Wildcats fall to Piper on Senior Night in regular season finale

Louisburg junior Ethan Sharp heads the ball away Tuesday during the Wildcats' home contest against Piper.

It wasn't the Senior Night the Louisburg boys soccer team was hoping for Tuesday.

In what was the Wildcats' final game of the regular season, they were tasked with going up against a talented side in Piper – a Class 5A program.

Louisburg lost the regular season finale, 5-1, to the Pirates but the Wildcats showed a lot of fight as they fell to 4-12 on the season.

"I think we definitely kept a competitive mindset going into the game," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Piper had a lot of speed, height, and experience on us. Everyone but their goalie and one of their subs was a senior. Our guys showed some grit, though. They didn't back down from Piper's physical style of play, and I'm pretty proud of how they didn't let

themselves get bullied.”

The Wildcats did get a chance to celebrate their senior class as they honored their lone player – John Powls – and two managers Lexi Hampton and Ava Halbert.

Louisburg seniors (from left) Ava Halbert, John Powls and Lexi Hampton were honored Tuesday on Senior Night.

Powls suffered a season-ending knee injury early in the year, but got a chance to suit up and start. He was introduced with his teammates before being subbed out shortly after the start of the match.

“John has had such a rough go with injuries during his high school career,” Bovaird said. “His sophomore year was really the only season he played a full season. This year started off so well for him, being a starter up top and scoring two goals in our first four games. He would have been making a big difference for us throughout the season, so I’m really glad that he got the chance to suit up and be a part of the opening

kickoff Thursday night.”

Piper jumped out to an early 2-0 advantage, but the Wildcats were able to cut into the Pirate lead as junior Emmett White dribbled into the box in the 27th minute. White’s shot hit off a Piper goalie, but he was able to get the rebound and took advantage of the empty net for the goal.

Louisburg junior Jacob Brown clears the ball out of the Piper end of the field Tuesday at home.

The Pirates added another score to take a 3-1 lead at halftime. Piper had two more second half goals to seal the win over the Wildcats.

Now, Louisburg will focus on the postseason as it begins the Class 4-1A regional tournament next week. Tournament brackets will be announced Saturday.

“The thing is, we just need to keep the right mindset as a team,” Bovaird said. “We can step out there and play against

anyone, whether they’re 4A or 6A, on turf or on grass. It’s been a season full of progress and growth. From game 1 to our final game against Piper, it’s a much different and improved team. They’re excited to see what we’re capable of doing, and that’s all I can ask of the team.”