LEAGUE CHAMPS: Wildcats capture second straight Frontier title



Louisburg head coach Drew Harding is doused with a bucket of cold water thanks to seniors Brady Hickey (16) and Wyatt Holland on Friday following the Wildcats' 35-21 win over Spring Hill. The Wildcats won their second straight Frontier League title.

SPRING HILL – It had been 16 years since the Louisburg football team last repeated as back-to-back Frontier League champions.

That drought ended Friday in Spring Hill.

In a battle of undefeated league teams, Louisburg proved its was the best. The Wildcats scored 21 unanswered points, and shutout the Broncos in the first half, as they cruised to a 35-21 victory.

Louisburg earned back-to-back league crowns for the first time since the 2006 and 2007 campaigns. The Wildcats also finished the regular season with an 8-0 record.

“It is pretty exciting,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “We talked to the guys before the game about how long it is has been since we have won back-to-back league titles and it has only been done four times in our school’s history. So to chalk another one up there feels pretty good.”

The emotions were evident following the victory as seniors Brady Hickey and Wyatt Holland doused Harding with the water bucket and the celebration ensued.

“It means a ton to this team, knowing that back in June when we first started weights our goal was to be undefeated league champs,” Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle said. “Man time flew, it’s already here and we got it done. It feels great.”

Battle helped guide the Wildcat offense to a fast start that included 21 unanswered points in the second quarter and Louisburg was able to take a 21-0 halftime lead thanks to some big plays on both sides of the ball.

On defense, junior Lucas Swartz recorded a sack on Spring Hill’s opening drive that forced a Bronco punt. Then later in the first quarter, linebacker Wyatt Holland intercepted a Bronco pass to stop another drive and gave the Wildcats good field position.



Senior Wyatt Holland intercepts a Spring Hill pass Friday in the first half.

Holland, who suffered a hand injury earlier this season, has been forced to wear a large wrap throughout the season and was still able to haul in the interception.

“Wyatt has the club for sure,” Harding said. “He always has great energy and to be able to pick that off with the club was awesome. He advanced it 20-30 yards as well. It was a big play for us and a big stop for our defense.”

The Wildcats turned that turnover into points as Battle scored one of his four touchdowns on the night on a 1-yard run to give Louisburg the lead. Junior Alex Saad converted the extra point and was a perfect 5-for-5 on the night.

After a 3-and-out by the Louisburg defense, the Wildcat offense buiit a double-digit lead when Battle scored on a 15-

yard run.

Louisburg got the ball back once again, but faced a third and long late in the second quarter. That's when Battle connected with junior Myles Vohs on a 61-yard touchdown that saw him outrun a Spring Hill defender to the endzone.



Junior Myles Vohs celebrates his touchdown late in the first half Friday at Spring Hill.

That lifted an already confident Wildcat sideline to another level as they took a 21-0 lead.

"Myles plays with his heart on his sleeve that is for sure," Harding said. "It was great to see him make a play there. We had ran that play previously and we noticed Myles was open. So when we ran it again, we told Declan that. He stood in there and took the hit as he threw it and Myles had a great catch and had enough speed to get in the endzone."

Senior Brody McGreer intercepted a Spring Hill pass with seconds left in the first half to keep the shutout intact.

Spring Hill leaned on its running back – Colton McKanna in the second half – and the Broncos got on the scoreboard on the opening drive of the third quarter on a McKanna 19-yard touchdown.

McKanna was a big focus of the Wildcat defense coming in and they were able to slow him down enough to leave Spring Hill with a win.

“That was our goal coming was to have our eyes on No. 5 (McKanna),” Harding said. “We wanted to make them beat us some other way. He is a really good running back and they have a big offensive line, so we had to get as many hats to the football as we could. I thought we did a pretty good job defensively.”



Declan Battle finds the endzone Friday for one of his two rushing touchdowns against Spring Hill.

Louisburg was able to answer right back on its opening drive of the second half as Battle found Ashton Moore on a 6-yard touchdown pass to keep the 3-score lead.

Moore and Battle salted the game away for the Wildcats on the ground with chunk plays against the Bronco defense. Moore finished with 113 yards rushing and Battle had 82.

The offensive line of Jackson Howard, Johnny Hendrickson, Jaymes Melton, Brayden Yoder, Ben O'Bryan, along with tight ends Brock Vohs and Conlee Hovey, provided several holes to run through.

"I think it is tough for defenses to contain everybody because we have so many guys that can make plays," Moore said. "Whether it is receivers, tight ends, running backs, linemen

or the quarterback, they are all going to do their job and they have to worry about everyone. Everyone doing their jobs is what sets us up for success.”

The Wildcats were able to find success through the air, as well. Battle threw for 254 yards and his favorite target was Caden Caplinger.

The Louisburg senior had six catches for 87 yards and brought down several contested balls. Moore also had 61 yards receiving on the night.

“I think the offense did a great job,” Battle said. “Starting up front with the O-Line, every play starts with them and they open up opportunities for us to make plays. Caden did a great job going and getting the ball when he needed to. Ashton always runs hard, and I know when we put the ball in his hands good things will happen.”



Senior Caden Caplinger knocks away a pass Friday at Spring Hill.

Defensively, the Wildcats made big plays throughout the night and it started at the linebacker spot with Moore and Holland. Moore finished with a team-high 10 tackles and Holland added nine, including six solo stops.

Senior Brady Hickey also had nine tackles and junior Brayden Yoder had eight. Battle and Caplinger registered seven tackles each.

“There were a few times at the beginning of the game where we weren’t lined up where we should be,” Moore said. “Our coaches talked to us about that at halftime. So for us to have those mistakes, and still shut them out in the first half, it felt great. We just needed to keep doing our jobs and we did.”

Now the Wildcats will prepare for what is a deep postseason

run. Louisburg is the No. 2 seed in the Class 4A state playoffs and will host No. 15 Labette County (1-7) on Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

“It is one week at a time and that is what we preach to the guys,” Harding said. “We have to do whatever we can to survive and continue to play football because from this point forward we aren’t guaranteed anything. We are just going to take it week by week and advance as far as we can.”

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SCORING SUMMARY

Second Quarter

L: Declan Battle 1 run (Alex Saad kick)

L: Battle 15 run (Saad kick)

L: Myles Vohs 61 pass from Battle (Saad kick)

Third Quarter

S: Colton McKenna 19 run (kick good)

L: Ashton Moore 6 pass from Battle (Saad kick)

Fourth Quarter

S: Tyson Beashore 1 run (kick good)

L: Moore 1 run (Saad kick)

S: Ryan Jackson 22 pass from Beashore (kick good)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ashton Moore 26-113; Declan Battle 18-82

PASSING – Declan Battle 14-23-254

RECEIVING – Caden Caplinger 6-87; Ashton Moore 3-69; Myles Vohs 1-61; Reid McCaskill 1-20; Blake Amren 1-8; Conlee Hovey 1-5; Brock Vohs 1-4

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 10, Wyatt Holland 9, Brady Hickey 9, Brayden Yoder 8, Declan Battle 7, Caden Caplinger 7, Hunter Heinrich 5, Lucas Swartz 4, Jack Anderson 3, Conlee Hovey 3, Brock Vohs 1, Brody McGreer 1

INTERCEPTIONS – Wyatt Holland 1, Brody McGreer 1

SACKS – Lucas Swartz 1