

# Ebenstein named Coach of the Year, 4 Wildcats earn state, metro honors



Louisburg head football coach Robert Ebenstein was recently named the Class 4A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Football Coaches Association. Ebenstein just finished his second year as head coach and led the Wildcats to a Frontier League title and a regional championship.

The Louisburg High School football team had one of the better seasons in its history as the Wildcats won their first 10 games of the season and finished with a regional championship.

It only makes the sense that several of the Wildcat players and coaches are receiving postseason recognition.

The latest came from the Kansas Football Coaches Association as Louisburg head coach Robert Ebenstein was named Class 4A Coach of the Year. Ebenstein, who is just in his second season as head coach, has a 16-4 record with the Wildcats as he guided his team to a Frontier League championship this year.

“To be named coach of the year is an honor for sure,” Ebenstein said. “Many guys coach for years and never get that, but to be honest this award is a just a reflection of the assistant coaches we have and the commitment these players give to this program.

“I cannot say enough about the guys that I have the honor to

coach with, Doc D, (Drew)Harding, (Joel) McGhee, (Ty) Pfannenstiel, (Pete) Skakal, (Alex) Gentges, (Kade) Larson and (Jeff) Lohse are some of the best football minds in the state as well as role models and mentors for our players to look up to. I am fortunate to coach with them and Louisburg is lucky to have them."



**Senior Austin Moore was named as a first-team all-state player by several publications.**

Seniors Austin Moore and Kiefer Tucker joined Ebenstein on the KFCFA all-state team as both players were named to the first team all-state offense on the senior-only list.

Moore tallied 1,554 total yards, with 1,428 yards of those on the ground at the running back spot and also had 21 touchdowns, while Tucker, played guard on the offensive line was a big part of a lot of those yards.



**Junior lineman Brayden White earned first team all-state honors and was also named to the All-Simone second team.**

Junior lineman Brayden White and Moore were also recognized as some of the top players in the Kansas City area. Moore was a semifinalist for the Small-Class Players of the Year when the annual Simone Awards were announced. The Simone Awards recognize some of the best players in the Kansas City area on both sides of the state line.

White was also a semifinalist for the Bobby Bell Award, which is for the best small-class lineman or linebacker. He was also named to the All-Simone second team as an offensive lineman.

“Having a player nominated for the Simone Awards is an honor, but to have two players in the same year is unreal,” Ebenstein said. “It is awesome to see that the Greater Kansas City media has noticed Louisburg football and our players.”



**Seniors Blue Caplinger (left) and Kiefer Tucker were honorable mention all-state selections. Tucker was also named to the first team all-state list by the Kansas Football Coaches Association.**

If that wasn't enough, both Moore and White were named to the Class 4A All-State first team by both the Topeka Capital-Journal and the Wichita Eagle. Wildcat teammates Blue Caplinger and Tucker were both recognized as honorable mention all-state players.

"It was really cool to see all-state honors for Blue and Kiefer," Ebenstein said. "They played great football all season long, and for other coaches and media members to take notice is awesome. I may be a little biased, but I honestly feel like we had a few more players compete at an all-state level, but there are a lot of great football players in 4A and the Greater Kansas City Area."

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## **Moore, Tucker lead Louisburg as Cats awarded 16 slots for**



# all-league



**Louisburg seniors Austin Moore (left) and Kiefer Tucker were both awarded first team All-Frontier League honors on each side of the ball. The Wildcats were awarded 16 slots on the team.**

The Louisburg football team reached several milestones this season, including winning its first 10 games for the first time since 2010 and was only the third Wildcat team to reach double-digit wins since 2000.

Throw in the fact the Wildcats also won their first Frontier League title in eight years and captured a regional championship, it was a year to remember for Louisburg football. With all that success, the individual honors are starting to roll in.

All-Frontier League teams were recently released and the Wildcats were awarded 16 slots overall, including eight on each side of the ball.

“Overall I was very happy with how we were represented,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said.

Seniors Austin Moore and Kiefer Tucker led the Wildcats as the two players were first team selections on offense and defense. Moore was named a first-team running back and linebacker, while Tucker earned first team honors on the offensive and defensive lines.

Offensively, senior Brayden Gage (wide receiver) and junior Brayden White (line) were named to the first team. Junior Madden Rutherford (quarterback) and senior Blue Caplinger (multi-purpose player) were second team selections.



**(From left) Brayden White, Blue Caplinger and Brayden Gage were each selected to the All-Frontier League first team.**

Caplinger (defensive back) was also named to the all-league first team defense, as was Rutherford (punter). White (line) and junior Charlie Koontz (linebacker) were second team selections. Senior Noah Larson and junior Garrett Harding earned honorable mention honors as linemen on both sides of the ball.

Moore had a big season for the Wildcats, prior to breaking his collarbone in the next to last game of the year. He led Louisburg in tackles with 83 and had seven tackles for a loss, three sacks, two forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and an interception.

Offensively, he tallied 1,554 total yards, with 1,428 yards of those on the ground and also had 21 touchdowns. He was also the leading point-getter in the all-league voting on both sides of the ball.

“Austin had an outstanding year,” Ebenstein said. “The kid is

just a stud and you know it shows on Friday night, but he's earned it all in the weight room. Within the last week, he has had collarbone surgery and Austin was already was doing kettlebell squats with his good arm, with his other arm in a sling. That's the type of work ethic that gets you first team on both sides of the ball."

Tucker was among the leaders on the line scrimmage for the Wildcats as he helped pave the way for more than 3,500 yards of total offense. Defensively, Tucker was a force from his defensive end position as he recorded 55 tackles, three tackles for a loss, three forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and a sack.

"Kiefer also had a great year, and you know the thing about him is he's so disciplined and does his job on every single play and he goes 100 percent all the time," Ebenstein said. "On the offensive side of the ball, he's one of the smartest lineman that we've ever had since I've been here. He pretty much knows where every single person is supposed to go and he relays that on almost every play."



**Madden Rutherford (left) and Charlie Koontz were each**

**named to the all-league second team. Rutherford was also a first team selection at punter.**

White, along with Tucker, Larson and Harding, played vital roles on the Louisburg offensive and defensive lines. White was among the league's best offensive tackles and also played well on the defensive line with 51 tackles, a forced fumble and a sack.

Gage, who split time at wide receiver and running back, earned first team wide receiver honors as he led the Wildcats with 283 yards receiving with three touchdowns. He also had 258 yards on the ground and two touchdowns.

Caplinger had a big season on both sides of the ball as he had 310 yards on the ground and four touchdowns. He also had 234 yards receiving and two touchdowns.

Defensively, Caplinger had 31 tackles from the safety spot and also had two tackles for a loss, two fumble recoveries and an interception.

"I am just excited for all those guys," Ebenstein said of his first teamers. "They all had a great year and I'm glad that the other coaches in the league saw that as well and were willing to vote for them. It's just a testament to how hard all those kids worked as a whole."





**Noah Larson (left) and Garrett Harding were each named as all-league honorable mentions on both sides of the ball.**

Rutherford was just edged out of the first team quarterback spot, despite throwing for 1,100 yards and 14 touchdowns. He also rushed for 354 yards and had four touchdowns on the ground and had one more score receiving.

Koontz had a good year from the linebacker spot as he recorded 50 tackles, including six for a loss. He also had three fumble recoveries and a sack that helped him earn second team honors.

Larson and Harding also had good seasons on the Wildcat defensive line. Larson had 43 tackles, two sacks, two forced fumbles and a fumble recovery. As for Harding, he had 34 tackles despite missing three games due to an injury at the defensive tackle spot.

“I was very happy for those guys to get noticed,” Ebenstein said. “They all had great seasons and the difference between the guys who got first and second team were slim in the voting numbers. At the end of the day, if you are being noticed by other coaches, even if you are honorable mention, you have

done something really well so I'm super excited for all those kids."

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL**

### **FIRST TEAM**

#### **OFFENSE**

BACKS – Austin Moore, Louisburg, senior; Seth Richmond, Paola, senior; Korbin Riedel, Tonganoxie, senior

RECEIVERS – Brayden Gage, Louisburg, senior; Elijah Tyner, Tonganoxie, junior; A.J. Watson, Bonner Springs, senior

LINE – Cole Sample, Tonganoxie, junior; Jeffery Schartz, Paola, senior; Mikey Stribling, Paola, junior; Kiefer Tucker, Louisburg, senior; Brayden White, Louisburg, junior

MULTI-POSITIONAL PLAYER – Brennen Feedback, Spring Hill, senior

KICKER – Ryan Wokutch, Paola, junior

### **SECOND TEAM**

BACKS – Conner Hasz, Paola, junior; Bryce Krone, Bonner Springs, junior; Madden Rutherford, Louisburg, junior

RECEIVERS – Dallas Bond, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Malakhi Kennon, Piper, sophomore; Keyon Thomas, Bonner Springs, senior

LINE – Cooper Beebe, Piper, senior; Tyler McKinney, Paola, senior; Quinn Nichols, Baldwin, senior; Bryce Scholtze, Spring Hill, junior; LeMoses White, Piper, senior

MULTI POSITIONAL PLAYER – Blue Caplinger, Louisburg, senior

KICKER – Bear Gardner, Spring Hill, junior

## **HONORABLE MENTION**

**BACKS** – Gavin Elston, Eudora, senior; Carter Neis, Eudora, senior; Noah Villarreal, Bonner Springs, senior; Dalton White, Piper, senior

**RECEIVERS** – Easton Jones, Spring Hill, senior; Nasjon Porter, Bonner Springs, senior; Jack Robinson, Piper, junior

**LINE** – Corbin Fullerton, Piper, senior; Garrett Harding, Louisburg, junior; Kaden Hartwell, Eudora, junior; Noah Larson, Louisburg, senior; Tucker Mace, Ottawa, senior; Jacob Miller, Tonganoxie, senior; Jacob Peterson, Bonner Springs, junior

**MULTI-POSITIONAL PLAYER** – Drake Pray, Tonganoxie, senior

**KICKER** – Sydni Bolewski, Bonner Springs, senior; Jonny Moon, Piper, senior

## **DEFENSE**

### **FIRST TEAM**

**LINE** – Javier Castillo, Paola, junior; Clay Essex, Paola, junior; Cole Sample, Tonganoxie, junior; Kiefer Tucker, Louisburg, senior

**LINEBACKER** – Austin Moore, Louisburg, senior; Brendan Ohlmeier, Paola, senior; Evan Peuser, Paola, junior; Drake Pray, Tonganoxie, senior

**BACKS** – Blue Caplinger, Louisburg, senior; Gavin Elston, Eudora, senior; Nasjon Porter, Bonner Springs, senior

**PUNTER** – Madden Rutherford, Louisburg, junior

## **SECOND TEAM**

LINE – Cooper Beebe, Piper, senior; Kade Kehl, Baldwin, junior; Alec Waterman, Spring Hill, senior; Brayden White, Louisburg, junior

LINEBACKER – Nolan Ewing, Spring Hill, senior; Charlie Koontz, Louisburg, junior; Brandon Martin, Piper, sophomore; Andrew Puckett, Bonner Springs, senior

BACKS – Brandon Carlson, Ottawa, senior; Seth Richmond, Paola, senior; Noah Villarreal, Bonner Springs, senior

PUNTER – Connor Quick, Baldwin, junior

## **HONORABLE MENTION**

LINE – Carson Downes, Spring Hill, junior; Garrett Harding, Louisburg, junior; Noah Larson, Louisburg, senior; Tucker Mace, Ottawa, senior; Jacob Miller, Tonganoxie, senior; BJ Walker, Piper, senior

LINEBACKER – Brayden Beerbower, Eudora, freshman; Brennen Feedback, Spring Hill, senior; Zach Flowers, Baldwin, senior; Dustin Rhoads, Tonganoxie, junior; Bryce Scholtze, Spring Hill, senior

BACKS – Brandon Ahart, Piper, sophomore; Conner Hasz, Paola, junior; Cy Hockey, Baldwin, senior; Noah Verbraken, Spring Hill, senior

PUNTER – Johnny Tapia, Bonner Springs, junior

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# Wildcats' perfect season comes to close with loss to Miego



Louisburg junior Charlie Koontz gets a block from teammate Josh Casey as he was able to score one of the Wildcats' three second half touchdowns in their 55-21 loss to Bishop Miego on Friday in the Class 4A sectional playoffs.

As the Louisburg football players walked off the field last Friday night following their sectional playoff game with Bishop Miego, the Wildcats felt something they hadn't experienced this year.

A loss.

It came at the hands of the four-time defending state champion Stags, who made things difficult on the Wildcats from the start and didn't let up, as Louisburg fell 55-21 at Wildcat Stadium.

The Wildcats finished their season with a 10-1 record, a Frontier League championship and a regional championship. Still, the fact that their season is over is hard feeling for the Louisburg players to shake.

"Being 10-0 and then having that first loss of the season was very disappointing," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said.

“Losing always sucks, but losing in the playoffs and having to wait until next August is the worst. At the end of the day, Miego is a very good team and we did some good things. We got them to fourth down on multiple drives in the first quarter, we just couldn’t make the plays on those big downs. Then we got behind a little and started pressing.”

On a frigid night that featured a slick and hard Wildcat Stadium field, both teams battled tough field conditions and it affected the Stags early as they mishandled several snaps. Louisburg was able to force Miego into third, and fourth and long situations, but the Stags converted several big plays to get out of it.

Bishop Miego scored 27 first quarter points, with three of those touchdowns coming on passes of more than 30 yards. The Stags added two more scores in the second quarter and jumped out to a 41-0 halftime lead.



**Junior Garrett Harding (left) and senior Noah Larson team up for a block Friday against Bishop Miege.**

"They have big time play makers all over the field, and their offensive line was able to give time in the pocket and they just made those plays," Ebenstein said.

The Stags had two losses on the season coming into the game, but those were against the No. 1 team in 5A in St. Thomas Aquinas and a perennial power in Missouri, Rockhurst. They also play in a 5A and 6A dominated league throughout the season.

Miege has since feasted on Class 4A opponents when its gets to the playoffs, and the talent discrepancy made it difficult for the Wildcats to overcome.

Despite freezing cold temperatures and a large halftime deficit, the Wildcats didn't give up and played hard in the second half.

In the third quarter, senior Blue Caplinger scooped up a Miege fumble and returned it 67 yards for a touchdown to get Louisburg on the board.

The Wildcats added two more scores in the fourth quarter as junior Charlie Koontz broke free for a 21-yard touchdown run and then senior Brayden Gage returned a kickoff 77 yards for the Wildcats' final touchdown.

"As a coaching staff we challenged the guys to show their true colors and grit and I was very pleased with the fight and character our guys showed," Ebenstein said. "We came out and won the second half."



**Seniors Brian Houck (23) and Jonathan DePriest bring down a Miego runner Friday at Wildcat Stadium.**

It was a special season that saw the Wildcats win 10 straight games for the first time since 2010 and they also came away with a pair of championships. Despite all that, it was tough to say goodbye to a year that brought many great memories.

Add in the fact that 18 seniors played their final football game at Wildcat Stadium, it was an emotional ending.

“Overall it was a great year,” Ebenstein said. “I am very proud of our guys and excited for them that they were able to get double digit wins for only the third time since 2000, and there was a lot of really good football played during that time period. It was a lot fun to be a part of.”



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## SCORING SUMMARY

### First quarter

B: Deaunte Parker 2 run (kick failed)

B: Hudson Bentley 38 pass from Sam Pedrotti (run good)

B: Phillippe Wesley 31 pass from Brison Cobbins (kick good)

B: Jaylen Scruggs 39 pass from Pedrotti (kick failed)

### Second quarter

B: Cobbins 9 run (run good)

B: Wesley 9 pass from Pedrotti (kick failed)

### Third quarter

L: Blue Caplinger 67 fumble return (Drake Varns kick)

B: Jude Putz 20 pass from Harrison Braudis (kick good)

### Fourth quarter

L: Charlie Koontz 21 run (Varns kick)

B: Jake Ryan 36 pass from Timothy Dorsey (kick good)

L: Brayden Gage 77 kickoff return (Varns kick)

## STATISTICS

RUSHING: Charlie Koontz 9-48; Blue Caplinger 2-8; Brayden Gage 1- -2; Madden Rutherford 4- -5

PASSING: Madden Rutherford 3-13-16

RECEIVING: Josh Casey 1-6, Weston Guetterman 1-6, Michael Waldron 1-4

TACKLES: Charlie Koontz 11, Brayden Gage 8, Jorge Lebron 5, Brian Houck 5, Ben Wiedenmann 4, Kiefer Tucker 5, Brayden White 4, Beckett Rasmussen 3, Blue Caplinger 3, Tanner Belcher 3, Noah Larson 2, James Foote 2, Hunter Day 2, Jonathan DePriest 2, Gabe Rader 1, Dylan Knipp 1, Garrett Harding 1.

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## Wildcats to play underdog role against Bishop Miege



Louisburg quarterback Madden Rutherford hands the ball off to senior Blue Caplinger during the Wildcats' win over Piper last week. Louisburg will host defending state champion Bishop Miege tonight in the Class 4A sectional playoffs.

The Louisburg football team enters today's sectional playoff game with Bishop Miege as the No. 1 seed on the east side of the state and currently boasts a 10-0 record on the season.

Despite all that, the Wildcats are a heavy underdog.

Bishop Miege, the No. 1-ranked team in Class 4A, has won the last four state championships and has dominated 4A in the last decade, including a 76-8 win over Labette County and a 49-20 victory over Pittsburg so far in the playoffs. Last season, the Stags outscored their playoff opponents 230-60.

The Stags' only losses this season have come to the No. 1 team in Class 5A, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Missouri power, Rockhurst High School.

Despite all that, the Wildcats are excited for the opportunity to play one of the state's best teams on their home field. Kickoff for tonight's game is set for 7 p.m., in the sectional round of the playoffs. The winner of this game will meet the winner of Paola and Basehor-Linwood for the sub-state title.

"It is going to be awesome and the whole team is super excited," Louisburg senior Blue Caplinger said. "A lot of people have been saying, 'Oh, you are playing Miege, this is going to be your last game of the season.' I think we have some advantages too. Our field is an advantage, the snow and the cold, too, so I think that it will be a good game."

The Wildcats have put together a dominant season of its own as they have outscored their two playoff opponents, Ottawa and Piper, 104-8 the last two games.

"Our kids and coaches get excited for every game, but I would be lying if I said the focus this week wasn't a little bit different than some others we have had," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "Our kids are excited for the opportunity to play Miege and give them our best shot on our home field."

The Wildcats will have to account for a lot of weapons with the Bishop Miege offense and come up with their best performance of the season defensively.

Stag quarterback Sam Pedrotti leads the way with more than 1,700 yards passing and 19 touchdowns. Receivers Phillippe Wesley and Hudson Bentley each have more than 600 yards receiving and seven and five touchdowns, respectively.

Running back Brison Cobbins is another weapon for the Stags with nearly 1,000 yards on the ground and 16 touchdowns. The Stags also have a big offensive line that the Wildcat defensive front is going to have to deal with.

Defensively, Miege linebacker Dylan Downing is one of the best players in the state with 100 tackles on the season, including 10 for a loss. Defensive lineman Jalen Williams is also a big factor with 17 tackles for a loss and a team-high 11 sacks.

Louisburg realizes Miege will be the toughest team it has faced all season and it will be playing at a disadvantage at times.

"When you watch them on film, they are just solid all around," Ebenstein said. "They have good schemes and amazing athletes all over the field. Every one of their players only play one side of the football and they never look tired. When a starter does go out, the person who replaces them never seems to be a downgrade.

"They also have about 18 coaches on the sidelines, and with players only playing one side of the ball, they make adjustments very well and have plenty of coaches on the sideline who can coach it up by position, which is tough for us. For example, when our quarterback comes off the field our QB coach (Jeff Lohse) is calling the defense so he never really has that chance to talk to him from a position coach perspective. It is just one of the many differences schools like Miege have that public schools are not granted."



The Wildcats will also be without their leading rusher and tackler, Austin Moore, who was injured last week with a broken collarbone. Sophomore Ben Wiedenmann will fill in at running back and linebacker for Moore.

Still, the Wildcats have plenty of depth at the running back position with seniors Blue Caplinger and Brayden Gage, who have been big contributors all season.

Quarterback Madden Rutherford has been a steady presence for Louisburg as he has thrown for almost 1,100 yards and 14 touchdowns. He also has four more scores on the ground.

However for the Wildcats to be effective, it all starts up front with a veteran offensive line of Kiefer Tucker, Brayden White, Noah Larson, Garrett Harding and Jonathan DePriest.

"The play on the line is going to be huge," White said. "We need to be able to have a run game and we need to be able to mix it up a little with the pass too. But the run game is going to be big for us, especially in the wet, soggy grass.

"It is going to be hard to replace someone like Austin. He is a big part of our team and he has probably given the most out of anyone here. I think Ben is going to do really good and I think he is going to surprise people and Austin has been supporting him the whole way."

The Wildcats are hoping for a big crowd tonight at Wildcat Stadium, similar to the one they saw in Paola when they captured the Frontier League crown less than a month ago.

"Our community has been so supportive this season and their support at every home game is very much appreciated," Ebenstein said. "Looking up and seeing those bleachers packed every home game is just a reminder of how amazing this community is and how much this school and team is supported.

"The Paola game also is another example that place was crazy

that type of atmosphere could be a huge advantage against a team like Miego as they like to call and check almost every play at the line of scrimmage. As for being the underdog, we will take it. Nobody thought we would be league champions but we are. Nobody thought we were going to beat Paola, but we did, and now nobody thinks we will beat Miego."

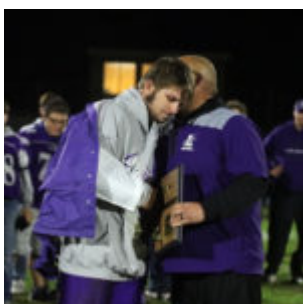
It is that underdog mentality that the Wildcats hope to use in their favor tonight against the highly-favored Stags.

"Honestly I think every coach and every player on our team believes we will win this game," Ebenstein said. "Miego is an amazing team, and their track record proves they are, and have been one of the best teams in the state of Kansas over the past five years. The good news is we don't have to beat them every week, we only have to beat them this week.

"I think we have a good plan to get that done, and a team full of kids working their butt off to carry out that plan. Those nerves are always there for me personally, but once kickoff comes, everything just settles in and we play the game."

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## **OPINION: Moore's injury hurts, inspires Louisburg football**



Louisburg senior, and team captain, Austin Moore accepts the regional championship trophy from coach Robert Ebenstein following the Wildcats' 48-0 win over Piper last Friday at Wildcat Stadium. Moore broke his collarbone in the first half of the game and has sidelined him for the rest of the season.

Following Louisburg's 48-0 win over Piper on Friday that gave the Wildcats a regional championship, one would think the mood would be filled with excitement.

The Wildcats had just advanced in the playoffs and picked up their 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive victory to stay perfect on the season. It was a time to bask in what was a dominant performance.

It was anything but celebratory.

In fact, the setting was more like a funeral.

During the game, senior Austin Moore – a team captain and leader on both sides of the ball – suffered a broken collarbone in the first half. Although the Wildcats will get to play another week of football, Austin's time as a Louisburg football player was up.

To put some perspective on what Moore was to his teammates, he might as well have worn an 'S' on his jersey and donned a red cape. He was Superman to a lot of those players.

He was supposed to be invincible to this type of stuff. There was nothing that could bring down Austin Moore. Just ask his previous nine opponents.

At running back, Moore finished his season with more than 1,400 yards rushing to go along with 21 touchdowns in less than 10 games. On defense, he was the team's leading tackler from his middle linebacker spot.

The shock across the Wildcat sideline could be seen as he came

out of the locker room at halftime. Instead of a jersey and shoulder pads, he replaced it with a purple jacket and a sling. His season was over.

“After the game was a bitter sweet feeling for us all,” senior lineman Kiefer Tucker said. “Yes we were happy that we had won, but we also all felt terrible because of what happened to Austin. Austin is the hardest working kid I’ve ever met and he’s tough as nails too, so to see him injured was a surreal feeling.”

In the second quarter against Piper, Moore caught a swing pass for a short gain, but was brought down by three Piper players and landed hard. The impact would break his collarbone, but it didn’t keep him from staying on the field.

Moore shook off the injury – if one could do that with a broken bone – and carried the ball three more times, including a 6-yard touchdown run that saw him shed tacklers and drag defenders into the endzone to give Louisburg an early lead.



**Austin Moore breaks a tackle as he tries to get into the endzone after he suffered a broken collarbone.**

He then went back on the field for defense, despite his coaches telling him to take a break.

“After we scored, Blue (Caplinger) and (Brayden) Gage both said you need to check on Austin,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “So I found him on the sideline and said ‘You alright?’ and he responded with ‘Yeah I’m fine,’ and went right back out on defense. So we watched him that defensive possession and he was favoring that arm just a little bit.

“When we forced the punt, we put in Ben (Wiedenmann) for a drive to get him a break. He comes to the sideline and says ‘I’m fine, put me back in.’ I told him to just take a breather, we end up scoring and he goes back in to play linebacker. Next offensive possession I took him out again and he comes over and asks me why. I said we are up three scores,

take a breather. His only response was I am fine.”

In his mind though, Moore knew something wasn’t right.

Reluctant to take x-rays at halftime, Moore finally conceded. It didn’t take the team’s trainer, Dr. Damon Dennis, long to figure out exactly what was wrong.

“Doc got his pads off and pressed around and said he needed to get an x-ray and Austin refused to go,” Ebenstein said. “Austin is a very tough kid. I have seen college athletes in tears over that same injury.”

The Wildcats carried on his absence and went on to outscore Piper 34-0 the rest of the way to ensure themselves a regional championship.

After the game was over, Ebenstein had Austin come out to midfield where he handed him the regional championship trophy and Austin presented it to the team. Celebration ensued, even if it was for just a brief moment.

In the locker room, instead of feeling sorry for himself, Austin was there to congratulate his teammates on what was an impressive victory.

“The atmosphere definitely wasn’t as if we had just won the regional championship, 48-0,” quarterback Madden Rutherford said. “The mood was a bit solemn because we all know how much this team means to Austin Moore. The coaches and Austin himself did an outstanding job of saying, ‘Yes, this sucks, but we must move on.’”

That is exactly what the Wildcats are doing as they face a daunting task of playing defending state champion, Bishop Miege. There aren’t many who would give the Wildcats, even with Moore, a chance of knocking off a team that has dominated Class 4A and won the last four state titles.

To put it in perspective, a media outlet in Kansas City



released a poll on Twitter asking its followers to pick the Class 4A winner on the east side of the state – the only four choices were Bishop Miego.

T-Mobile

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62%

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Tweet

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810 Varsity

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Who goes to Class 4A football final from East:

Bishop Miego

48%

Bishop Miego

17%

Bishop Miego

21%

Bishop Miego

14%

807 votes · Final results

10/30/18, 9:19 PM

5 Retweets

28 Likes

There hasn't been team in Class 4A that has come close to knocking off the Stags in more than a decade.

That is what the Wildcats are up against this Friday in the sectional round of the playoffs.

"Miego is a good team, you can't deny that, but they are all human and they too make mistakes just as much as we do," Tucker said. "The whole team, and myself, are very excited to

be able to play against them because challenging games like this bring out the best in us. I fully believe that we have the heart and players to go out there and prove to everyone just who we are on our home field in front of the best community out there."

Louisburg has put together probably its best season in eight years, since the Wildcats won the school's first state championship. It has been quite a ride and one that will have to continue without No. 21 on the field.

However, Moore hasn't left them. He will be more vocal than ever on the sidelines and the Wildcats are ready to make the best out of a bad situation.

"After the game I know a lot of us went up to him and told him how much respect and love we have for him and we told him that we weren't done yet and that this next one was for him," Tucker said. "We all know that we must step up now in the absence of him on the field, but he will be right on the sideline coaching us up and making sure that we are in the right mindset."

Even without Moore, this Wildcat team ranks among one of the better teams in school history. They have a lot of depth at running back in Blue Caplinger, Brayden Gage and now Ben Wiedenmann, and Rutherford has had a big year at quarterback.

The lines on both sides of the ball have played well all season and is considered one of the team's strength.

As good as that is, this team still needs your help. They need Wildcat fans to pack the stadium, just like you did against Paola and create an atmosphere these players will not forget.

They need you be loud and supportive. They need to know you have their back.



**Austin Moore presents the regional trophy to the rest of the team last Friday.**

This is postseason football. The stands should be full. No matter the outcome, celebrate what these Wildcats have already accomplished and what they have the potential to become.

"This is what we prepare all summer for, this is what we practice long hours for, this is why we study film for countless hours," Rutherford said. "Playing Bishop Miege is something not many teams in the state want to do. They'd like to avoid them as long as possible.

"We are all stoked as a team to have them come down to our stadium and push us to our limits, and vice versa. All week long, the high school football gurus, and even classmates, will speculate that 'We have to play Miege.' But the reality is, Miege has to play us."

Louisburg will do so with their leader and captain on the sidelines, cheering them on louder than if he were on the

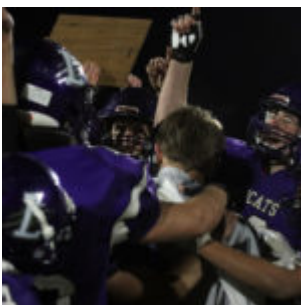
field. It is Moore's injury that has given his team a new perspective.

"It's always a blow to lose any player, but a kid who leads like Austin will be a big loss," Ebenstein said. "We love Austin and will miss him Friday night on the field for sure, but we are a solid team and it is next man up preparing for the next game. I know our team will rally around the loss of Austin this week. The genuine love of a teammate could be seen in the faces of our kids in the locker room after the game.

"We always preach to play every play like it is your last, and this is just another example of why. Austin will recover fine and I expect him to have one heck of a college football career, but you never know when this game can be taken from you."

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## **Wildcats plunder Pirates to win regional championship**



Senior Austin Moore (center) hands his Louisburg teammates the regional championship trophy Friday following the Wildcats' 48-0 win over Piper at Wildcat Stadium. Moore was injured in the first half of the game with a broken collarbone and is out for the rest of the season.

It had been almost two months since Louisburg and Piper squared off on the football field in what was one of the more entertaining games on the Wildcats' schedule.

Back in early September, Louisburg left Piper High School with a seven-point win – a victory that would help propel them to a Frontier League championship and a perfect regular season.

On Friday, the two teams squared off again and the stakes were a bit higher. The game, at least for Louisburg anyway, was even more exciting.

The Wildcats dominated action from the opening kickoff and never looked back in a 48-0 win over the Pirates. In the process, Louisburg won the school's first regional championship since 2016 and are off to a 10-0 start for the first time since 2010.

"We have preached all year that we need to continue to get better in practice every week," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "We played them to a seven-point game early in the season, and then to come here in week 10 and put 48 up and get the shutout, is a true testament to these kids. It is a testament that they have sold out and how hard they are willing to work."

The Wildcats showed their improvement throughout much of the game as they put up four touchdowns in each half and cruised to a win after winning a nail-biter earlier in the year.

"Friday's game was a real blast to just go out there and show to everyone how much we have improved since we played them earlier in the season," senior lineman Kiefer Tucker said. "I thought all around we were really clicking and then to be able to hold up the regional plaque at the end of the game was a great feeling as well."



As exciting as the win was for the Wildcats, the mood after the game was less than celebratory.

During the game, many of the players and coaches found out that team captain Austin Moore was lost for the rest of the season with a broken collarbone.

Moore, the team's leading rusher on offense and leading tackler on defense, has played big roles on both sides of the ball for the Wildcats this season and Louisburg is going to have to move forward in the playoffs without him on the field.

Moore sustained the injury in the second quarter when he caught a swing pass and was dragged down by three Piper defenders. He landed hard on the ground, but stayed in the game for the rest of the drive – a drive that included a 6-yard touchdown run by Moore that saw him shed tacklers and drag defenders into the endzone with that broken collarbone.





**Austin Moore fends off a Piper defender for a long run during the first half of Friday's game with Piper.**

He later went back out on defense to play for a series and told the coaches he didn't want to come out of the game. The coaching staff quickly realized something wasn't right.

"I didn't even realize Austin was injured in the moment," Ebenstein said. "He caught a little swing pass and the way he landed with three guys on top of him broke his collarbone. He didn't say anything and stayed in the game and actually carried the ball three more times and scored the touchdown on the same drive. After we scored Blue (Caplinger) and (Brayden) Gage both said you need to check on Austin. So I found him on the sideline and said 'You alright?' and he responded with 'Yeah I'm fine,' and went right back out on defense. So we watched him that defensive possession and he was favoring that arm just a little bit.

"It's always a blow to lose any player, but a kid who leads like Austin will be a big loss. We love Austin and will miss him Friday night on the field for sure, but we are a solid team and it is next man up preparing for the next game."

Even after losing Moore in the second quarter, the Wildcats continued to shine on both sides of the ball as they outscored the Pirates, 34-0, the rest of the way.

Quarterback Madden Rutherford came through for the Wildcats with three touchdowns on the ground, and another through the air, to lead the Louisburg offense.

Rutherford opened the game with a 1-yard touchdown run, and then after Moore's touchdown in the second quarter, scored again on another quarterback sneak to put Louisburg up 21-0 late in the second quarter.



**Senior Kiefer Tucker (50) pulls on the jersey to bring down a Piper player Friday in the regional championship game.**

On that drive, senior Blue Caplinger stepped up in Moore's absence as he made a leaping catch on third down for 29 yards, and then had a fourth down run to the 1-yard line to give Louisburg a first down – and then an eventual touchdown.

Kicker Drake Varns then helped give Louisburg the ball right back as he skipped the kickoff along the ground and allowed the Wildcats to recover the onside kick on the Piper 37-yard line with 2 minutes and 28 seconds left in the half.

Louisburg took advantage and scored its fourth touchdown of the half on a Brayden Gage 10-yard run and the Wildcats held a 28-0 lead at halftime.

The Wildcat defense made a big impact on the game as well as

it forced four turnovers, including an interception by Caplinger to start the second half. Senior safety Tanner Belcher also had a big night with an interception, a fumble recovery and two deflected passes.

Louisburg's defensive line also made a difference as seniors Kiefer Tucker and Noah Larson each forced a fumble and junior Garrett Harding recovered the other fumble. Larson also recorded the game's only sack and junior linebacker Charlie Koontz led the Wildcats with seven tackles.

"Looking back, there probably could have been three or four more games to where we could have gotten shutouts, but we finally got to the point where we locked in to where every single person knew what their job was and we weren't giving up those huge plays," Ebenstein said. "I am super proud of those defensive kids, coach (Jeff) Lohse and all the position coaches for coaching it up all season."



**Safety Tanner Belcher (36) had a big night or Louisburg with an interception and a fumble recovery.**

The Wildcat offensive line also provided a lot of push up front as Larson, Tucker, Brayden White, Harding and Jonathan DePriest, along with tight end Michael Waldron, helped tally 388 yards of total offense.

Big plays dominated the second half for Louisburg as Caplinger broke free for a 20-yard touchdown in the third quarter and Rutherford followed that up with a 50-yard run up the middle for another score. Louisburg sealed the win late in the game when Rutherford found Brandon Cooper on an 80-yard touchdown pass.

"It is good to see all those guys start to mesh together," Ebenstein said. 'We are continuing to add plays, do new things and give new wrinkles and that is because they are focused. It is something that these kids work their butt off for and it is all for them."





**Senior Brayden Gage looks for some running room as he gets a block from teammate Blue Caplinger.**

The road to the state championship gets significantly harder this Friday when Louisburg hosts defending state champion Bishop Miega at 7 p.m. at Wildcat Stadium. The Stags have won four straight state titles and have had their way in Class 4A the last several years, including this season with a 76-8 win over Labette County to start the playoffs and a 49-20 victory over Pittsburg last week.

"We tell the kids every single day over summer weights that we train to beat the best and Miega has the track record that says they are pretty good," Ebenstein said. "This is what we work for and we are going to come out and give em hell."

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## SCORING SUMMARY

### First quarter

L: Madden Rutherford 1 run (Drake Varns kick)

### Second quarter

L: Austin Moore 6 run (Varns kick)

L: Rutherford 1 run (Varns kick)

L: Brayden Gage 10 run (Varns kick)

### Third quarter

L: Blue Caplinger 20 run (kick failed)

### Fourth quarter

L: Rutherford 50 run (Varns kick)

L: Brandon Cooper 80 pass from Rutherford (Varns kick)

## STATISTICS

RUSHING: Austin Moore 11-68, Madden Rutherford 11-68; Blue Caplinger 13-59; Brayden Gage 5-31; Charlie Koontz 1-3



PASSING: Rutherford 5-11-165-1

RECEIVING: Brandon Cooper 1-80; Blue Caplinger 2-47; Austin Moore 2-39

TACKLES: Charlie Koontz 7, Brian Houck 5, Jorge LeBron 4, Blue Caplinger 4, Kiefer Tucker 4, Noah Larson 4, Garrett Harding 4, Beckett Rasmussen 3, Ben Wiedenmann 3, Jay Scollin 3, Tanner Belcher 3, James Foote 3, Brayden White 3, Gabe Rader 2, Michael Waldron 2, Austin Moore 2, Andrew Krause 2, Brandon Cooper 1, Dylan Knipp 1, Justin Collins 1, Jonathan DePriest 1.

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## **Wrigley reaches end of successful football career**



Lincoln University senior, and Louisburg High School graduate, Brenton Wrigley will play his final collegiate football game next Saturday after spending the last two years with the Blue Tigers as the team's long snapper.

In a little more than a week, Brenton Wrigley will put on the pads one final time.

Football has served Wrigley well the last four years as he has

spent time at two colleges and worked his way onto a Division II program as a long snapper. It hasn't always been easy for Wrigley, but then again, life as a college football player isn't supposed to be.

Wrigley, who is a 2015 Louisburg High School graduate, will be honored next Saturday when his Lincoln Blue Tigers host McKendree on Senior Day. It figures to be an emotional day for Wrigley and his family as he says his goodbyes to the Jefferson City, Mo., program.

"It will be a little bittersweet, and I don't think it will hit me that football is over until after the season," Wrigley said. "My mind set is to be the best that I can be and help this team with anything they need. I'm definitely going to miss the workouts with my teammates and waking up at 5 a.m. to grind with them."

Being a long snapper isn't a position that has a lot of glory – in fact – most people don't even notice them out there at times. However, it has been one that Wrigley has embraced in the last decade and one that has helped find playing time at two different schools.



**Brenton Wrigley**

Following graduation from Louisburg, Wrigley made his way to Fort Scott Community College for two years and then eventually moved onto to Lincoln, where he has helped the Blue Tiger special teams.

"I've always been a long snapper and my dad (Ryan Wrigley) taught me when I was at a young age," he said. "I'm still getting it down and it is a work in progress. A bunch of technique is required and I'm always learning from either watching the pros or watching film on YouTube."

Wrigley honed in on his craft at Fort Scott and he enjoyed his time with the junior college program, which he believed prepared him for the Division II level.

"The best memories for me came from juco because we were all grinding to make it out of Fort Scott," Wrigley said. "I made some incredible friends there like Chris Flowers, Andrew Carter, Austin Wolfe, Logan Edwards and Dakota Crichton. These people are my family and making it out of the struggle with them is something that I'll never forget."

As seamless as Wrigley made the transition seem from Fort Scott to Lincoln seem, it wasn't always that easy.

"When I first got here, Lincoln was kind of challenging because I was the like the new kid on the block and I didn't know anyone on campus," he said. "But now that I have been here for a while, I've gained more friends on and off the football team. College football has its ups and downs, but it is fun playing with a bunch of individuals that have the same common goal as you."

The normal grind of school and football is hard for many student athletes, but when you have to worry about your health on top it, its adds another level of stress.

Wrigley is diabetic and he has had to deal with the disease for a little more than a decade. It is something that presents

its fair share of challenges, but nothing he hasn't been able to overcome.

"In almost 11 years of having diabetes, it was struggle early dealing with it because I was new to it all," Wrigley said. "It's still hard because my blood sugar fluctuates depending on the amount of activity I do. I've learned to check my blood sugar before games, during halftime and when I get back to the locker room after the game. I always carry fruit snacks, or something like that around all the time to make sure I am ready to go."

Working hard on the football field isn't the only thing Wrigley has shined at during his two years at Lincoln. Before the start of the season, Wrigley was awarded the Division II Academic Achievement Award by the Athletic Directors Association.

To be eligible for the award, student-athletes must have a cumulative grade-point average of 3.5 or higher and have completed at least four semesters at their institution.

It is an honor that Wrigley, who also earned academic awards while at Fort Scott, takes pride in as it is challenging to find a balance between athletics and academics.



**Brenton Wrigley has long snapped the last four years, including two at Fort Scott Community College and two at Lincoln.**

"It is difficult because my whole day is taken up with football and meetings from 5 in the morning to around 5 or 6 at night with classes in-between," he said. "I try to spend the hours I'm not doing anything football related in the library doing homework or studying for a test.

"I take my classes very seriously because at the end of the day football won't always be there, but that degree will. I'm very proud of those honors that I've received. I strive to perform well on and off the field."

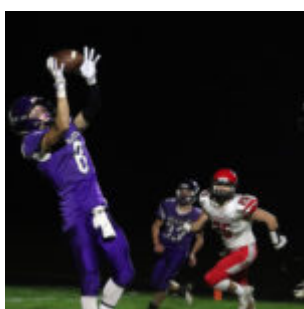
Wrigley knows the opportunity he has received at Lincoln wouldn't have been possible with the support of his parents, Ryan Wrigley and Krista Stramel, previous football coaches and Lincoln head coach Steven Smith.

"I've made many more friends here at Lincoln and the coaches will always be here for me no matter what the situation is," Wrigley said. "Coach Smith is the one that got me to Lincoln

University. He believed in me and I can't thank him enough for the opportunity that he has given me."

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## Louisburg rolls Ottawa to begin state playoff run



Louisburg senior Josh Casey hauls in a touchdown pass in the second half of Louisburg's first-round playoff game Friday against Ottawa at Wildcat Stadium. The Wildcats defeated the Cyclones, 56-8.

Coming off an emotionally-charged game with rival Paola the week before in which it claimed the Frontier League title, Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein was mildly concerned how his team would respond.

The No. 1 seed Wildcats hosted winless No. 16 Ottawa in the first-round of the Class 4A state playoffs Friday. Louisburg shutout Ottawa earlier in the year and he didn't want his team to overlook the Cyclones.

As it turned out, there was absolutely nothing to be worried about.

Louisburg dominated from the opening kickoff and never looked



back in a 56-8 victory over Ottawa. The Wildcats advanced to the regional round of the playoffs and will host No. 9 seed Piper this Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

"It was good," Ebenstein said of the win. "Trying to keep our kids composed coming off a big win like we had last week, and coming back here and staying grounded, I think they did a great job with that. We were able to get some guys in the game in the second half and they knew what we wanted them to do. That is what we hope for nine weeks into the season and I am pretty happy with them."

Senior Brandon Cooper got the Wildcats off and running when he returned the opening kickoff 83 yards for a touchdown, and after Drake Varns extra point, the Wildcats took a 7-0 lead.



**Austin Moore (21) brings down an Ottawa runner while Brayden Gage (10) comes in to finish him off Friday.**

After the Wildcat defense forced an Ottawa punt on its first possession, Louisburg went down and scored again as Blue Caplinger found the endzone on a 27-yard touchdown run.

Louisburg's defense struck again as senior Beckett Rasmussen intercepted an Ottawa pass early in the second quarter and the Wildcats quickly turned that into points. Two plays later, senior running back Austin Moore broke free for a 57-yard touchdown run.

Moore found the endzone again, this time on a 3-yard run, to put Louisburg up 26-0 with 2 minutes and 28 seconds left in the first half. The Wildcats still weren't done as their defense forced another Ottawa punt and the offense drove right back down the field.

With a few seconds remaining in the second quarter, Varns converted a 34-yard field goal to give Louisburg a 29-0 lead at halftime.

The Wildcats, which defeated Ottawa 25-0 earlier in the year, continued to pour it on. Defensively, Moore intercepted a pass and returned it 23 yards for a touchdown to open the third quarter.



**Louisburg kicker Drake Varns (30) celebrates with his teammates after making a field goal to close out the first half Friday against Ottawa.**

Quarterback Madden Rutherford got involved a little later when he connected with Josh Casey in the endzone on a 12-yard touchdown pass with 422 left in the third quarter.

Louisburg gradually put its second-string players in after that and those Wildcats found success as well. Brian Houck had a pair of strong runs down the sideline that set up a 1-yard touchdown, his first score of the season, to put Louisburg up 49-0.

The Wildcats scored one more time when backup quarterback Noah Bell, a.k.a. 'Roll Tide,' came in the game. In his second play from scrimmage, he handed the ball off to sophomore Ben Wiedenmann, who ran 66 yards for a touchdown and sealed the win for Louisburg.



It was a much different game for Louisburg the second time around as it didn't have to deal with a cold and muddy Wildcat Stadium field.

"Our cleats worked this time," Ebenstein joked. "The last game we ran iso like 27 times and stretch like 20 times. We just didn't want to turn the ball over. This time we wanted to open it up a little bit and run our stuff and we did that in the first half. The second half was a lot of fun to be able to get some of the backups in and have this experience as well."



**Louisburg backup quarterback Noah Bell (aka Roll Tide) hands the ball off to Ben Wiedenmann for a touchdown late in the game Friday.**

Moore led the Wildcats in rushing with 115 yards on just 11 carries, while Rutherford had 92 yards through the air. Casey and Brayden Gage led Louisburg in receiving with 34 and 29

yards, respectively.

Ottawa just wasn't able to move the ball on the Wildcat defense as it held the Cyclones to just 214 yards of total offense and forced two turnovers.

Now the Wildcats will need to get ready for a Piper team that they defeated earlier in the season, 28-21. It was one of the closest games of the year for Louisburg and the Wildcats realize it will be another difficult challenge this time around.

"We are going to come back prepared and get ready for another week of football," Ebenstein said. "I know the guys will be ready to go and we are going to come back here and hopefully we will do this again."

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<b>– 8</b>				

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

### **First quarter**

L: Brandon Cooper 83 kickoff return (Drake Varns kick)

L: Blue Caplinger 27 run (kick failed)

### **Second quarter**

L: Austin Moore 57 run (run failed)

L: Moore 3 run (Varns kick)

L: Drake Varns 34 FG

### **Third quarter**

L: Moore 23 interception return (Varns kick)

L: Josh Casey 12 pass from Madden Rutherford (kick failed)

L: Brian Houck 1 run (Varns kick)

### **Fourth quarter**

O: 20 touchdown pass (pass converted)

L: Ben Wiedenmann 66 run (Varns kick)

## **STATISTICS**

RUSHING: Austin Moore 11-115; Ben Wiedenmann 2-67; Blue Caplinger 6-56; Brian Houck 6-49; Madden Rutherford 6-24; Jorge LeBron 1-6; Brayden Gage 1-1

PASSING: Madden Rutherford 7-11-92

RECEIVING: Josh Casey 2-34; Brayden Gage 2-29; Austin Moore 1-18; Blue Caplinger 2-11

TACKLES: Brian Houck 6, Austin Moore 5, Tanner Belcher 5, Brayden White 4, Brayden Gage 3, Jorge LeBron 3, Charlie Koontz 3, Blue Caplinger 3, Ben Wiedenmann 3, Jay Scollin 3, Kiefer Tucker 3, Noah Larson 3, Garrett Harding 3, Jonathan DePriest 3, Kaden Oehlert 2, Beckett Rasmussen 2, Brandon Cooper 2, James Foote 2, Drake Varns 1, Andrew Krause 1, Ian McGuire 1, Cole Williams 1, Hunter Day 1.



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# LEAGUE CHAMPS: Louisburg knocks off Paola for No. 1 seed



Louisburg's Blue Caplinger (right) celebrates with teammate Jonathan DePriest following Caplinger's touchdown to open the game Friday at Paola High School. The Wildcats captured the Frontier League title with a 25-7 win over the Panthers.

PAOLA – Louisburg quarterback Madden Rutherford tried to avoid the internet prior to his team's game with Paola.

At the same time, Rutherford just couldn't help himself. He wanted to know what kind of chances people gave the Wildcats in Friday's battle of unbeatens.

Rutherford didn't like what he saw.

"Coming in there was a lot of hype from the Panther side of things and a lot of people were doubting us," Rutherford said. "I tried not to look at all the predictions online, but a lot of them had Paola either winning or winning big. That just fueled our fire."

Louisburg certainly had a lot of fire as the Wildcats put

together their best game of the season at the perfect time. The Wildcats handed Paola its first loss of the season with a 25-7 victory at Panther Stadium, and at the same time earned the Frontier League title and the No. 1 seed in the state playoffs. It was the Wildcats' first league title since 2010.

"It is just another win to be honest, but being able to come over to Paola with both teams being undefeated and a league championship on the line, it is true testament to these coaches and these players," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "They bought in and they worked their butts off and they earned this. This is all for them."

The two rivals created a festive atmosphere in Paola as the towns filled the stands on both sides, while Louisburg fans were two to three rows deep behind the fence next to the stands cheering on the Wildcats.

The Wildcat players appreciated the support and let the fans know how much by holding Paola to seven points and forcing four turnovers on defense. Offensively, the Wildcats converted several big plays that led to four touchdowns.

"That is huge," Ebenstein said. "I have never seen Louisburg travel as well as this and I have been here a few years. We have played some playoffs games in Independence and Chanute, but it just seemed like the whole town was here and it was jammed pack with fans.

"I just want to thank everyone for coming out and supporting us and being able to come home for the rest of the season is going to be a good feeling for sure."



**Louisburg senior Noah Larson (54) celebrates a big stop for the Wildcat defense Friday in Paola.**

Rutherford certainly did his part as he was involved in all four scores for the Wildcats and made a little history in the process. He became the first Wildcat in school history to pass for, rush for and a catch a touchdown in the same game according to Ebenstein.

The junior quarterback certainly got some help as it was a game full of great catches from receivers Brayden Gage and Blue Caplinger that led to touchdown scores.

Louisburg opened up the passing game on the Panthers as it knew Paola would be focusing on senior running Austin Moore, who entered the game with more than 1,000 yards on the ground and 18 touchdowns.

“That was the plan,” Ebenstein said. “Everyone in the world knows about Austin, and he is a stud, but the greatest thing about Austin is that I don’t think he cared one bit that we

didn't call his number 27 times. We were going to take what they gave us, we executed and those other guys played great."



**Louisburg quarterback Madden Rutherford escapes the pocket to make pass Friday in Paola.**

Rutherford, who finished the game with 172 yards through the air, led the Wildcats to a touchdown on their first possession of the game. He found Caplinger for a 25-yard touchdown pass that completed a nine-play drive, and after a missed extra point, Louisburg led 6-0.

On Paola's first play from scrimmage, the Wildcats forced a fumble and recovered to keep the Panthers off the board. In fact, they kept them scoreless for most of the first half.

Early in the second quarter, Louisburg got its passing game going again when Rutherford completed a 40 yard pass down the sideline to Gage. The Louisburg senior receiver went up in the



air for a jump ball and pulled it out of the Paola defenders' hands for the completion.

Two plays later, Rutherford found Gage again, this time for a 38-yard touchdown to give Louisburg a 12-0 lead.

On Louisburg's next drive, it was Caplinger's turn again as he made a 26-yard diving catch at the Paola 10-yard line to set up the Wildcats' next score. On a third down on the 9-yard line, Caplinger took the pitch from Rutherford, set his feet and threw it across the field to Rutherford who scored on the halfback pass to go up 19-0.



**Louisburg's Garrett Harding (58), Austin Moore (21) and Charlie Koontz combine for a tackle late in the game Friday against Paola.**

"It is amazing," Caplinger said of the win. "This is everything we have been working for. We just wanted to come

out and get them down quick because we knew they would be up for it, being a rivalry game.

“Madden was putting the throws on the spot and we were catching them. It was awesome to see and everything was falling our way.”

Louisburg got its offense going thanks to the offensive line of Noah Larson, Kiefer Tucker, Brayden White, Garrett Harding, Jonathan DePriest and tight end Michael Waldron.

Paola, which had given up 25 points all season, gave up 25 points to the Wildcats in three quarters and had never trailed all season coming into the game.

“I was impressed by our passing game,” Tucker said. “We made some amazing catches out there and Madden was throwing it good. The line was giving him great time to throw it and everyone was just clicking.

“Scoring first was huge for us. They hadn’t trailed all year and I don’t think they knew what to do. They were getting frustrated at each other and you could see it on the field. We just kept our composure and we played like it was 0-0 the entire time.”

Paola tried to get some momentum going into halftime as quarterback Seth Richmond connected with Corbin Gant on a 79-yard touchdown pass down the sideline.

Then to start the second half, the Panthers got the ball again and drove into the redzone. The Wildcat defense came up big as they forced Paola to turn the ball over downs and frustrate the Panthers even more.

After all the passing the Wildcats did in the first half, they got their running game going in the third quarter as Moore reversed field position for a 48-yard run. Rutherford then found Waldron on a 28-yard pass that set up another score.



Rutherford ran the ball down to the 1-yard line on the next play and followed it up with a quarterback sneak for a touchdown and a 25-7 Louisburg lead.

“Coach E was giving me some good play calls,” Rutherford said. “They could see a lot of things from the sideline and the booth and that made things pretty easy for me. The receivers ran crisp routes and Blue and Brayden just went up and got the ball. Michael (Waldron) also had a nice catch on third down as well, which was huge for us. I couldn’t be prouder of my guys.



**Senior cornerback Beckett Rasmussen races down the field after an interception in the fourth quarter.**

Defensively, Louisburg forced four turnovers on the night. The Wildcats got two interceptions from Beckett Rasmussen, including one with three minutes left in the game to help seal the win for the Wildcats. Moore and fellow linebacker Charlie

Koontz both recovered fumbles after Tucker and White forced them out.

Moore also led the Wildcats with 11 tackles, while Koontz and Larson each added eight in the win. Gage and Harding finished with six tackles and the Wildcat defense came up with the big plays when they needed them.

"I can't say enough good things about (defensive coordinator) Jeff (Lohse)," Ebenstein said. "He knows his stuff and he teaches it better than anybody. The kids pick it up and they just fire around and play for each other. The defense was just flying tonight. They played great."

The win gives the Wildcats the No. 1 seed in the playoffs and they will host every game at Wildcat Stadium. Louisburg (8-0) will face No. 16 Ottawa (0-8) at 7 p.m. on Friday in a rematch of the mud bowl two weeks ago that left the field unrecognizable.



**Louisburg head coach Robert Ebenstein (front) and assistant Ty Pfannenstiel celebrate a big play in the first half.**

“Our field is all messed up with the mud bowl we had earlier, but that is ok because I like our field,” Gage said. “It can be an advantage for us going into the playoffs. This just feels amazing. This is what we have been working for all season.”

As big as the win over Paola was, the Wildcats realize the true season is just now getting started.

“We worked all year for this and all the hard work has definitely paid off with all those extra reps and running after practice,” Tucker said. “It has all paid off, and the best thing about it is that it isn’t even over yet. We are just getting started. We haven’t put four quarters together yet but we are getting closer.”

For a photo gallery from the game, make sure to [click here](#).

<b>LOU</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>25</b>					
<b>PAO</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>– 7</b>					

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

### **First quarter**

L: Blue Caplinger 25 pass from Madden Rutherford (kick failed)

### **Second quarter**

L: Brayden Gage 38 pass from Rutherford (run failed)

L: Rutherford 9 pass from Caplinger (Drake Varns kick)

P: Corbin Gant 79 pass from Seth Richmond (Ryan Wokutch kick)

### **Third quarter**

L: Rutherford 1 run (kick failed)

## **STATISTICS**

**RUSHING** – Austin Moore 18-90; Madden Rutherford 8-51; Blue Caplinger 3-25; Brayden Gage 4-21

**PASSING** – Madden Rutherford 7-14-172; Blue Caplinger 1-1-9

RECEIVING – Brayden Gage 3-84; Blue Caplinger 2-51; Michael Waldron 1-28; Madden Rutherford 1-9

TACKLES – Austin Moore 11, Charlie Koontz 8, Noah Larson 8, Brayden Gage 6, Brayden White 6, Blue Caplinger 5, Beckett Rasmussen 4, Kiefer Tucker 4, Tanner Belcher 3, Jorge LeBron 3, Brandon Cooper 2, Ben Wiedenmann 2, Andy Hupp 1, Jay Scollin 1.

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## **PHOTO GALLERY: Wildcats capture league crown**



**Members of the Louisburg football team celebrate for the television camera following Friday's 25-7 win over Paola at Paola High School.**

And then there was one.

The Louisburg High School football team remained unbeaten Friday with a 25-7 victory over previously unbeaten Paola at Paola High School. In the process, the Wildcats secured their first Frontier League title since 2010 and are the No. 1 seed on the East side of the state playoffs.

Louisburg is currently the lone unbeaten left on this side of

the state and will host No. 16 seed Ottawa on Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

The Wildcats scored on their opening drive against Paola and never looked back as they took a 19-7 lead at halftime and the defense took care of the rest. Louisburg forced four Paola turnovers and also turned the Panthers over on downs a couple other occasions.

It was great atmosphere for high school football as both sides were standing room only and Louisburg fans showed in full force.

Here is a photo gallery from Friday's league championship game. Congrats again to all the players and coaches on a great game.

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Louisburg head coach Robert Ebenstein (front) and assistant Ty Pfannenstiel celebrate a big play in the first half.















Louisburg senior Noah Larson (54) celebrates a big stop for the Wildcat defense Friday in Paola.





















Louisburg quarterback Madden Rutherford escapes the pocket to make pass Friday in Paola.















Louisburg's Garrett Harding (58), Austin Moore (21) and Charlie Koontz combine for a tackle late in the game Friday against Paola.







Senior cornerback Beckett Rasmussen races down the field after an interception in the fourth quarter.







