

Wildcat defense rises to occasion to knock off Eudora



Louisburg senior Brady Hickey brings down Eudora quarterback Kole Manley near the goal line Friday during the Wildcats' 13-7 victory in Louisburg.

Through its first four games, Louisburg had its offense take care of business as the Wildcats averaged nearly 48 points a game during that stretch.

On Friday in its homecoming contest against Eudora, the Wildcat defense shouldered the load and came up big when Louisburg needed it the most.

The Wildcats held Eudora to just seven points, and shut out the Cardinals in the final three quarters, to hold on for a 13-7 victory. It was also the fifth straight win to start the season as they remain atop the Frontier League standings.

"It was definitely a character building win for us," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "We faced a ton of adversity and had a lot of things that didn't go our way. We had two turnovers, we had three goal line stands and it was tough sledding on offense. Our kids showed a lot of character in this game."

Louisburg (5-0) found itself with its back against the wall early on. A fumbled punt return in the first quarter set up the Cardinals' early touchdown and gave them a 7-0 lead.

After a Louisburg punt on its first offensive possession, the Cardinals methodically drove the ball down the field again. This time they used a 17-play drive that took close to 12 minutes.

However, the Wildcat defense came up big with its first of three goal line stands. The Cardinals had the ball at the eight yard line three times, but big tackles from Brayden Yoder, Wyatt Holland, Brady Hickey and Brody McGreer forced a Eudora field goal attempt.

That attempt was no good and the Wildcat offense would get the ball for just the second time of the first half with five minutes left in the second quarter.

"The defense played tremendous and Eudora has a pretty high-powered offense," Harding said. "They have an explosive receiver and they can make a lot of big plays. So to be able hold them to seven points, and not only that, but to be in bad situations and still hold them to just seven was really big for us."

Louisburg made the most of the opportunity as the Wildcats drove 80 yards that ended in a 1-yard touchdown run from Ashton Moore. That score was set up by a 24-yard run from Declan Battle and a 17-yard pass from Battle to Moore.



Ashton Moore stiff-arms a Eudora defender Friday. Moore scored both Wildcat touchdowns.

The game was tied at 7-all going into halftime, but the Wildcats got the ball to open the second half and took advantage.

The Wildcats drove the ball down the field and scored on a 4-yard touchdown run by Moore. The extra point failed, but the Wildcats had their first lead of the game.

From that point on, it was up to the Wildcat defense.

The Cardinals drove down the field and appeared they were going to – at the very least – tie the game. Eudora had a 3rd and goal from the 1 yard line, but was called for an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty that moved them back 15 yards.

Louisburg would eventually stop Eudora on downs and turned the

Cardinals away from the endzone for the second time.

The Wildcats found themselves in a difficult position early in the fourth quarter. A bad snap on a punt attempt for Louisburg, gave the Cardinals the ball on the Wildcat 8-yard line.

Once again, the defense came through. The Wildcats forced a 4th and goal from the 5-yard line and turned the Cardinals over on downs again when McGreer broke up a pass in the endzone.



Louisburg senior Brody McGreer (12) celebrates with his teammates following a big stop on fourth down Friday.

"That was a huge momentum swing for us," Harding said. "Eudora had all the momentum at the time, so for our defense to bow up there and keep that offense from gaining five yards in four plays – it was an impressive stand."

It was one of several big plays from the Wildcat secondary on

the night. McGreer, who mishandled a punt in the first quarter, made up for the mistake on defense, while senior corner Hunter Heinrich shadowed the Cardinals' top receiver, Adrion Seals, and allowed just one catch.

"Brody had a great response to what happened earlier in the game," Harding said. "He came back and made a couple of huge tackles on the perimeter as well as stopping a touchdown with a pass break up. Hunter had a huge challenge ahead of him with this game. They have an extremely talented receiver and Hunter followed him all night. He did a great job and limited him to one catch for five yards. Both of those corners played very well."

Louisburg then took advantage and ran close to 8 minutes off the clock before turning the ball over on downs to Eudora on its own 25. It didn't leave the Cardinals with much time to drive down the field and the Wildcats held on for the win.

Both Moore and Battle played every snap for the Wildcats. Moore tallied a 134 yards of total offense to go along with his two touchdowns, while Battle rushed for 90 yards and threw for 69.

On defense, Moore led the team in tackles with Holland as each registered 15 stops. Yoder and Hickey finished with seven and six tackles, respectively.



The Louisburg team celebrates with head coach Drew Harding following their 13-7 win to go to 5-0 on the season.

"It was tough sledding offensively, and both Ashton and Declan ran the ball extremely tough," Harding said. "They put their shoulder down and got some extra yards. Defensively, Ashton played really well and got us aligned, and Declan did the same on the back end. Both of those guys played every single snap and never got a break and both played really well."

Louisburg will face another test this Friday as the Wildcats travel to Tonganoxie and will face a different type of opponent.

"They are another huge challenge for us," Harding said. "They like to get their receivers out wide and they are a very balanced team. They have a tough hard-nosed runner and they have another guy that can take the top off the defense. It will be another tough challenge for us, but hopefully we have a good week of practice."

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SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

E: Kole Manley 1 run (kick good)

Second quarter

L: Ashton Moore 1 run (Alex Saad kick)

Third quarter

L: Moore 4 run (kick failed)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ashton Moore 17-97; Declan Battle 12-90

PASSING – Declan Battle 7-8-69

RECEIVING – Ashton Moore 2-37; Conlee Hovey 2-20; Myles Vohs 1-9; Brody McGreer 1-5

TACKLES – Wyatt Holland 15, Ashton Moore 15, Brayden Yoder 7, Brady Hickey 6, Declan Battle 5, Caden Caplinger 5, Brock Vohs 4, Conlee Hovey 3, Hunter Heinrich 3, Brody McGreer 3, Lucas Swartz 1, Jackson Howard 1