

Revenge win over Ottawa puts Wildcats in regional title game



Louisburg's (from left) Ryan Haight, Michael Seuferling, Colin Cook and Haden Yeager celebrate Cook's goal early in the first half Tuesday in Ottawa. The Wildcats defeated the Cyclones, 3-1, to advance to the regional championship.

OTTAWA – In two previous meetings during the regular season, the Louisburg boys soccer team just couldn't figure out a way past Ottawa.

The Wildcats seemed to solve the riddle against the Cyclones on Tuesday and they couldn't have picked a better time to do it.

Louisburg traveled to Ottawa for the Class 4-3-2-1A regional semifinal and the Wildcats got the win they were looking for with a 3-1 victory that sends them to the regional championship for the fourth consecutive season.

"We just had some really bad luck in the first two games with them," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "This was a game where we felt we could win and the kids played that way. The kids played hard, they executed and did their jobs. We showed that we should have beaten them the first two times, but we just had horrific luck and we couldn't finish and this was

vengeance for that. I am very proud of the boys.”

Scoring wasn't a problem this time around for the Wildcats (6-10) as they had three different players find the back of the net. Junior Colin Cook, along with seniors Chris Williams and Brock Bila, all came up with big goals to go up in front early.

Cook scored his goal nine minutes into the contest when Eli Minster sent the pass to the back side of the goal where Cook was waiting and he was able to tap it in to put Louisburg up, 1-0.

The score would stay that way until early in the second half when Williams collected a rebound off a Bila shot and sent it past the Ottawa goalie for the two-goal lead.



Defender Will Frank heads the ball away Tuesday during the regional

semifinal in Ottawa.

Ottawa didn't back down as it scored a goal six minutes later to cut the lead in half. It took Louisburg less than a minute to give them a two-score lead again as Bila finished it off with a goal of his own and the Wildcats were able to hold on.

"We were actually working on that the last few weeks and it worked," Conley said of Cook's goal. "We were able to play that back side ball and he was able to get it in. It was really cool to have three different goal scorers, and all three guys busted their butt and finished well. It was a lot of fun."

The Wildcat defense did its part as the back line of Minster, Will Frank, Michael Seuferling and Haden Yeager, along with help of midfielder Ryan Haight, helped contain the Cyclone attack. Ottawa turned up the intensity late in the second half as it put three shots on goal, but goalie Thomas Arnett came through with some key saves late.



Junior Ryan Haight holds off an Ottawa player to win a 50-50 ball Tuesday against the Cyclones.

“Thomas made a really great save there on a free kick that just bent around the wall,” Conley said. “Thomas read it well and that was huge. Then they had a header in the box that he was able to save as well, which was fantastic. It was a good all-around effort.”

Louisburg, which is the No. 11 seed, will travel to No. 3 Bishop Miege (10-5-2) tonight for the Class 4-3-2-1A regional championship match. The Stags have won the last two state championships and the Wildcats know they will have tough challenge ahead of them.

“We are looking at it as it is just another team and it is that simple,” Conley said. “That is why you play the game. We are not looking at paper, and if that was the case, they would

have a state championship before the season started. They want to stay in 4A, so we will play them and we will play hard. They are a fantastic team and one of the best in the state of Kansas.”

Piper spoils Wildcats' senior night with three penalty kicks



Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett dives to make one of his several saves during the Wildcats' match with Piper on Thursday in Louisburg. The Wildcats came up short in their regular season finale with a 5-1 loss to the Pirates.

It started out as a Senior Night to remember for Brock Bila, Chris Williams, Eric Vazquez and Eli Minster.

The Louisburg seniors, who were honored prior to the game with managers Hayli Detherage and Camdyn Clark, jumped out to an early lead against Piper in the Wildcats' last regular season game and the final ever home contest for the Wildcat quartet.

Louisburg had hopes of handing the Pirates, one of the best teams record-wise in Class 4-3-2-1A, a loss to head into the

postseason with some momentum.

Piper, unfortunately for the Wildcats, had different plans.

The Pirates were awarded three penalty kicks in the second half, and converted all three, as they went on to down Louisburg, 5-1, and spoiled the Wildcats' celebration.

"Two penalty kicks absolutely kill you, and then you get a third, and it is just frustrating," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "It was just a lot of dumb luck. It just stinks and then we lost our cool little bit there at the end, and that didn't help. In the end, I think this was one of our best games this season and the score is not indicative of how close the game really was. The boys played with a lot of heart and guts, we just didn't have a lot of luck."

The Wildcats (5-10) got out to an early lead as a pair of seniors put Louisburg on top. Williams raced down the sideline and crossed it over to Bila, who found the back of the net, to give Louisburg a 1-0 advantage nine minutes into the match.



Senior Brock Bila celebrates the game's first goal with teammates Landon Johnson (10) and Eric Vazquez.

Five minutes later, Piper scored the equalizer and the two teams went into halftime tied at 1-all. Wildcat goalie Thomas Arnett turned away several Pirate opportunities in the first half to keep the game close.

In the second half, however, Piper broke the game open thanks to the three penalty kicks and another goal that gave the Pirates a lead in which the Wildcats couldn't recover.

"Thomas did his thing," Conley said. "He held his ground and saved everything he should have saved. When you have three penalty kicks it is frustrating, but he is a wall back there. He adjusted and communicated well with his defense. He played fantastic and did a great job in the net for us."

Louisburg's four seniors put together one of their best

showings of the season and Conley was pleased with what he saw out of his team.



The Louisburg seniors (from left) are manager Hayli Detherage, Brock Bila, Eli Minster, Eric Vazquez, Chris Williams and manager Camdyn Clark.

“We played well,” Conley said. “Chris was hustling all over the place and brought a lot of high pressure. I think Brock played fantastic and it was probably his best game this year. He did everything we asked him to do. He attacked and went at people. He played awesome and was our best player.

“Eli did a good job and was fantastic on the back side dealing with their runners all the time. Vazquez worked his butt off and played a lot of good balls down the line. Those four boys left it all out on the field and left nothing back.”

Although the loss ended the Wildcats’ regular season on a sour

note, they have a chance to make amends Tuesday when they travel to Ottawa for the Class 4A regional semifinal.

The Wildcats are the No. 11 seed and will square off with the No. 6 Cyclones (9-7) at 5 p.m. at Ottawa High School. The winner will play Thursday against the winner of Bishop Miege and Bishop Ward for the regional championship.

“The past couple years, we were the guys on the other side that had a big target on our back,” Conley said of his previous regional championship teams. “We are 5-10 and I don’t think anyone will take us seriously, and I think that is to our advantage. We will just see what happens. We have to come out and play hard and I like our chances. It will be difficult to rebound after a tough loss to Piper.”

Late push not enough for Wildcats against Paola



Louisburg sophomore Haden Yeager battles a Paola player for the ball during a match earlier this season. The Wildcats fell to Paola, 3-1, on the road on Oct. 8 at Paola High School.

PAOLA – For the last 15 minutes of its match with Paola, the Louisburg boys soccer team put the Panthers on their heels.

The Wildcats controlled possession and had numerous shots on goal, including one that found the back of the net. Unfortunately for Louisburg, the first 65 minutes didn't look like the final 15.

Paola opened the game with three goals, including two in the second half, and Louisburg couldn't catch up in a 3-1 loss on Oct. 8 at Paola High School. The Wildcats defeated Paola, 4-0, earlier in the season but it was a much different match this time around.

"We really played hard the last 15 minutes or so, and if we played that hard the entire game, I think it is vastly different outcome," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We gave up a couple of incredibly soft goals and didn't play hard. Then all of a sudden the last 15 minutes we decided to play hard. I don't know why we couldn't get up for a rival game. I thought we were ready to go, but it just didn't work out that way."

One positive to come from the Wildcats' loss was the return of midfielder Landon Johnson. The Louisburg junior suffered a leg injury in the offseason and made his season debut against the Panthers.

Johnson contributed in his first game back as he recorded an assist on the Wildcats' lone goal. He set up senior Brock Bila with 13 minutes left in the match and Bila's goal gave Louisburg a little bit of life.

"I thought he did fine out there," Conley said of Johnson. "His vision helps us a bunch, along with his knowledge of the game. He usually puts the ball right where it needs to be and he did a good job for the time he was out there. Once he gets more comfortable out there, he will help us even more."

Louisburg played without five varsity players again against the Panthers and injuries continue to mount against the Wildcats. They did get some time to heal up as they had a week

off from action before the final week of the regular season.

The Wildcats (5-9) return to action today when they travel to Ottawa. Louisburg will then host Senior Night on Thursday when it faces off with Piper.

Injuries don't slow Wildcats down in win over Eudora



Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett goes in for a save against Spring Hill last Tuesday in Louisburg. Arnett made a save on a penalty kick Thursday at Eudora to help give the Wildcats a 1-0 victory to snap a six-game losing streak.

EUDORA – The injury bug has bitten the Louisburg High School boys soccer team hard in recent weeks and it has left the Wildcats a little undermanned.

Those injuries have taken their toll on the Wildcats as they entered Thursday's road match against Eudora on a six-game losing streak.

Louisburg was without five varsity players against the Cardinals, and then later lost another to an injury in game. It wasn't the ideal situation for the Wildcats, but they

didn't let those losses get to them as they scored a second half goal and played strong in the back to pull out a 1-0 win against Eudora.

Not only did Louisburg break its losing streak, but also its string of bad luck.

"I felt the boys have been playing good soccer the past couple games, but we weren't having any luck," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "With four to six varsity players out the past couple weeks or so, we have been playing a lot of freshmen and sophomores as the next man up. The experience is paying massive dividends in their growth and development, but we have some growing pains.

"I thought we played well against Eudora, and the boys handled wherever I put them. They had a great mindset and played as a team. Our boys play really hard and we were able to grind out a positive result."



Sophomore Treston Carlson shields a Spring Hill player from the ball last Tuesday at home.

After a scoreless first half, the Wildcats (5-7) found the back of the net early in the second. Senior Brock Bila revived the Louisburg offense with a shot that sailed past the Eudora goalie, on what turned out to be the game-winning goal.

“We have been preaching to our boys to get more shots to put pressure on our opponents,” Conley said. “Brock got a clear look and hit it. I think their goalkeeper wasn’t ready and Brock took advantage.”

Following the goal, the Wildcat defense faced a lot of pressure from the Eudora attack and got their biggest test when Eudora was awarded a penalty kick with 19 minutes left in the match.

Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett read the Cardinal kick well and

recorded one of his many saves on the night to preserve the lead for the Wildcats.

“Thomas was ready and prepped,” Conley said. “Coach (Michael) Pickman worked on penalty kicks recently with him and the extra training paid off as Thomas made a great save.

“Defensively we played well and kept it together. We defended the last 9-12 minutes like our lives depended on it. They pushed everyone forward and we held our ground.”

The win was a nice pick-me-up for the Wildcats as they lost a tough 1-0 match to Spring Hill last Tuesday at home.

Even with all the setbacks and injuries, the team has kept their head up and are looking forward to a strong finish to the season.

Louisburg will try and make it two straight wins tonight when it travels to Paola for a 5 p.m. matchup. The Wildcats will then host Basehor-Linwood this Tuesday in what is a make-up contest from earlier in the season.

“The boys keep showing up and giving it their all,” Conley said. “I love this team’s blue collar attitude and how they never make excuses. We are about to get healthy and I think we could make some noise in the playoffs.”

Wildcats can't snap losing skid on road at Baldwin



Louisburg's Ethan Showalter blocks off a Baldwin defender to the ball Thursday during the Wildcats' game at Baldwin High School. The Wildcats fell to the Bulldogs, 3-1.

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg boys soccer team was able to break one streak Thursday against Baldwin, but unfortunately the Wildcats couldn't put an end to an even peskier one.

Louisburg scored its first goal in three matches right before halftime of its game at Baldwin High School and sent the Wildcats into halftime knotted up at 1-all.

However, Baldwin answered with two second half goals and the Wildcats weren't able to respond in a 3-1 defeat. It was the fifth straight loss for Louisburg as it has tried to break out of its slump since Sept. 13, after falling to Spring Hill.

"I thought we played well at Baldwin," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "The score did not show how close the game really was. We had more dangerous chances than they did, but we had two bad mistakes that led to goals. It's unfortunate, but I thought we played much better and have been playing better. The scores have not shown that, but the boys are figuring it out and piecing it together."

The Wildcats (4-6) found themselves down early in the match after a Baldwin goal, but with three minutes left in the first half, senior Brock Bila attacked the goal and got a shot past the Bulldog goalie to tie it.

It didn't take long for Baldwin to take back control as it

scored the go-ahead goal five minutes into the second half and then again with 19 minutes left in the match.



Louisburg goalie Garrett Rolofson bends down to make save Thursday in Baldwin.

Injuries also hampered the Wildcats as they were missing a few varsity contributors and forced some younger players to step in and fill those roles. Still, the Wildcats had their opportunities on goal, but weren't able to finish.

On Tuesday, it was much of the same for Louisburg as it wasn't able to find the back of the net and lost a tough 1-0 match on the road at Tonganoxie. The Chieftains converted a penalty kick with 17 minutes remaining to come out on top.

Despite the recent struggles, Conley is impressed with how his team has improved throughout the year after having just six players with varsity experiencing entering the season, and

also dealing with injuries.

Louisburg will try to get back on track this Tuesday when it hosts Spring Hill at the Wildcat Sports Complex. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m.

“I am excited to see what happens when we are completely healthy,” Conley said. “We will keep grinding and working to get better every day.”

Wildcats lose matches to Baldwin, Spring Hill



Louisburg sophomore Haden Yeager clears the ball out of the back during Monday’s match with Baldwin in Louisburg. The Wildcats lost back to back matches to Spring Hill and Baldwin.

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team had gotten off to a hot start to its season by winning four of its first five matches.

Those winning ways have recently hit a snag as that streak was snapped last Thursday in a 3-1 loss to Spring Hill and the Wildcats fell again at home Monday in a 3-0 defeat to Baldwin, which is currently undefeated on the season.

“Against both teams I felt we played well at times, but then we were exposed on our mistakes,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We need to learn from those mistakes and keep improving. Unfortunately, those mistakes are the same mistakes we have been making, but those two teams exposed us.”

On the road at Spring Hill, Louisburg found itself down 1-0 at halftime and the Broncos tacked on another goal to put the Wildcats down two midway through the second half.

The Wildcats were able to get back in the match when senior Chris Williams was fouled in the box and Louisburg was awarded a penalty kick. Junior midfielder Ryan Haight converted on the penalty and the Wildcats were building momentum until the Broncos put the match away late in the second half with another score.

In its match with Baldwin at home Monday, Louisburg didn't have many chances on goal as the Bulldogs dominated possession throughout and kept the Wildcat defense busy.

Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett made several big saves in the net, but Baldwin put pressure on the Louisburg back line most of the night and were able to put three in the back of the net.



Freshman defender Michael Seuferling makes a pass to a teammate last Thursday in Spring Hill.

Although the Wildcats (4-3) have suffered a couple setbacks, Conley knows his young team will continue to grow as the season goes along.

“We are getting back to basics and focusing more on teaching and improving,” Conley said. “We are working on our game preparation, being ready to play (showing up on time and with all their equipment), being prepared to play, and playing our game. We will learn and continue to learn.”

“We have to remember we only have six kids returning with any previous varsity soccer experience. We will keep getting better and progressing.”

The Wildcats will try and bounce back at 6 p.m. tonight when it hosts Ottawa in a Frontier League match.

Back-to-back wins give Wildcats four straight victories



Louisburg senior Eric Vazquez clears the ball away during the Wildcats' 3-1 victory Monday over Lansing in Louisburg. The Wildcats won back-to-back home games with wins over Lansing and Bishop Ward.

In what is one of its busy weeks of the season, the Louisburg High School boys soccer team is two-thirds of the way to perfection.

The Wildcats had three games scheduled for this week, including a pair of back-to-back contests Monday and Tuesday. Playing two games in a span of 24 hours didn't seem to bother Louisburg as it rolled to two victories by a combined score of 7-2.

On Monday, Louisburg hosted Lansing, a Class 5A program, and the Wildcats used a pair of second half goals to pull away for a 3-1 win. Against Bishop Ward on Tuesday, it was much of the same as Louisburg scored three unanswered goals to start the match, and got a hat trick from senior Brock Bila in the 4-1 victory.

Since the Wildcats' season opening loss to Fort Scott, they have reeled off four straight wins and have got things back on track.

"They just do a good job and keep improving every day and that is all we can ask of them," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We are going to put kids in and play them in a bunch of different spots and the thing is these guys just have to keep improving. They are working hard and they are accepting the challenge. We have had some hiccups and there are times where we fall asleep a little bit and get complacent, but it is fun watching this group because they compete and they battle."

It didn't take long for Louisburg (4-1) to get going against Lansing as Bila scored his first of two goals in the match 11 minutes in. Bila got a pass from Logan Faulkner and put it in the back of the net to give the Wildcats a 1-0 lead, and it remained that way to halftime.

Ten minutes into the second half, Bila struck again as defender Eli Minster had a long throw in from the side that landed in front of Bila, and he beat the Lansing defense for his second goal.

Faulkner added a goal to go along with his assist a few minutes later as he took a shot in the box that made it past the Lansing goalie and gave Louisburg a 3-0 lead.

Lansing ended Louisburg's hopes of shutout with 46 seconds left when the Lions were awarded a penalty kick and put it in for their first goal.

"We held our own, and they actually started to counter attack us," Conley said. "With our young group in the middle, we were trying to stay disciplined and trying to hold our shape, but we struggled with that at times. The boys still played well though and did what we asked them to do. They followed the scouting report and we were able to take advantage of some things."



Eli Minster (left) battles a Lansing player for a 50-50 ball Monday in Louisburg.

Against Bishop Ward, the Wildcats followed much of the same recipe as they were able to score early and play from in front. Bila, who registered a hat trick, got going with a goal to put Louisburg up 1-0, just four minutes into the contest.

Five minutes later, the Wildcats were fouled in the box and awarded the penalty kick. Junior Ryan Haight took advantage as he found the back of the net on the penalty kick and put his team up two.

Late in the first half, Bila scored again, this time on an assist from senior Eric Vazquez and the Wildcats had a 3-0 lead at halftime.

“I thought the boys executed the game plan pretty well,” Conley said. “I felt the past two nights the boys played with

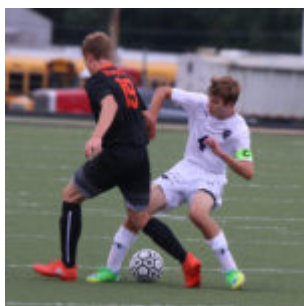
a tremendous amount of energy. I love the blue collar attitude we play with. I appreciate that the boys come focused and ready to play each and every night.

“The second half we got out of our shape and comfort zone for a 10 minute stretch or so, but regained quickly and attacked as a unit. The boys are getting better each and every night and I could be prouder of their improvement.”

Bishop Ward scored on a penalty kick themselves in the second half to break the shutout, but Bila answered late with his third goal to complete the hat trick.

Louisburg will try for five in a row tonight when it travels to Spring Hill for a Frontier League matchup. Varsity is set to begin at 6 p.m.

Wildcats win in double overtime on goal from Williams



Louisburg midfielder Ryan Haight battles a Bonner Springs opponent for a 50-50 ball Thursday at Bonner Springs High School. The Wildcats won 2-1 in double overtime.

BONNER SPRINGS – With time ticking away at a chance at victory, the Louisburg High School boys soccer team wasn't about to see all its hard work end in a tie.

After the Wildcats rallied to even the score against Bonner Springs in the second half of Thursday's contest at Bonner Springs High School, they went to an extra period and were still unable to find the back of the net.

Then, in the final overtime, Louisburg got the opportunity it was looking for.

Louisburg senior Chris Williams scored the game-winning goal five minutes into the second overtime to give the Wildcats a 2-1 victory, and gave them back-to-back wins after losing their season opener.

"We had a free kick that was played into the 18-yard box and Bonner didn't clear the ball well because of the pressure applied by Ryan Haight," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "Chris attacked it and chipped it over the goalkeeper's head for the game winner. Chris provided a huge spark for us off of the bench. He played extremely hard the entire game and he gave our team a big lift. It was only fitting that he get the game winner. It was a fantastic moment from that young man."

To start the match, both teams had their chances on goal before Bonner Springs connected on a shot from 25-yards out to give the Braves a 1-0 lead with seven minutes remaining in the first half.

The match stayed that way until midway through the second half when Brock Bila scored on an assist from Eric Vazquez to tie the match up and eventually send it to overtime.

The Wildcats (2-1) had to make adjustments along the way as they had to get used to playing on a turf surface for the first time this season, which plays much quicker than their home grass field they are used to competing on.

“Playing on turf is always challenging for us because of our practice environment, but we try to make the most of it,” Conley said. “It is nice to have a ball that rolls clean and smooth, but it takes some getting used to it. In the second half, the boys moved the ball and let the ball do the work. We had 6 to 8 really nice opportunities inside 12 yards, but failed to capitalize. Once we started playing our game we started to control the game.”



Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett skies to knock a shot attempt away on a corner kick Thursday in Bonner Springs.

Despite the lone goal the Wildcats gave up in the first half, the defense held strong as the back line Eli Minster, Haden Yeager, Michael Seuferling and Will Frank turned away the Braves' attack and goalie Thomas Arnett snagged whatever got

through.

It was an overall team effort from Louisburg and the Wildcat coach couldn't have been prouder of his team as they picked up their second straight win.

"We played well and did a nice job for the most part in staying organized," Conley said. "We started off poor on the turf and trying to do too much. By the end, we were trying to play the right way and let the ball do the work. It was very nice getting our first road win, especially to a team that beat us last year."

It will be a busy week for the Wildcats that begins today when they host Lansing, a Class 5A program, for a 6 p.m. start. Louisburg will then host Bishop Ward on Tuesday before traveling to Spring Hill on Thursday.

"This week is going to be a really good test for us," Conley said. "We play back to back on Monday and Tuesday and follow that up with powerhouse Spring Hill. I think this week will show our true colors. I like how this team though is focused on getting better. It is fun to watch them grow."

Bila's hat trick helps Wildcats to first victory



Louisburg senior Brock Bila celebrates a goal during the Wildcats' 4-0 victory over Paola on Thursday at the Wildcat Stadium Complex. Bila recorded a hat trick on the night as the Wildcats picked up their first win of the season.

Last week's season opening loss at Fort Scott didn't sit well with the Louisburg High School boys soccer team.

It was a game they felt they should have won.

Two days later, the Wildcats made sure they didn't make the same mistake again.

Louisburg hosted Paola for its home opener Thursday and the Wildcats used a big second half to snag their first victory of the season. Senior Brock Bila, who missed the team's season opener, responded in a big way as he scored three second half goals to help give Louisburg a 4-0 win over the Panthers.

"It was definitely a good win," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "I think Paola had a lot of the play, but the way our team is set up is we are geared for counter attack and geared for transition and we did a really good job of cutting them when we could. We did a really good job of weathering the storm for the first 20 minutes. Thomas (Arnett) did a good job back there in goal and made some really big saves for us. So, it was definitely better than our opener."

Paola and Louisburg each had their chances on goal in the first half and the Panthers controlled possession through much of the first half before the Wildcats started to turn the tide in the final 10 minutes.

Senior Chris Williams, Bila and junior Ryan Haight all had good looks at the net at different times, while Williams made several hard runs at the goal – only to see their shots go just wide or get saved. The teams went into halftime in a

scoreless contest.



Junior defender Will Frank (24) heads the ball away from the goal Thursday during Louisburg's win over Paola.

Bila made his chances count in the second half. His first one came in the opening minute of the second half as he beat the Paola goalie on a 1-on-1 opportunity to score the game's first goal.

About 12 minutes later Bila struck again, and much like the first score, he beat the Panther goalkeeper in the box to put the Wildcats up 2-0.

Louisburg made it a three-goal lead when Williams was fouled in the box and the Wildcats were awarded a penalty kick with 21 minutes remaining. Haight made the PK and it was smooth sailing from there.

Bila completed the hat trick with five minutes left in the match on another shot in the box and gave the Wildcats their first victory of the season.

“It was good to see some passion and some emotion from him,” Conley said of Bila. “The first 10 minutes I was a little worried, but then he started to figure it out. He played hard and played the right way and that is the stuff that I like to see. He showed positive energy and he just competed.”

The Wildcats (1-1) also had solid play from its defense as goalie Thomas Arnett earned the clean sheet – the first of his varsity career. Seniors Eli Minster, junior Will Frank, sophomore Haden Yeager and freshman Michael Seuferling also helped contribute to the shutout by limiting the Panthers’ chances, including ones from Paola’s all-league player in Ryan Wokutch.

“Paola clogs the middle like crazy and we made some adjustments to take away some players that they had to make sure they couldn’t get at us, and I think that was the key,” Conley said. “Wokutch had one chance at the end and Thomas made a big save on it.



Sophomore Haden Yeager steps in to knock the ball away from a Paola player Thursday at home.

“(Wokutch) is a talented kid. He doesn’t like to be chased or bumped too much, but I thought we played hard and we didn’t play dirty. We obviously frustrated them a little bit and it was good for us.”

Not only was it their first win of the season, but for the Wildcats, it couldn’t come at a better time as they prepare for back-to-back matches with Basehor-Linwood and Bonner Springs. Louisburg will host Basehor-Linwood on Wednesday.

“It was good to see that we are not distracted,” Conley said. “We got our stuff squared away, we started acting right and we played together. We were organized, and I was very excited with how organized we stayed because there was a good chance that we could have gotten run on. The boys held their ground, stayed structured and that is really good for a young team.

“We are not built for back to back, but we will have to suck it up and do our job. Basehor is pretty good. They have a new coach, a new style and we will be ready for them.”

Wildcats fall in season opener to Fort Scott



Louisburg freshman Will Finestead leaps in the air to win a ball Tuesday in Fort Scott. Finestead assisted on one of the Wildcats' two goals, but Louisburg came up short in a 3-2 loss.

FORT SCOTT – The first minute of the match provided an ominous feeling for the Louisburg High School boys soccer team Tuesday in its season opener at Fort Scott.

Fort Scott scored a goal in the opening minute on a scrum in front of the goal as a header squeaked its way into the back of the net. For the next 79 minutes, the Wildcats found themselves playing catch-up.

Although Louisburg was able to score a goal in each half, the Wildcats couldn't overcome a three-score first half from Fort Scott as it handed Louisburg a 3-2 loss.

“The boys didn’t come ready to play and struggled giving up a goal in the first minute of the game,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “For a lot of these young men, it was their first ever high school game. I figured they would be nervous, but not that bad. We had a lot of distractions yesterday, but I loved how the boys kept fighting and wouldn’t give up.”

After the first minute goal from Fort Scott, the Wildcats started to settle down and possess the ball and eventually got some shots on goal.

Midway through the first half, Louisburg found the back of the net when sophomore Luke Faulkner scored his first-ever goal to tie the match on an assist from freshman Will Finestead.



Senior forward Chris Williams fakes out a Fort Scott defender Tuesday.

The final three minutes of the first half proved to be the

difference in the game as Fort Scott scored twice during that span to take a 3-1 halftime advantage. The Wildcats were called for a handball just outside the box that resulted in a direct kick score for the Tigers, then a misplay in the box by the Wildcats with a minute left accounted for the other.

Down two goals didn't seem to bother the Wildcats, however. They continued to put pressure on the Tigers.

Junior Ryan Haight cut the Fort Scott lead in half as he found the back of the net with 20 minutes left in the match, but Louisburg could get no closer.

Louisburg (0-1) will try and bounce back Thursday when it will host Paola in its home opener. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m. at the Wildcat Stadium Complex.

"Our goal is to get better each and every day and I think we were better than we were in our Gatorade scrimmage," Conley said. "This team will continue grow and we will be pretty solid at the end of the year."