

Wildcats advance in state playoffs with shutout of Labette County



Louisburg running back Ashton Moore breaks free for a long gain Friday against Labette County at Wildcat Stadium.

The Louisburg football team couldn't have asked for a better start to its playoff journey.

The Wildcats made plays all over the field Friday as they hosted Labette County in the first round of the Class 4A state playoffs. Louisburg scored all its points in the first half in its 47-0 victory over the Grizzlies.

"I thought we played pretty well overall," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "It is exciting to advance in the playoffs. We talked a lot this week about how it's win or go home at this point, so to have our season extend further feels good."

Louisburg (9-0) dominated the contest from the opening whistle as the Wildcats made big plays in all three phases.

The Wildcats got things going as they scored on their first drive that ended on a 6-yard touchdown run by junior running back Ashton Moore.

It was the defense's turn after that. After Labette County completed a long pass to the Wildcat 5-yard line, senior Brody McGreer recorded an interception in the endzone to turn away the Grizzlies.

The Wildcats took advantage as senior quarterback Declan Battle hit long passes to Conlee Hovey and Caden Caplinger on a drive that ended on a 4-yard touchdown run by Battle.

Then on the ensuing kickoff, Alex Saad squib kicked it, the ball hit off a Labette player and the Wildcats were able to recover. That resulted in a 26-yard touchdown run by Moore and the Wildcats led 20-0 after one quarter.

Labette County found itself close to the redzone again, but the Wildcat defense stood tall as Lucas Swartz recorded a sack that forced a fourth-and-long and the Grizzlies eventually turned the ball over on downs.

Moore scored his third touchdown of the night early in the second quarter on a 4-yard run. It was a set up by a 44-yard run by Battle that put the ball inside 10.



Caden Caplinger sprints his way for a 75-yard interception return for a touchdown.

Next, it was Caplinger's turn as he found the endzone on a pair of big plays.

The first one came on offense when Battle pitched the ball in front of him to Caplinger, who was in motion, and he sprinted 57 yards for the touchdown.

Caplinger also made it happen on defense as he picked off a Labette County pass and scored on a 75-yard interception return for a touchdown.

Right before halftime, Battle found Brock Vohs for a 25-yard touchdown pass and the Wildcats led 47-0 and sealed the win in the first half.

Offensively, the Wildcats used a balanced attack. Battle and

Moore combined for 148 yards rushing, while Battle threw for 198 yards. Caplinger also led the Wildcats with 98 yards receiving.

"It's great to be balanced and that is always the goal," Harding said. "We were able to throw and run the ball effectively, so hopefully we can keep that up moving forward."

Defensively, the Wildcats earned the shutout and frustrated the Labette County offense for most of the night. Senior Wyatt Holland led the way with a team-high nine tackles.

Caplinger, McGreer and Logan Henry each had interceptions on the night, while Swartz and Hovey both tallied a sack.

"I thought the defense played well," Harding said. "They were able to advance to football into the redzone once and got a key interception to keep them off the board. We scored on defense too, which I think is the first time since playing Paola in the second week of the season."

It will get a little more challenging this Friday as the No. 2 seed Wildcats host No. 7 seed Basehor-Linwood (6-3). The Bobcats defeated Paola, 35-14, last week and Harding knows his team will have to be ready.

"Basehor is a big challenge," Harding said. "They are a well-coached, complete team. They spread you out and do a really good job of moving the football and creating bigs plays offensively. Defensively, they play fast and physical so we will have to play well in order to advance and play again. It will be an exciting playoff football game."

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SCORING SUMMARY

First Quarter

L: Ashton Moore 6 run (kick failed)

L: Declan Battle 4 run (Alex Saad kick)

L: Moore 26 run (Saad kick)

Second Quarter

L: Moore 4 run (kick failed)

L: Caden Caplinger 57 pass from Battle (Saad kick)

L: Caplinger 75 interception return (Saad kick)

L: Brock Vohs 25 pass from Battle (Saad kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 5-75; Ashton Moore 7-73; Darby Van Eaton 9-40; Wyatt Holland 1-20; Rickey Giles 3-12

PASSING – Declan Battle 9-11-198; Alex Saad 3-4-12

RECEIVING – Caden Caplinger 3-98; Conlee Hovey 1-39; Brock Vohs 2-34; Ashton Moore 2-22; Gage Feldkamp 1-9; Reid McCaskill 1-5; Declan Battle 1-2; Rickey Giles 1-1.

TACKLES – Wyatt Holland 9, Conlee Hovey 4, Ashton Moore 4, Brayden Yoder 4, Brody McGreer 3, Lucas Swartz 3, Jackson Howard 3, Brock Vohs 3, Logan Henry 2, Brady Hickey 2, Caden Caplinger 2, Declan Battle 1, Hunter Heinrich 1, Myles Vohs 1, Lane Cunningham 1, Drake Crooks 1, Xander Lucas, 1

INTERCEPTIONS – Caden Caplinger 1, Brody McGreer 1, Logan Henry 1

FUMBLE RECOVERY – Alex Saad 1

SACKS – Lucas Swartz 1, Conlee Hovey 1