

Wildcats roll past rival Paola to win second straight game



Louisburg senior running back Darby Van Eaton scored a pair of touchdowns and rushed for more than 130 yards in the Wildcats' 34-13 win over Paola.

PAOLA – The football rivalry between Louisburg and Paola has been one-sided as of late, and it has been controlled by the Wildcats.

Nothing changed following Friday's contest at Paola High School.

Louisburg dominated from the start as it scored 27 unanswered

points to start the game and never looked back in a 34-13 victory over the Panthers. It marks the third consecutive season the Wildcats have come out on top in the rivalry battle.

It was a much more comfortable victory for the Wildcats following their week one overtime victory against Tonganoxie.

“We got a little better from last week,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “We are still far away from a finished product at this point, but we took a step forward and now we just need to keep taking steps each and every day.”

Louisburg took control of the line of scrimmage and provided lots of room for running back Darby Van Eaton. The Wildcat senior tallied 134 yards on 24 carries with two touchdowns and had 40 yard receiving.

The Wildcat offensive line of Brayden Yoder, Nate Capuro, Miles Meek, Xander Lucas and Johnny Hendrickson, along with tight ends Conlee Hovey and Erik Lien, opened running lanes for Van Eaton.

“Darby ran the football hard,” Harding said. “He was able to break tackles and he was finishing plays and always falling forward. That is what we want out of our backs and he did a good job.”

Van Eaton scored his two touchdowns in the second quarter as he opened with a 2-yard run to give Louisburg a 7-0 lead. On the Wildcats’ next possession, he then broke free for a 36-yard run to the end zone to put his team up two scores.

Louisburg added to its lead at halftime as it got its passing game going.



Louisburg senior Josh Holtzen hauls in a touchdown catch right before halftime on Friday against Paola.

Quarterback Alex Saad found senior Josh Holtzen in the corner of the end zone for a 30-yard touchdown pass with less than a second remaining in the first half. A Blaise Vohs extra point gave the Wildcats a 21-point lead at halftime.

“We definitely didn’t feel like we were playing our best offensive football in the first half, so to be able connect there right before halftime, and put a bright spot on the first half was pretty nice,” Harding said.

Saad continued the scoring to start the third quarter with a 1-yard touchdown run. Then after a Paola touchdown, the Wildcats answered right back when Saad found Hovey for a 28-yard score and Louisburg led 34-6.

The Louisburg quarterback finished the game with 177 yards and

two touchdowns on 12 of 19 passing. Senior Myles Vohs and Hovey each led the team with 53 yards receiving.

Defensively, the Wildcats stymied the Paola offense in a first half shutout. Louisburg limited the big plays as it held the Panthers scoreless till midway through the third quarter when the game was already in-hand.

Lien led Louisburg with 11 tackles on the night, while Rickey Giles and Yoder each finished with five. Yoder also had 1.5 tackles for a loss and Giles had a sack.



Louisburg senior Logan Henry races down the sideline following an interception Friday at Paola.

Louisburg senior Logan Henry had a first half interception that led to a Wildcat score, while Hovey, Holtzen, Swartz, Lien, Russell Wiseman and Ashton Moore also had tackles for a loss.

“I thought the defense played great,” Harding said. “I still think we are playing better defensive football than offensive football right now. We did a really good job of being assignment sound and getting lined up and making Paola work for what they got.”

The Wildcats also got a chance to put in its reserves in the second half, which doesn’t happen often in a Louisburg-Paola matchup.

“It is really fun to get those guys in because they get beat up on scout team so much,” Harding said. “They put in just as much work as everyone else, so for them to get in on a Friday night is a lot of fun.”

Louisburg will try for its third straight win to start the season this Friday as it hosts an out-of-league opponent in Clay Center – a team the Wildcats aren’t very familiar with. Still, it presents a new type of challenge.

“It is fun to play someone new,” Harding said. “You don’t really know what they do well, so we will obviously watch some film on them, but they have some really good athletes and it will be a challenge for us for sure. We are excited to play someone a little different.”

LOU 0 21 13 0 – 34

PAO 0 0 6 7 – 13

SCORING SUMMARY

Second Quarter

L: Darby Van Eaton 2 run (Blaise Vohs kick)

L: Van Eaton 36 run (Vohs kick)

L: Josh Holtzen 30 pass from Alex Saad (Vohs kick)

Third Quarter

L: Saad 1 run (kick failed)

P: JD Troutman 1 run (kick blocked)

L: Conlee Hovey 28 pass from Saad (Vohs kick)

Fourth Quarter

P: Troutman 30 run (kick good)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Darby Van Eaton 24-134; Freddy Moreau 3-13; Cole Heinrich 2-7; Bryce Thompson 1-4; Alex Saad 1-1

PASSING – Alex Saad 12-19-177

RECEIVING – Myles Vohs 4-53, Conlee Hovey 3-53, Darby Van Eaton 3-40, Josh Holtzen 1-30, Erik Lien 1-1.

TACKLES – Erik Lien 11, Rickey Giles 5, Brayden Yoder 5, Logan Henry 4, Josh Holtzen 4, Lucas Swartz 4, Gage Feldkamp 4, Russell Wiseman 3, Conlee Hovey 3, Ashton Moore 3, Myles Vohs 2, Bryce Thompson 2, Aidan Meyer 2, Johnny Hendrickson 2, Michael Foote 2, Daniel Aponte 1, Wyatt Crooks 1, Kael McGuire 1, Jimmy DeVary 1, Aiden Kennedy 1