010, so it has been a long time. I guess it makes it a little more sweeter for sure.”

Battle did a little bit of everything as he put together his second straight five touchdown performance. He finished the game with two rushing scores and two more through the air, but

it all got started on defense.

On Paola's opening drive of the game, Battle intercepted a pass and returned it 40 yards for touchdown. Louisburg had a quick 7-0 lead in the first couple minutes of the game.

"When you can start the game like that, it is pretty sweet," Harding said. "We worked on that specific route quite a bit in practice. Declan made a great read on the ball and scored. It was nice to see for sure."

Paola, which had the size advantage on its offensive line, marched down the field and scored a touchdown in 13 plays. The Panthers did it by running up the middle and getting gains of 3-plus yards, but scored when Paola quarterback Triston Katzer hit Clayton Younger for a 31-yard touchdown on what was a fourth down play.

Louisburg senior Wyatt Holland blocked the extra point to keep it a 7-6 game.



***Louisburg cornerback Hunter Heinrich breaks up a pass Friday against Paola.***

The Panthers used that same recipe to keep themselves within striking distance of Louisburg throughout the contest. In fact, the Wildcat offense only had the ball twice in the first half as Paola controlled the time of possession.

Still, the Wildcats were able to score on both of those possessions. Battle ended the first quarter with a 10-yard touchdown run to put Louisburg up 14-6.

Paola answered with another score in the second quarter, but a failed 2-point conversation kept it a 14-12 game.

Right before halftime, the Wildcats extended their lead when Battle found a diving Caden Caplinger, who made an over-the-shoulder catch in the endzone for a 35-yard touchdown. Louisburg took a 21-12 lead into the locker room.

“That was a huge catch,” Harding said. “We talked to Caden before the game and told him that when the ball was in the air, that it was your ball. He went and got it, and was able to keep his feet in bounds. It was a heck of a catch.”



***Caden Caplinger hauls in a diving catch in the endzone late in***



***the first half of Friday's win over Paola.***

The Wildcats opened the second half with the ball to try and put some more distance between themselves and Paola, but the Panthers got an interception, which set up a Paola score. After a successful 2-point try, it was a one-point game again.

Paola's defense got another stop and forced Louisburg to punt, but it was the Wildcats' defense turn to step up. Louisburg stopped Paola on a 3-and-1 on the Panther 24-yard line, and instead of punting, decided to use their size advantage and went for it.

Louisburg got the biggest stop of the night as linebacker Ashton Moore and Caplinger stopped the Paola runner at the line of scrimmage and forced the turnover on downs.

Momentum quickly changed as Louisburg used the short field. Battle hit Moore for a 22-yard touchdown pass and took a 28-20 lead.

"Stopping them on that fourth and 1 was just a huge play for the defense," Harding said. "It can be very disheartening for a defense when they are getting chunk yardage and converting on third and shorts with long drives. We only had the ball twice in the first half, so the defense was on the field a lot. Those guys really grinded and they were big for us."



It was big early season win for the Wildcats and one that was able to answer some questions in the process.

“Coming into the season, the question mark for us was if teams just line up and try to mash us, could we hold up,” Harding said. “That is exactly what we got with Paola. They are a big physical team, that got 3 or 4 yards on rushes and put together long drives. There was a lot momentum going against us, but we answered and it was a good win for us.

“It is fun to start 2-0. We are going to see some things on film against Paola that we need to improve upon. We really needed a game like this and we can certainly get better from here.”

**LOU 14 7 7 7 – 35**

**PAO 6 6 8 0 – 20**

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

### **First quarter**

L: Declan Battle 40 interception return (Blaise Vohs kick)

P: Clayton Younger 31 pass from Triston Katzer (Kick blocked)

L: Battle 10 run (Vohs kick)

### **Second quarter**

P: Katzer 2 run (2-point failed)

L: Caden Caplinger 35 pass from Battle (Vohs kick)

### **Third quarter**

P: Cooper Stanchfield 1 run (JD Troutman pass from Katzer)

L: Ashton Moore 22 pass from Battle (Vohs kick)

## **Fourth quarter**

L: Battle 24 run (Vohs kick)

# **STATISTICS**

RUSHING – Declan Battle 11-86; Ashton Moore 14-68; Darby Van Eaton 1-2

PASSING – Declan Battle 7-10-96

RECEIVING – Caden Caplinger 5-68; Ashton Moore 2-29

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 14, Brady Hickey 13, Declan Battle 9, Brayden Yoder 7, Conlee Hovey 6, Brock Vohs 6, Brody McGreer 5, Jackson Howard 4, Wyatt Holland 3, Lucas Swartz 3, Darby Van Eaton 3, Jack Anderson 2, Logan Henry 1, Hunter Heinrich 1

SACKS – Hickey 1, Vohs 1

INTERCEPTIONS – Battle 1