

Wildcats rally past Tonganoxie to stay perfect on season



Louisburg junior Ashton Moore rushed for 173 yards and had 20 tackles in the Wildcats' 30-29 win over Tonganoxie.

TONGANOXIE – With a possible Frontier League title hanging in the balance, Louisburg found itself with its back against the wall – needing something positive to happen.

After the Wildcats got out to a big lead, penalties and mistakes allowed Tonganoxie to take a seven-point lead late in the contest.

Leave it to a pair of seniors to come through for the Wildcats when they needed it the most.

Quarterback Declan Battle hit Caden Caplinger on a long touchdown pass, and after converting the 2-point conversion, the Wildcats defense took care of the rest and held on for a 30-29 victory over the Chieftains.

“There were a lot of opportunities to make plays in the

passing game, but we were just missing them,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “Then we finally made one at the end and really glad that we did.”

On a 2nd and 26 with under six minutes left in the contest, Battle hit Caplinger down the sideline for a 59-yard touchdown pass. Then with the Wildcats’ kicking game in flux, they decided to go for two and take the lead.

Battle rolled out to the right and found a wide open Conlee Hovey on the opposite side of the endzone to give the Wildcats a lead they wouldn’t relinquish.



Louisburg Caden Caplinger hauls in the go-ahead touchdown Friday late in the fourth quarter of the Wildcats’ 30-29 win.

“It was a little risky to call that play there,” Harding said of the 2-point conversion. “We hadn’t run it all year and it was pivotal point in the game with a lot on the line. They

executed and did a really good job.”

Tonganoxie got one final opportunity and were close to field goal range with its kicker, Jackson McWilliams. However, Brayden Yoder and Wyatt Holland combined on a tackle for a loss that forced a fourth down on the Wildcat 32-yard line.

The Chieftains decided to go to the air – an advantage they had for most of the game – but overthrew the intended receiver on fourth down and the Wildcats were able to run out the clock.

“They have a really explosive offense,” Harding said. “We got out to a big lead, but we knew it wasn’t over by any means. It was a grind and Tonganoxie had a lot of momentum on their side in the second half. For us to respond, and pull this one out, it was impressive.”



Louisburg's Brayden Yoder (56) and Wyatt Holland celebrate a big stop late against Tonganoxie.

Louisburg (6-0) did a lot of its damage on the ground – especially early. Tonganoxie had its sights set on slowing down Louisburg running back Ashton Moore, but the Wildcat junior inflicted a lot of damage.

Moore finished with 173 yards on the ground on 25 carries and had two touchdowns. The Chieftains had tough time slowing down Battle as well as the Louisburg quarterback had 147 yards on the ground on 17 carries.

They had success thanks to blocking up front of Miles Meek, Johnny Hendrickson, Jaymes Melton, Ben O'Bryan, Yoder, along with tight ends Brock Vohs and Hovey.

On defense, Moore was all over the field for the Wildcats. The Louisburg linebacker registered a team-high 20 tackles to go along with a sack.

“Ashton is so physical,” Harding said. “He is a tough tackler and when we get the ball in his hands it generally results in good plays. Ashton is a tank and played really well defensively. Between him and Declan, both of those guys run really hard. It is tough for defenses to tackle both of them with the first guy.”

Louisburg marched down the field on the game's opening drive and found the endzone on a 1-yard run by Moore. After the Wildcat defense held Tonganoxie on its first drive, Louisburg struck again.



Quarterback Declan Battle races past the Tonganoxie defense toward the endzone.

This time it was Battle as he broke free for a 66-yard score, and after a 2-point pass to Hovey, took a 14-0 lead.

Tonganoxie answered on a long touchdown run by Colton Brusven – his first of three scores on the game. However, the Wildcats continued to assert themselves on the ground as Moore broke free for a 39-yard run and went up 22-7 after Battle ran in the 2-point try.

“That was the first time this year that we had not started on defense,” Harding said. “We challenged them to score right away and we did that. We got a stop and then we did it again. Unfortunately we couldn’t keep it rolling, but it was a great start for us.”

The Chieftains would eventually slow down the Wildcat offense

and score 22 unanswered points through the second and third quarters to go up 29-22

From there, the Wildcats were able to make plays when they needed them on both sides of the ball.

Along with Moore, seniors Brady Hickey and Holland each finished the game with 10 tackles each. Yoder added nine stops from his defensive tackle spot.

Louisburg will look to continue its perfect season this Friday when it hosts Ottawa for Senior Night. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

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SCORING SUMMARY

First Quarter

L: Ashton Moore 1 run (kick failed)

L: Declan Battle 66 run (Battle pass to Conlee Hovey)

T: Colton Brusven 73 run (kick good)

Second Quarter

L: Ashton Moore 39 run (Battle run)

T: Trevor McGraw 8 run (Isaiah Holthaus pass from McGraw)

Third Quarter

T: Brusven 2 run (kick good)

T: Brusven 3 run (kick good)

Fourth Quarter

L: Caden Caplinger 59 pass from Battle (Battle pass to Hovey)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ashton Moore 25-173; Declan Battle 17-147

PASSING – Declan Battle 9-18-116

RECEIVING – Caden Caplinger 4-86; Ashton Moore 3-24; Conlee Hovey 2-6

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 20, Brady Hickey 10, Wyatt Holland 10, Brayden Yoder 9, Brody McGreer 5, Caden Caplinger 5, Logan Henry 3, Conlee Hovey 3, Jackson Howard 3, Brock Vohs 3, Declan Battle 2, Hunter Heinrich 2, Lucas Swartz 2, Jack Anderson 2, Josh Holtzen 1, Jaymes Melton 1.