Short-handed Wildcats fall short against Piper



Running back Justin Collins looks for some running room Friday against Piper at Wildcat Stadium.

The thought of preparing a football game with just 15 players had never crossed Robert Ebenstein's mind.

The same could be said for the rest of his coaching staff.

But early last week, that is where Ebenstein found himself. All but 15 members of the Louisburg football team were forced to quarantine due to a positive COVID-19 result, and therefore, left the Wildcats a little short-handed for their game with Piper on Friday.

Despite all that, the Wildcats found themselves in a tie-game at halftime with the Pirates at Wildcat Stadium as they tried to defy the odds. In what was a defensive battle for most of the night, the Pirates used one big play to come out on top and handed Louisburg a 21-14 loss.

The thought of a moral victory wasn't on the Wildcats' minds when it was all said and done, but Ebenstein was pleased with his players and coaching staff.

"For the most part our effort was there, the part we struggled with was staying checked in to our assignments mentally in all three phases for the entire game," Ebenstein said. "Typically we have people who play special teams, and that is a mental

play off for the two-way guys, but we just didn’t have that.

“As for preparing with 15 players left, we did the best we could. We were right there. We were prepped for assignments, but Piper’s speed and size was something that a bunch of old coaches would not imitate. It took us a bit to catch up to their speed and our tackling looked like something we didn’t focus on all week.”

Defensively, the Wildcats stood tall at times as they held the Pirates under 300 yards of total offense and forced a turnover that Louisburg turned into a touchdown.

The game was tied at 14-all at halftime, and in the third quarter Piper quarterback Cory Macon broke free for a 53-yard touchdown run that turned out to be the difference in the game.

Senior linebacker Jay Scollin led the Wildcats with 13 tackles on the night and senior Andy Hupp had eight tackles to go along with a sack and a forced fumble.

Alec Younggren, a senior transfer from Olathe South who has been out with an injury, played his first game as a Wildcat and finished with 10 stops.

“The unfortunate thing about football is you can do so many things well, but that one bad play, or the one mental mistake can lead to a score,” Ebenstein said. “Their long run was a mixture of good execution by them, and us having a couple players with a mental lapse. That’s how it works, and their first drive they had some success because it took us a few plays to catch up to their speed. A bunch of old coaches can’t recreate that. Other that, we really played good defense outside of three drives. We will keep getting better.

“As for Alec I was really excited to see him get to play. He wants to be out there so bad. I am happy he is getting his opportunity to play this game. He is a good kid and is going

to do great things.”

Piper opened the game with a touchdown on its opening drive to go up 6-0, but the Wildcats bounced back with two straight scores to take the lead in the second quarter.

The Wildcats (2-2) put together a 14-play drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown run from senior Ben Wiedenmann, who carried the ball six times on the drive.

It was Wiedenmann who would come up big again just minutes later.

On Piper’s ensuing possession, Hupp stripped the Pirate ball carrier to force a fumble and Wiedenmann was there to scoop it up and return it 30 yards for a touchdown. Wiedenmann ran in the 2-point conversion and the Wildcats were up 14-6.

Piper answered just before halftime with a touchdown of its own to tie it at 14-all.

Offensively, it was tough for the Wildcats to move the ball on the Pirates as they totaled 182 yards of offense – all of which came on the ground.

“Piper’s defense was solid, but we honestly moved the ball and then we were killing ourselves with penalties,” Ebenstein said. “But they do have very skilled kids in the secondary, so throwing against them is always tough.”

Louisburg will try and bounce back this Friday when the Wildcats travel to Eudora. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOU	**0**	**14**	**0**	**0 – 14**
PIP	**6**	**8**	**7**	**0 – 21**

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

P: Kennon Malahki 24 pass from Logan Ladish (2-point fails)

Second quarter

L: Ben Wiedenmann 1 run (2-point failed)

L: Wiedenmann 30 fumble recovery (Wiedenmann run)

P: Cory Macon 10 run (2-point conversion)

Third quarter

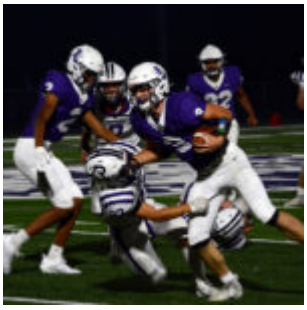
P: Macon 53 run (kick good)

LOUISBURG STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ben Wiedenmann 19-94, Andy Hupp 8-40, Weston Guetterman 7-26, Kolby Kattau 8-21

TACKLES – Jay Scollin 13, Alec Younggren 10, Kolby Kattau 9, Ben Wiedenmann 9, Andy Hupp 8, Aiden Barker 7, Konnor Vohs 3, Justin Collins 2, Weston Guetterman 1

Wildcats defeat Baldwin, lose Doles to injury



Louisburg quarterback Weston Guetterman sheds a tackler during Friday's game with Baldwin.

As happy as Louisburg was following its 32-6 win over Baldwin on Friday, there was still a level of concern over one of their teammates.

Junior Brandon Doles, the team's starting tight end and linebacker, had to be taken off the field by an ambulance in the first quarter due to a leg injury. Doles sustained the injury following a 40-yard pass play.

Further tests revealed that Doles suffered a broken fibula and a dislocated ankle. He will be out for the season.

"Brandon going down is a huge loss for us," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "He is a great kid and always has a fun, upbeat presence, and a good leader on and off the field. As for football, he started both sides of the ball as well as he was our long snapper. Those are some big shoes to fill."

Other than Doles' injury, it was a successful night for the Wildcats as they were able to bounce back after suffering their first loss of the season to Tonganoxie. Louisburg scored three second quarter touchdowns and held the Bulldogs to just a single score late in the game.



Junior Brandon Doles races away from the defense moments before suffering a season-ending injury in the first quarter against Baldwin.

Louisburg's defense came up big throughout the game as it forced two turnovers, one of which was a touchdown. The Wildcats held Baldwin to 171 yards of total offense, many of those coming late in the contest.

"Coach (Drew) Harding is doing a great job organizing a game plan and teaching it to our kids," Ebenstein said. "The kids had a great week of practice and film study and did a solid assignment job all game long."

The Wildcats put together a strong opening drive that ended on a 2-yard run from Andy Hupp and quarterback Weston Guetterman ran in the 2-point conversion. It was all set up on the 40-yard pass from Doles before his injury.

Louisburg (2-1) put the game out of reach in the second quarter as it found the endzone on three different occasions.

Senior Konnor Vohs set up the first score as he hauled in a 47 yard pass from Guetterman to give the Wildcats a first-and-goal from the 3. Junior Kolby Kattau took it from there for the touchdown.

Normally a team that likes to run the ball, the Wildcats were able to take advantage of some things through the air as Guetterman threw for 148 yards. Vohs was his main target as he had three catches for 86 yards.

“We do want to run the ball and control the tempo of the game,” Ebenstein said. “We honestly want to take what people will give us, and if teams want to challenge us one on one on the outside, we take those chances.”

After the Wildcats threw an interception on their next drive, it was Vohs who picked off a Baldwin pass to give Louisburg the ball back. Vohs also ignited the offense once again as he broke free for a 35-yard run and the drive ended on a 6-yard touchdown run from Guetterman.

The Louisburg defense came through again for the Wildcats as Hupp scooped up a fumble caused by senior Jay Scollin and returned it 25 yards for a touchdown to give Louisburg a 26-0 halftime lead.

Senior Justin Collins added a 21-yard run in the fourth quarter to take 32-point advantage to all but seal the win for Louisburg.

A few days after the game, the team was informed that all but 15 players will have to quarantine due to a positive case of COVID-19. With Doles being out with an injury and another player out with an illness, the Wildcats will have 13 rostered players for Friday’s game with Piper.

Many of those are varsity players and Louisburg will have a challenge ahead of itself at home against the Pirates.

“As for Piper they are big, strong, athletic and fast,” Ebenstein said. “My biggest concern right now is that we only have 13 players. As for difficulties for this week, one injury we are in trouble, two injuries and we are out of subs, three injuries and we are playing with 10. Not having a scout team all week is not ideal.”

LOU	**8**	**18**	**0**	**6 — 32**
BAL	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6 — 6**

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Andy Hupp 2 run (Weston Guetterman run)

Second quarter

L: Kolby Kattau 3 run (conversion failed)

L: Weston Guetterman 6 run (conversion failed)

L: Hupp 25 fumble return (conversion failed)

Fourth quarter

L: Justin Collins 21 run (conversion failed)

B: Cole Mahaffey 40 run (conversion failed)

STATISTICS

RUSHING — Weston Guetterman 9-69; Ben Wiedenmann 6-46; Konnor Vohs 1-35; Justin Collins 1-21; Andy Hupp 6-20; Kolby Kattau 8-16; Carson Wade 1-3.

PASSING — Weston Guetterman 5-14-148

RECEIVING — Konnor Vohs 3-86; Brandon Doles 1-40; Mason

Dobbins 1-25

TACKLES – Ben Wiedenmann 6, Jase Hovey 5, Aiden Barker 4, Jay Scollin 4, Will Patterson 4, Konnor Vohs 3, Justin Collins 3, Andy Hupp 3, Nathan Vincent 2, Weston Guetterman 1, Kolby Kattau 1, JR Rooney 1

Member of LHS football team has confirmed case of COVID-19



Louisburg High School has confirmed a positive case of COVID-19 on the Wildcat football team that will force nearly 50 players to quarantine.

The quarantine does not include 15 athletes, many of whom are on varsity. However, due to a player suffering a season-ending surgery and another out with a separate illness, the Wildcats will be down to just 13 active players for Friday's contest with Piper.

"There was a JV roster of kids, with nine players who were 'swing players,' who would practice with the varsity and the JV," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "We also have a freshman group that practiced separately. So basically we tried to prevent one positive case from bringing down all

programs.

“Well, the freshman game was cancelled last Thursday so we had our freshman team scrimmaging our JV team in the first practice. So the one positive case brought down basically everyone from that practice with the county/s interpretation of the close contact rules – which was all the JV players and the nine players who were playing both JV and varsity. “

Almost two weeks ago, the entire Louisburg boys soccer team was forced to quarantine due to an infected player participating in a practice. The Wildcats were able to come back from their quarantine last Thursday.

According to the Miami County Health Department, any player in active participation when the infected player was on the field had to be quarantined unless they wore a mask and goggles.

“It is as broad and simple as that,” Ebenstein said in an email to the football parents. “I have gone through to remove as many players as possible with certainty they were not active participants during those specific plays on last Wednesday. Even if a kid were to be an active participant with a mask on they would not have been safe from close contact quarantine. A mask and a face shield would not make them safe as it does not “seal around the eyes”. Masks and goggles would, but you are not allowed to wear goggles under your facemask as they are not NFHS certified.”

More than a week ago, a member of the Tonganoxie football team tested positive prior to Louisburg’s game with the Chieftains in week two, and only that infected player was forced to quarantined due to different conditions stated by the Leavenworth County Health Department.

“I want all of our kids to be safe in the classroom, but for some reason wearing a mask inside keeps a kid safe, but wearing a mask outside during sports does not,” Ebenstein said. “I don’t understand any of it.

“As for difficulties for this week…one injury we are in trouble, two injuries and we are out of subs, three injuries and we are playing with 10. Not having a scout team all week is not ideal.”

According to the school, they are hoping the students will able to return to in-person classes next Thursday, but the official date has yet to be confirmed.

Louisburg falls to defending league champ, Tonganoxie



Louisburg senior Andy Hupp brings down Tonganoxie’s Tyler Bowden with help of some teammates Friday at Tonganoxie High School. The Wildcats fell, 24-14.

TONGANOXIE – The Louisburg football team faced one of its more difficult challenges of the season Friday when it traveled to defending Frontier League champion, Tonganoxie.

In the first half, the Wildcats found themselves in the game and were down just 10 points at halftime. Unfortunately, two Tonganoxie touchdowns in the fourth quarter proved too much to overcome in a 24-14 loss.

Louisburg (1-1) found itself down 24-0 in the fourth quarter, before the Wildcats scored two late touchdowns to make the

game a little closer.

“They worked too hard to lay down and take a shutout,” Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said of his players “The frustrating thing is we were hoping we could learn some things before the fourth quarter and try to figure things out. They fought hard and they worked hard. We are young and we were kind of exposed there for a little bit. Tongie is a heck of a team, but honestly we just kept beating ourselves. We just have to keep getting better.”

After a scoreless first quarter, Tonganoxie struck first on a 25-yard field goal from Jackson McWilliams, but the Wildcat defense came up big late in the second quarter. Junior Brandon Doles recovered a Tonganoxie fumble on the Chieftain 35-yard line and gave the Wildcats a short field to try and take the lead.

The Wildcats weren’t able to take advantage of the opportunity as the Chieftains picked off a Louisburg pass with under three minutes left in the first half. That gave Tonganoxie an opportunity and it took advantage as it scored on a 20-yard run from Sam Kleidosty with 58 seconds left and took a 10-0 lead into halftime.

“We get that turnover and then the first thing we do is jump offsides and then it is first and 15,” Ebenstein said. “Honestly, first and 15 is bad for us. We are not that kind of team. We just need to make sure we are focused in. It was a turning point in that game, but I thought Coach (Drew) Harding had a heck of a game plan, but that is a tough, physical team we are playing. We got a little gassed, but a lot of our kids are on the field the whole game and they played hard.”

Tonganoxie running back Tyler Bowden found success in the second half. Bowden, an all-state transfer from Lawrence Free State, scored twice in the fourth quarter – including a 51-yard touchdown – to help the Chieftains all but seal the win.

“(Bowden’s) last run, we were just completely misaligned,” Ebenstein said. “It was one of those things where if we were lined up right then we make that tackle. He is tough, their system is good and they have a lot good seniors. Tongie is a good team.”

Louisburg didn’t give up, however, as the Wildcats put two drives together to score a pair of touchdowns in the final five minutes.



Senior running back Ben Wiedenmann drags some Tonganoxie defenders for a big gain Friday.

Quarterback Weston Guetterman found Konnor Vohs on a 23-yard pass, and that set up a 9-yard touchdown run from senior Ben Wiedenmann. Sophomore Layne Ryals added the extra point to make it 24-7.

Ryals came through for the Wildcats in just his second varsity

game as he put down a good onside kick, that was recovered by Louisburg and the Wildcats had another opportunity.

Running back Kolby Kattau found Vohs on a 25-yard halfback pass on a drive that ended up on a 12-yard touchdown run from Wiedenmann, who finished the game with 91 yards on the ground.

Defensively, senior Andy Hupp was all over the field for the Wildcats as the defensive lineman recorded a team-high nine tackles, while junior Aiden Barker and sophomore JR Rooney each added a sack.

Kattau and Wiedenmann both had six tackles from the linebacker spot. Guetterman, Justin Collins, Vohs and Barker each finished with five.

Louisburg will try and bounce back Friday when it host Baldwin. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

“We have to focus on us,” Ebenstein said. “We just have to get better and work on what we do. Our kids’ heart is the positive. It is easy for any team to lay down when you are losing 24-0, but we were able to put up 14 points in those five minutes to finish strong. These kids are going to keep learning and build off this. We are going to get better.”

LOU	**0**	**0**	**0**	**14 – 14**
TON	**0**	**10**	**0**	**14 – 24**

SCORING SUMMARY

Second Quarter

T: Jackson McWilliams 25 FG

T: Sam Kleidosty 20 run (McWilliams kick)

Fourth Quarter

T: Tyler Bowden 3 run (McWilliams kick)

T: Bowden 51 run (McWilliams kick)

L: Ben Wiedenmann 9 run (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Wiedenmann 12 run (Ryals kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ben Wiedenmann 16-91; Andy Hupp 8-19; Kolby Kattau 4-7; Weston Guetterman 8-5; Justin Collins 1-4

PASSING – Guetterman 2-7-26; Kattau 1-1-25

RECEIVING – Konnor Vohs 2-48; Jase Hovey 1-13

TACKLES – Andy Hupp 9, Kolby Kattau 6, Ben Wiedenmann 6, Weston Guetterman 5, Justin Collins 5, Konnor Vohs 5, Aiden Barker 5, Brandon Doles 3, Jase Hovey 3, Nathan Vincent 3, JR Rooney 3, Dominic Owens 1

Guetterman sparks Wildcat comeback over Spring Hill



Louisburg quarterback Weston Guetterman (3) celebrates with his teammates following the Wildcats' go-ahead touchdown in

their 22-14 win over Spring Hill on Friday in their season opener at Wildcat Stadium.

Louisburg found itself trailing Spring Hill on two different occasions during Friday's season opener, and both times Weston Guetterman found a way to help bring his team back.

The Wildcat senior quarterback took center stage on Senior Night as he rushed for more than 100 yards and scored three touchdowns, including a late fourth quarter score to give Louisburg a 22-14 victory at Wildcat Stadium.

It was the ideal start for Louisburg and its 2020 season.

"It is just truly special," Guetterman said. "We worked all summer, we had online Zoom workouts back in March and during quarantine. Then we were able to get back on the field and had weights outside. Even thought it was all abnormal, it is really gratifying to finally get out here and play again. It is really nice to get a win on Senior Night too. Hopefully we can get many more."

Before the game, Louisburg honored its eight seniors as Guetterman, Jay Scollin, Justin Collins, Andy Hupp, Konnor Vohs, Will Patterson, Ben Wiedenmann and Alec Younggren with their parents for their time with the program.

Louisburg controlled the pace from the opening kickoff as the Wildcats put together a 20-play drive that lasted more than 10 minutes, before turning the ball over on downs near the endzone. Spring Hill took the lead first on a 54-yard touchdown pass in the second quarter, but other than that play, the Louisburg defense held strong.

The Wildcats held Spring Hill to just 10 yards of offense outside of the Broncos' scoring play – and thanks to that effort – Louisburg was able to take the lead at halftime.



Junior running back Kolby Kattau finds some running room during the first quarter of Friday's game with Spring Hill at Wildcat Stadium.

Guetterman engineered a late scoring drive in the second quarter as he finished it off with an 5-yard touchdown run. He created some more magic when he rolled out to throw for the 2-point conversion, and while being tackled, managed to find an open Brandon Doles to go up 8-6.

"Weston is so quiet and so humble and he just works hard," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "Then he comes out here and puts on beast mode and makes Patrick Mahomes plays in the endzone. I am super happy for him and he deserved every bit of this and he earned it. I think those kids gravitate toward him and I was excited to see that."

Spring Hill wasted no time getting going in the second half as the Broncos drove down the field and scoring on an 18-yard

touchdown pass from quarterback Fletcher Pankey to Zach Knowlton. After a successful 2-point conversion, the Broncos held a 14-8 lead that went into the fourth quarter.

The Louisburg offense once again took control of the game as it put together a 13-play drive that ended with a 14-yard touchdown run from Guetterman to tie the game midway through the quarter after a failed 2-point conversion.

The offensive line of Dominic Owens, Nathan Vincent, JR Rooney, Jay Scollin, Aiden Barker and tight end Brandon Doles provided a lot of blocking up front as did running backs Ben Wiedenmann, Kolby Kattau and Hupp.



Linemen Nathan Vincent (51) and Aiden Barker (54) get off the line of scrimmage to open holes for the Louisburg running attack Friday against Spring Hill.

“It was a good game,” Guetterman said. “We just fought hard

and our line did really good and nailed the assignments. The running backs blocked really well and just gave me an opportunity to score. That is all I can ask for. It really wasn’t me doing anything. All I had to do was just run it in.”

Wiedenmann also had a big game on the ground for the Wildcats as he carried the ball 20 times for 144 yards, including a 46-yard scamper that help set up the game-winning score. With 437 left in the game, Guetterman broke free for a 31-yard touchdown and then ran in the 2-point conversion to put Louisburg up 22-14.

Spring Hill had one final opportunity to tie the game, but senior Konnor Vohs picked off a Bronco pass in the redzone to all but seal the win for the Wildcats.

“Konnor is such a quiet, hard-working kid and he is always in the right spot and doing the right thing,” Ebenstein said. “That is the type of play that you see on film and he just made a heck of a play.”

In all, the Wildcat defense was strong as they held Spring Hill to just 204 yards of total offense – 72 of which came on two scoring plays through the air.



Louisburg senior Konnor Vohs (11) celebrates with teammates JR Rooney (62) and Jase Hovey after Vohs recorded the game-sealing interception late in the fourth quarter.

Senior Andy Hupp had a big day on the Wildcat defensive line as he finished with a team-high seven tackles, including three for a loss and a sack. Wiedenmann finished with six stops, while Rooney added five tackles. Doles also came up with four stops, two of which were for a loss.

“They played really well and I thought we were able to settle in,” Ebenstein said of his defense. “I think Spring Hill got better as the game went on. They made some good adjustments. In the first half we held them to 64 yards and 50 of them were on one play. We dominated that first half on both sides, and I need to do a better job of getting us in the endzone.”

Following the game, the Wildcat players made their way over to the sideline – not to slap hands with fans as has been

tradition in previous years – but they all took off their helmets, raised them in the air and screamed “Thank you” to those in the stands.

In all that is going on with COVID-19, the players were just happy to be under the Friday Night Lights and wanted to show appreciation for all the support.

“That is what it is all about,” Ebenstein said. “I am glad our kids got to play and I am glad that our kids got to apply all the things they did this spring and summer. Just to come out here and see the people, hear the band and see the lights – this is just what we play for and what it is all about.

“I am super proud of our kids and how focused they were. I think we went for it on fourth down and I think we executed on every single one of them. I told them that I have every confidence in the world in you and let’s go out and execute and that is what they did. They deserved this and they earned it. Hats off to Spring Hill as well because they played their butt off and faced the same adversity we did. The game could have easily went their way, but it feels good to come out on top.”

Louisburg will try to make it two in a row Friday as the Wildcats will travel to Tonganoxie to square off with the state-ranked Chieftains. Tonganoxie defeated Basehor-Linwood in its season opener, 62-28.

“Tonganoxie is going to be solid,” Ebenstein said. “Last year they put it on us pretty good and they had a heck of a team. I know they are going to be ready, but we just have to focus on us. We need to focus on who we are and what we need to do and see how much we can grow from week one to week two.”

SH	**0**	**6**	**8**	**0 – 14**
LOU	**0**	**8**	**0**	**14**

– 22

SCORING SUMMARY

Second Quarter

S: Zach Knowlton 54 pass from Fletcher Pankey (kick failed)

L: Weston Guetterman 5 run (Brandon Doles pass from Guetterman)

Third Quarter

S: Knowlton 18 pass from Pankey (run good)

Fourth quarter

L: Guetterman 14 run (2-point failed)

L: Guetterman 31 run (Guetterman run)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ben Wiedenmann 20-144; Weston Guetterman 13-103; Andy Hupp 15-39; Kolby Kattau 4-29; Justin Collins 1-2

PASSING – Guetterman 2-6-28

RECEIVING – Kattau 1-25; Brandon Doles 1-3

TACKLES – Andy Hupp 7, Ben Wiedenmann 6, JR Rooney 5, Brandon Doles 4, Konnor Vohs 4, Kolby Kattau 4, Jase Hovey 3, Aiden Barker 3, Jay Scollin 3, Weston Guetterman 2, Justin Collins 2, Tom Koontz 2, Nathan Vincent 1,

Different look Wildcats excited for start of season



Ben Wiedenman breaks free for a long run thanks to a block from teammate Kolby Kattau (26) during a game last season. Both are returning starters on both sides of the ball.

In what has been a crazy summer for the Louisburg football team, that has featured them wearing masks, social distancing as much as possible and having to lift weights outdoors – the day they have been working for has finally arrived.

Louisburg opens its season tonight when it hosts Spring Hill at Wildcat Stadium. Just like the summer, this Friday Night Lights matchup will be a little different.

There won't be quite as many fans in the stands due to limited tickets, the players have new uniforms and the Wildcats will also be celebrating Senior Night – an event that is usually scheduled for the end of the year.

Most of that can be attributed to the spread of COVID-19 and the lingering aspects of that will be hanging over the 2020 season.

Still, the Wildcats are looking forward to the opportunity, to not only take the field again, but also heal wounds from some of the tough times the town has experienced the last few months.

"I am super excited," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said.

“I think these kids have done everything we have asked of them. They have worn the masks, they’ve worn the glasses, they’ve separated themselves and have stayed away from certain social events. I think they deserve it.

“Honestly, I think the town deserves it as well. They have supported us in getting back to this and I wish everyone in the world could come watch this. Hopefully there will be enough tickets spread around that people that want to come to the game, can come and watch. I am just excited to get back to it and getting back to small town unity. From everything that has gone on from April to August, and issues that arise in this town, I am just ready for something to help unify everyone back together and get behind these kids and support them.”

With all the changes that are happening on the field, the Wildcats will also have a different look to it on the field, especially on the offensive side of the ball.

Louisburg is changing up its offense from the past and running something that fits more of their personnel. Gone are the big offensive linemen, so Ebenstein decided to take a different route this season.

The Wildcats will be smaller up front and return only one player who saw varsity action a year ago. JR Rooney, who filled in as a starter last year as a freshman, will return to center for his sophomore season, but will have four new players up there with him.

Senior Jay Scollin and sophomore Nathan Vincent will move from the running back spot to guard, while junior Aiden Barker will move from tight end to tackle. Junior Dominic Owens, who started one game as freshman before missing his sophomore year to injury, will play the other tackle spot.



Senior Weston Guetterman, who was an all-league receiver a year ago, is now the starting quarterback for the Wildcats.

Louisburg also moved its All-Frontier League receiver, Weston Guetterman, inside to take over the quarterback spot, which frees up senior Konnor Vohs and sophomore Mason Dobbins to play wide receiver and junior Brandon Doles will move from running back to tight end.

“We changed our philosophy a little bit, so we are just going to kick it old school,” Ebenstein said. “We are trying to put our focus at being fast up front, because we are not very big compared to what we’ve had in year’s past. We don’t have the 6-2, 250-pound guys anymore, so we wanted to make a big change to our philosophy and that is all about being quick. I hope teams say we are small, but we can fire out fast, they fire out low and fire out hard. We’ve been focusing on the littlest things, and when those guys fire out fast, I think we can be

pretty tough.”

Even with a lot of players in new spots, the Wildcats will feature the same faces in the backfield.

Seniors Ben Wiedenman, Andy Hupp, Justin Collins and junior Kolby Kattau will return to lead the running back group as both Wiedenmann and Hupp were both second-team all-league players last season. Sophomore Jase Hovey will also see time in the backfield to add to their depth.

“We are going to mix it up a little bit,” Ebenstein said. “We are going to keep it simple and focus on execution. One of our strengths is probably going to be our back field. You have Weston there at quarterback, that is where he played in the playoffs for us last year on two days of practice. It is great to have Andy, Ben, Kolby and Justin back after they did some really good things last year, plus we add a sophomore in Jase who will see some time as well. There are a lot of weapons that we have.”

Guetterman started at quarterback last season for the Wildcats in their lone playoff game as a last minute replacement due to injuries. Now, since the summer began, he has embraced that starting role and Ebenstein likes what he brings to the huddle.

“Honestly, Weston is a natural leader,” he said. “He does all the little things right. He is always in the right position and he is always taking care of his business on and off the field with school. The kids follow his leadership and they see the type of person that he is and the type of player that he is. He will do a great job leading us.”



Linebacker Brandon Doles is one of several returning starters on the defense.

Most of the Wildcats' experience can be found on the defensive side of the ball as they return many of their back-seven starters from a year ago. Wiedenmann, Kattau and Doles will lead the linebacker group.

Vohs and Collins will take the starting role at cornerback, while Guetterman and Hovey will play at the safety spot.

Up front, Hupp will lead the defensive line on the outside and will be joined by Barker and Owens on the other side. Rooney, along with a combination of Will Patterson, Vincent and Trace Eslinger will see time on the inside.

"The strength of our defense is going to be the back seven," Ebenstein said. "I say that, but probably one of our best players will be up front. We moved Andy Hupp to defensive end

to kind of shut down that side of the field because he is just a monster. Our back seven probably has the most experience as we return all of our linebackers and most of our secondary from a year ago.”

One of the Wildcats’ better players will begin the year on the sideline due to injury. Senior Alec Younggren, who transferred from Olathe South, is recovering from an injury, but when healthy he will be able to make an impact on the line of scrimmage.

Younggren was a state medalist on the Olathe South wrestling team at 220 pounds last season and Ebenstein says he has been a great fit with their team.

“When he gets healthy, I really think he can be a force for us on the inside,” he said. “Alec moved here in the summer, but we are excited to have him. He is coming off a broken foot that he injured in the summer. He was a starter at Olathe South and was a state medalist in wrestling. He is a smart kid and I think he fits in really well with us.”

The Wildcats have spent their entire summer preparing for their season opener against Spring Hill and they are looking forward to what can be a successful season, despite the distractions around them.

“This year is different with everything being so fluid and changing all the time,” Ebenstein said. “Our goal is to win, and I know this sounds cliché, but our goal is to win every game. We have one game a week and that is the one we are trying to win. We need to do it the right way and have the right approach to every game and get better. We are taking it one game at a time, and whatever it takes to win that game, and whatever system and personnel that it takes, is what we are going to do. Right now it is Spring Hill.”

Frontier League announces policy to limit fan attendance



Student crowds like this one will be hard to come by for the 2020 season as the Frontier League announced a plan to limit attendance.

Crowds at Frontier League athletic events will look different for the 2020 fall season.

They will also look a lot smaller, too.

On Sunday evening, the Frontier League announced the member schools will be limiting crowd size to allow social distancing and safety at facility-based events due to the spread of COVID-19 in the area.

The plan features several guidelines, but the biggest announced is that four league tickets will be created for volleyball, soccer, football, and cheerleaders rostered to play/perform that night. Tickets are good for Frontier League home and away games.

Coaches will receive two tickets and those numbers could go down if dictated by the host school’s county health department.

Member schools in the Frontier League include Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Eudora, Baldwin, Spring Hill, Tonganoxie, Piper and Bonner Springs. Piper and Bonner Springs are forced to play every game of their season on the road as the Wyandotte County Health Department prohibited non-professional sporting events to be conducted at this time.

The new rule will also make it harder for students to come support their classmates, as well as town members that don't have an immediate family member participating.

"Depending on the facility capacity, home or away, the amount of tickets available for that contest may be reduced," Louisburg activities director Michael Pickman said. "The athletic director will work with coaches to communicate the available number of tickets for each contest. We will be looking at expanding seating at events to grassy areas where safe, allowed, and possible, so we encourage people to bring lawn chairs or blankets. Designated home and away sections will be identified and utilized.

"We understand that this will affect the student and patron opportunities to attend games, but the ability to provide an environment where social distancing can occur can only be achieved through limiting capacity. We will be live streaming as many home events as possible in lieu of this fact."

Each rostered athlete and manager will be given four laminated tickets. These tickets will then be given out to the fans the student chooses. To enter a game a fan must have this ticket to present to the ticket taker and that student must be rostered for that contest. Admission, if applicable for the contest, will be charged at that time.

If the contest is a home event and the fan has a valid activities pass, this will count for admission, but the student ticket must still be presented. Schools have the authority to decrease the number of tickets as it relates to

their county guidelines and facility space.

Four league tickets will be created for dance and band members for home events. These tickets can be used at home events only. These numbers could be less if dictated by the host school’s county health department.

Each gate will have a detailed roster for both teams. Any players not rostered for that night’s event will not be allowed to have spectators enter the stadium. League passes are only for administration and school board at the current time.

According to Pickman, appropriate face coverings are required by all in attendance for indoor events, as well as social distancing from those who do not reside in the same household.

At outdoor events, fans should socially distance from those who do not reside in the same household and appropriate face coverings are required to enter, at concessions stands, at restrooms, and anytime you cannot socially distance. While the league encourages masks at all times, fans may remove their face coverings once proper social distancing of six feet from all people not residing in the same home occurs and is maintained.

For Louisburg, the threat of not being able to complete their season forced many of the programs to move up their Senior Night games to their first home contest of the season.

The Lady Cat volleyball team will host Senior Night on Sept. 1, and the boys soccer team will take place on Sept. 3. Football, dance, cheer and band Senior Night will be held on Sept. 4.

LHS fall sports practices underway with precautions



With the cloud of a different looking fall season hanging over their heads, the Louisburg High School fall sports teams officially got back to work Monday for the first day of practice.

The possibility of having a shortened fall season due to the COVID-19 pandemic hasn’t scared off Wildcat athletes from giving this season a go and making the most it.

All four teams saw good numbers on the first day of practice as it was business as usual for many of those squads.

In all, Louisburg saw a total of 181 athletes come out for sports at the high school level. Those numbers will drop when volleyball and boys soccer makes their cuts, but it shows the athletes aren’t afraid of what lies ahead and are excited to get their season going.

For the Louisburg football team, Wildcat coach Robert Ebenstein has 70 players out this season after the Wildcats finished last year with a 6-4 record and spot in the regional playoffs.

Practice has been similar than in year’s past, even with COVID-19, however the players and coaches are doing their part to stay as healthy as possible. That includes players bringing their own water bottles to practice and coaches instructing with face coverings.

“The kids and coaches were very excited to get back to it,” Ebenstein said. “We have a very young group and it was good to see them get out on the field and compete.

“We are following all the guidelines passed down from KSHSAA, the county and general guidelines from our school administration. The kids have done an amazing job buying in and doing what we have to do to ensure we get our opportunity to play this season.”



On the volleyball court, the Lady Cats came together to try and put together another strong season. Louisburg finished last year with a spot in the state tournament and took fourth overall.

When practice began, Louisburg had 38 athletes out for volleyball and the Lady Cats will try and continue to work off what they have done over summer as they try and make it back to the state tournament. Practices have looked a little different than in year’s past as players and coaches are wearing face masks at all times, unless certain physical

activities are taking place.

“I think the first few days have gone well,” Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. “We have a set of volleyball skill drills and physical tests that each athlete completes as part of the tryout process. Like every year, they are excited to get the season started. I’m sure there are different emotions because there are some unknowns. We are preparing to compete for the entire season but know there is the possibility it could be cut short or we could see adjustments to our schedules that are out of our control. We had 35 athletes, split among three teams, participate this summer in a league ran out of Olathe. Playing for six weeks over summer gave us an idea of what the season could look like and how we can adapt to the new guidelines that have been put in place.

“We are still practicing social distancing so we’ve adapted some of our drills to accommodate for that while also creating a competitive environment. We are encouraged to work in smaller groups when possible as well. As the season progresses, we’ll see the biggest changes come when we have a match because some pre-game protocol has changed as well as structure during a match. For instance, teams will not switch benches at the conclusion of a set.”



The Louisburg boys soccer team is coming off one of its best season's in program history as the Wildcats reeled off 16 wins a year ago and won a regional title. Louisburg returns several starters from last season and the Wildcats currently have 43 players out.

Along with football, soccer is considered a close-contact sport and the Wildcats are doing everything they can to keep themselves – and others – healthy throughout the year.

"The first day of practice was a typical first day," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "We were a little rusty, but we got through it. The boys are incredibly grateful for the ability to play the game they love. The boys have some massive goals this year and understand what it is going to take to obtain them.

"We made the kids have their masks on during breaks and their own water bottle. This will hopefully limit the chance of COVID spreading."

The one sport that probably won't see too much change this season is cross country. The Wildcat runners are coming off a season in which they had a runner – Trinity Moore – take third at state and watched as the girls' team qualified for state for the third year in a row.



Louisburg still has high goals on both the girls and boys side and the Wildcats have 30 athletes out this season. Thanks to a successful summer of running workouts, Louisburg is ready to get its season underway.

"We are always excited to get started," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "This year is not much different because we had a great season last year and the returners are very focused on improving over last year. Once summer running got started, a sense of normalcy crept in and we started getting ready for the season. They were excited to be with friends again.

"Not much has changed for us since there is not 'contact' during our races. The only thing that could change is how races are started to reduce numbers and losing meets due to a

large number of schools participating. We are already scrambling to get a first meet in this year. We will make it happen for the kids.”

Harding excited for new beginning at Truman State



It has been a crazy summer for Garrett Harding and one that he is not likely to forget anytime soon.

Even despite losing the last two months of his senior year and having his high school graduation in late July, the Louisburg graduate was in the process of trying to find his next home – his home to play football that is.

Harding was talking to a couple colleges, but when COVID-19 hit, his recruitment slowed down a little bit. Still, one school made sure to stay in touch all along and he was able to find the fit he was looking for.

Harding made it official in late June to sign with Truman State University, a Division II program in Kirksville, Mo. It was a relief to get the process over with and he is excited for what is to come.

“I’m very excited to play football at a higher level and ever since I was a little kid I’ve wanted to play football or

baseball in college or even beyond," Harding said. "I decided on Truman State because of the high academic standards and when I visited campus I knew it was the place for me. I had multiple other options, but Truman was the best fit for me."

The weirdness hasn't seemed to slow down for Harding, however.

The Great Lakes Conference, which Truman State is a member, voted to move football from the fall to the spring, in hopes the spread of COVID-19 has slowed down. It will certainly be a different experience for him, but he is trying to find the positive in all this.

"I was disappointed that I couldn't start playing right off the bat but I also understood the conditions why they did it," Harding said. "The only changes that it will do to me is give me more time to condition myself, to be more fit and learn more about the program."



Louisburg's Garrett Harding made his decision official in late June when he signed with Truman State to play football. Harding is seated next to his parents Dennis and Cara Harding, along with his sister Carina. Standing is Louisburg assistant football coaches Pete Skakal and Alex Gentges.

Extra time could be useful for Harding, and not only because he is an incoming freshman, but also because he is going to make a position change.

Harding has spent the last few years as a fixture on the Louisburg offensive line and performed at a high level. This past season, Harding was a first team All-Frontier League offensive lineman and earned second team honors on defense.

He was also a first-team All-Class 4A selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal and also played in the Kansas Shrine Bowl a month ago.

Still, the Truman State staff has a different role for Harding. They are going to try him out as a fullback or middle linebacker as they feel he can help the team in that area.

“I’m very excited to get back to my old positions and see what I can do again,” Harding said. “I used to play middle linebacker on Top City Crush, Olathe Pride and FBU so I don’t believe the transition back to it will be as rough as first learning it. I enjoyed playing middle linebacker for Coach Kelly on the Top City Crush who has coached at multiple high levels above high school.”

Although football has been moved to the spring for Harding, he is still planning to continue to work out when he reports for classes soon.

“For the first couple weeks, we won’t be allowed to do anything but if all goes well and there are no Coronavirus spikes, then we will start having conditioning and lifting with restrictions,” Harding said. “After that, if all is still going well, then we may have a few practices in October/November.”

Despite the different start to his collegiate football career, Harding is still looking forward to making a mark in a game that he wasn’t even sure he was going to play past high

school.

“I am going in open-minded, due to entering the recruiting portal late,” Harding said. “My thought was to play college baseball, however I changed very late in the recruiting process for football. We are taking this in stride because we are not sure how the current situation will play out because of the Coronavirus.

“The reputation of Truman being one of the most highly accredited universities in the country and having a very successful football program drew me in. Once I visited campus ,I just knew it was the place for me. The coaches have been great through this whole thing especially since the virus shut down in-person communications. They call me often, email me and share information on Hudl to help prepare me for the season.”

LHS coaches thankful, excited about KSHSAA ruling on fall sports



Coaches, parents and athletes held their collective breath last week during the Kansas High School Activities Association’s executive board meeting.

People around the state watched to see what KSHSAA would recommend for fall sports during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Back to school will be different than normal, and for some, will start after Labor Day due to a high number of positive cases.

Still, many have wondered what was going to happen to fall activities around the state and they got their answer. A motion by KSHSAA failed 5-4 in the executive board session, which in turn allowed the fall sports season to continue as scheduled.

“I am relieved that we know a definite start date and there will be no changes to the start of games,” Louisburg High School activities director Michael Pickman said. “The kids and coaches worked all summer, and I didn’t want to see that start date delayed and lose that progress. However, there will be some changes due to the pandemic so the focus turns to safety. The last thing I want is for the athletic events and protocols to create the spread of COVID that affects the academic side, so it will be very important that we take the recommendations of the health organizations and KSHSAA to make the athletics and competitions as safe as possible for this year.”

During the meeting, KSHSAA had proposed keeping the original start of practice date of Aug. 17 for all activities. For activities being able to allow social distancing and minimal contact, such as girls golf, girls tennis, cross country, debate and scholars bowl, no modifications were recommended.

However, the proposal called for moving the start dates for competition in football, volleyball and boys soccer to begin no earlier than Sept. 8 – which basically took a week of their season.

It would have made football and eight game season, instead of the normal nine. For soccer, number of games would have been

reduced from 16 to 14 and volleyball would have been reduced from 36-30 points.

For many of the Wildcat head coaches, the vote of the executive board was a breath of fresh air in what has been a challenging spring and summer for local athletes.

“I really think it was a good decision,” Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. “The kids deserve a chance to be able to play their season. It could be different than we have seen before, but I think we have done a good job of keeping the exposure down. They deserve this opportunity and activities like football will keep kids focused on school as well. I believe it is something they need.

“It was also good decision for the whole state. Yes, we are close to the metro, but you have schools like Smith Center or somewhere else in the state where the exposure is low. Starting the season on time was the right thing to do, and if there are cancellations, it gives schools an opportunity to reschedule if they need to.”

Louisburg’s boys soccer program is looking to have another big season as it tries to repeat as a Frontier League champion and their 16 wins from a year ago. Although, the Wildcats are looking forward to getting their season underway, they realize things could change on a daily basis.

“I was extremely excited,” Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. “There were so many rumors and recommendations that were flying I was worried. The vote at least gives this group an opportunity to actually get some games in. This gives the boys soccer team a chance to back up the season they had a year ago. I am excited to see us at least get a chance to start the season.

“I will be honest, I was extremely worried over the summer. In fact, a comment was made in the KSHSAA executive board meeting that still has me worried. They said let’s start the season as

soon as possible, because we are not sure how long it is going to last. It will also be interesting to see if the CDC or local health departments change their protocols when someone may have it, otherwise teams will be shut down right and left because they might have the virus.”

Cross country is a sport that considered somewhat safe when it comes to the spread of COVID-19. Louisburg head coach John Reece has treated this summer like normal.

Reece had 35 runners out for the first day of their daily morning runs, and have averaged 20 a day since then. It is considered a “socially-distanced” sport, and one that KSHSAA had no problems with starting their schedule on time.

“Very excited for our seniors to have a fall season,” Reece said. “I’m not gonna hold my breath as who knows what could happen in a month. For now it is go time, and we will be ready.

“We have been able to transition into some workouts on Wednesdays to get some quality work in. The rest of the time we are running this town and getting in the miles. It is going to be another fun year for both boys and girls teams. We want to get both to state and we will work hard to accomplish this goal.”

Volleyball is the one indoor sport in the fall, which has some worried about how social distancing will work in the gym and how many teams will be invited to tournaments. As for now, nothing has changed in that department, and head coach Jessica Compliment is looking forward to working with her team in a couple weeks.

“It’s nice to know what the season is going to look like,” Compliment said. “The uncertainty and the unknowns for the upcoming school has been a little unnerving, but I am happy to see that the players will have a season.

“I do not know of any changes to our schedule as of right now. I have been told the schedule will go as scheduled until we hear differently. I have not heard from tournament host schools on whether or not they plan to change anything.”

As far as spectators go, there has not been a limit set as of yet as members of the school district are working on protocols to use during the season. For now, the obvious guidelines are the ones people experience on a daily basis.

“There will be guidelines more than restrictions as related to Covid-19 safe practices that align with each sport and specific to that sport,” Pickman said. “Universal aspects like wearing masks to practice and during periods of inactivity will apply to all. Cleaning equipment schedules and protocols to have water bottles and cease use of water fountains, etc, along with others are sport specific guidelines for both practice and game day. These documents are being drafted and will be communicated once final.

“We are following the Executive Order 20-59, so if the event is outside, there will not be masks required, but we will still encourage social distancing. If the event is inside, masks will be required as well as social distancing encouraged.”

The district has had to make one change to the start of the fall season and that is the cancellation of the Fall Sports Pep Rally that has annually been held at the high school.

“The Community Pep Rally was a hard decision because it is a great school and community business partnership that the community and our coaches, players, and students look forward to, but it was more important to avoid these extra opportunities for mass gathering to place focus on opening school and activities on time and healthy as possible,” Pickman said. “We are looking to reschedule possibly during the buffer week at the conclusion of the fall season. No other

events have been cancelled at this time.”