PHOTO GALLERY: Louisburg takes down Piper



In a game full of twists and turns, the Louisburg High School football team came out on top Friday at Piper High School.

Louisburg and Piper both entered the contest undefeated, but when it was all said and done the Wildcats were the ones left standing as they came through with a 28-21 victory.

Here is a photo gallery from tonight’s game, with a full write-up to come in the coming days. Congrats to the Wildcat players and coaches on their victory that pushed their record to 4-0 on the season.


71


71
WILDCATS
1


70
Riddell
55
55
50




WILDCATS
21
43


28


Riddell
Riddell


PIRATES
PIRATES
PIRATES



Brayden Gage holds on to the ball despite getting his helmet knocked off Friday against Piper.






22
12




Riddell
7




20
PIRATES


WILDCATS
26
12


1
Riddell
63


55
Riddell
55
21
78


Riddell
8


PIRATES


PIRATES
97
PIRATES



Louisburg senior Noah Larson brings down a Piper runner in the redzone Friday.


PIRATES
55
21
43
Riddell








Riddell
43




12
Riddell
54
12
75


28
11
11


Riddell
Riddell
21


Riddell
21
Riddell




5




Riddell






41





Seniors Brian Houck (23) and Tanner Belcher team up for a tackle Friday against Piper.




PIRATES
WILDCATS
58


PIRATES
10
59
Riddell
10



Wildcats run past Baldwin for third straight win



Louisburg offensive linemen (from left) Garrett Harding, Noah Larson and Kiefer Tucker team up to create some running room

for quarterback Madden Rutherford on Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

The Louisburg High School football team kept its perfect season intact Friday when the Wildcats rolled Baldwin, 27-7, at Wildcat Stadium.

However, what Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein saw on the field was anything but perfection – and he was excited about it.

“There are a lot programs around the state that would be thrilled with a 27-7 win and we are extremely fortunate that we can win 27-7 and know that we have room to grow,” Ebenstein said. “I knew Baldwin was going to play tough and they have tough kids, but I feel we at least left 14 points off the board. We are still growing and we are still moving people around to see where our best fit is, so I am thrilled with the win and our kids worked their butts off and we are going to keep getting better.”

The Wildcats put together another highlight reel performance as they moved their record to 3-0 on the season, but no player had more game-changing plays than senior Austin Moore.

Moore was a factor in all three phases of the game. He carried the ball 11 times for 111 yards and three touchdowns. Defensively, he led Louisburg with nine tackles, six solo stops, two forced fumbles and a sack from his middle linebacker spot.

The Louisburg senior didn’t stop there as he also blocked a punt on special teams and he was all over the field for the Wildcats.

“Austin is all over the place and the greatest thing about him is no matter what you call he is going to give it 100

percent," Ebenstein said. "He makes some opportunities for himself, but we have a lot of selfless players on our team. We have a kid like Blue Caplinger, who is a stud, but he is the most selfless person we have. Austin was all over the place, but it is just the product of him being a stud in all phases of the game, but everyone else doing their job also."



Austin Moore celebrates a touchdown with teammates Charlie Koontz (24) and Madden Rutherford (1) during the Wildcats' 27-7 win.

Some of those others were the Wildcat offensive line of Kiefer Tucker, Jonathan DePriest, Noah Larson, Brayden White and Garrett Harding, along with tight end Michael Waldron, who opened up holes for the running game and had to make adjustments throughout the night.

"The line did well," Ebenstein said. "Baldwin completely

switched up how they were playing after the first quarter and I think that we adapted well. They played us like Spring Hill played us back in the opener and that is why we just hammered away and I thought the line did a great job adapting and opening up holes.”

Louisburg didn’t waste time getting on the scoreboard as it found the endzone on its first drive. Brayden Gage set up the score with a 38-yard run to get things started and Moore took it the rest of the way as he scored on an 18-yard run to make it 7-0.

The Wildcat defense struck next as senior cornerback Beckett Rasmussen forced a fumble on Baldwin’s next drive and Blue Caplinger recovered to give them ball 29 yards away from another score.

Score the Wildcats did, as Moore put Louisburg up two scores on a 3-yard touchdown run and Drake Varns converted the extra point to make it 14-0.

In the second quarter, Moore and the Wildcat defense came up big again as Moore sacked the Baldwin quarterback on fourth down and forced a fumble. Senior linebacker Jorge LeBron recovered his first two of fumbles on the night and set up another Wildcat score.



Senior cornerback Beckett Rasmussen takes out a Baldwin running back and forces a fumble in the process Friday in Louisburg.

Moore responded with a 69-yard touchdown run on the ensuing drive, and after a missed extra point, put Louisburg up 20-0 at halftime. Louisburg had a chance to make a four-score game before the break, but the Wildcats fumbled on the goal line.

“We preached to the kids all week that we wanted to get up early and just keep pounding,” Ebenstein said. “We could have pressed in the second half more than we did. We just kept running iso and they were just jamming the box. We could have thrown every play and made a play, but we just wanted to keep the ball and keep grinding. We were tinkering with some stuff and figuring some stuff there in the second half, but I am thrilled with the game went as a whole.”

Late in the third quarter, the Wildcats put the game away when

quarterback Madden Rutherford found Charlie Koontz for a 48-yard touchdown pass to put Louisburg up 27-0. Rutherford completed 5 of 8 passes on the night for 84 yards.

Baldwin added a fourth quarter touchdown to prevent the shutout, but the Wildcats were still able to celebrate their third straight win to start the season.

The Wildcats will face their most difficult test of the season thus far as they travel to undefeated Piper for a 7 p.m. kickoff Friday.

“Piper is going to be tough,” Ebenstein said. “There is not going to be a better time to play a perfect game than (Friday), so let’s see if we can do it.”

LOU	14	6	7	0 – 27
BAL	0	0	0	7 – 7

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Austin Moore 18 run (Drake Varns kick)

L: Moore 3 run (Varns kick)

Second quarter

L: Moore 69 run (kick failed)

Third quarter

L: Charlie Koontz 48 pass from Madden Rutherford (Varns kick)

Fourth quarter

B: Connor Quick 2 run (kick good)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Austin Moore 11-111; Brayden Gage 2-32; Charlie Koontz 2-14, Blue Caplinger 6-7

PASSING: Madden Rutherford 5-8-84-1

RECEIVING: Charlie Koontz 2-50, Weston Guetterman 1-20, Austin Moore 1-7, Blue Caplinger 1-7

TACKLES: Austin Moore 9, Andy Hupp 7, Blue Caplinger 4, Kiefer Tucker 4, Brayden White 4, Gabe Rader 3, Ben Wiedenmann 3, Tanner Belcher 3, Noah Larson 3, Garrett Harding 3, Beckett Rasmussen 2, Charlie Koontz 2, Brandon Cooper 2, Dylan Knipp 2, Jorge LeBron 1, Brian Houck 1, Jay Scollin 1, James Foote 1, Cole Williams 1, Jonathan DePriest 1.

Wildcats overcome Tonganoxie, rainy weather for first road

win



Louisburg junior quarterback Madden Rutherford looks for some running room as he gets a block from teammate Brandon Cooper on Friday at Tonganoxie High School. The Wildcats won their second straight to start the season with a 27-7 victory over the Chieftains.

TONGANOXIE – The field was muddy. It was almost impossible to keep the footballs dry and the players couldn't ever quite find their footing.

But for the Louisburg High School football team, life couldn't have been better.

The Wildcats took to the road Friday to face off with Tonganoxie and they left with their second win of the season. Louisburg scored two quick touchdowns to start the game and never looked back in a 27-7 win over the Chieftains at Tonganoxie High School.

"I was very proud of our kids, going on the road to another team's home opener is always tough, but then to go out and do it in the rain with the mud was great to see," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "I thought we grew up a little bit and showed that composure that you would like to see in those situations."

Louisburg (2-0) dominated the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball as the Wildcats put together long drives that

found the end zone, and then on the other side of the ball, the Louisburg defense held Tonganoxie to just 175 yards of total offense – 76 of which were on a long pass play for a touchdown.

The offensive line of Noah Larson, Kiefer Tucker, Brayden White, Jonathan DePriest, Garrett Harding and tight end Michael Waldron helped pave the way for 300 yards of total offense in not ideal conditions.

It opened up running room for running backs Austin Moore, Brayden Gage and Blue Caplinger to run the ball, and for quarterback Madden Rutherford to get the ball down the field.

The Wildcats took advantage of what limited opportunities they had as they had just six possessions for the game, and scored on four of them.

“We scored four times, had one punt, and one possession that was ended short due to the half,” Ebenstein said. “We did a great job of playing smart. Our blocking was solid, not only by the offensive line, but our backs and receivers could be seen 20 yards down field throwing blocks. I was very pleased with their effort.”

Defensively, the Wildcats were also able to force two turnovers. Larson recovered a fumble, while Brandon Cooper intercepted a pass late to help seal the win.

Harding was busy up front as he led the Wildcats with seven tackles, while Moore and White each tallied six to lead the Louisburg defense.

“The defense gave up 99 yards if you take out the 76-yard pass,” Ebenstein said. “We allowed only two yards per rush. I was very pleased with our defense and the defensive game plan. Our staff had a great plan, taught it to the players and the players executed very well, minus a couple plays.”



Louisburg seniors Cole Williams (60) and Gabe Rader bring down a Tonganoxie player on Friday.

Moore had a another strong game for the Wildcats offensively as he led the team with 90 yards on 19 carries to go along with three touchdowns and 39 yards receiving. Caplinger recorded the Wildcats' other score in the fourth quarter.

Louisburg got out to fast start on its first possession as quarterback Madden Rutherford scrambled around to keep the drive alive as he found sophomore receiver Weston Guetterman on a two different occasions, including 13-yard pass where Rutherford mishandled the snap was a still able to roll out and find Guetterman for a first down.

Moore took it from there as he scored on a 4-yard touchdown run. He later found the endzone on Louisburg's next possession on a 1-yard touchdown that was set up by a 35-yard run from Rutherford. The Louisburg quarterback completed 8 of 11 passes

for 104 yards and also had 62 yards on the ground.

Tonganoxie cut into the Wildcats' 12-0 lead in the second quarter when it converted a 76-yard touchdown pass, but that would be all the Louisburg defense would give up.

The Wildcats added two more scores in the second half on touchdown runs from Moore and Caplinger to keep their perfect season intact, despite rough playing conditions.



Sophomore receiver Weston Guetterman jumps up to make a catch early in Friday's game at Tonganoxie.

"The situations were not ideal, but they were not ideal for both teams," Ebenstein said. "I thought our guys did a great job of taking care of the football. We didn't have any turnovers and only had to punt one time, and that was on a series where we mishandled a snap and didn't execute well on

third down.

“We made some minor adjustments during the first couple of drives, just based on how Tongie lined up. In the second half, we decided to go under center and kill the clock a bit with a lead and I thought we did a solid job of keeping the ball away from their offense.”

Louisburg will try to make it three wins in a row this Friday when it hosts Baldwin at Wildcat Stadium. The Bulldogs are currently 1-1 on the season with a win over Ottawa and a loss to Piper.

“Baldwin is going to be tough,” Ebenstein said. “They have a similar style as us where they want to control the line of scrimmage and establish the run. I think the team who does those little things right and plays with most energy will end up winning. It should be a good game.”

LOU	**12**	**0**	**8**	**7 — 27**
TON	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0 — 7**

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Austin Moore 4 run (kick failed)

L: Moore 1 run (run failed)

Second quarter

T: Dallas Bond 76 pass from Hayden Robbins (kick good)

Third quarter

L: Moore 3 run (Moore run)

Fourth quarter

L: Blue Caplinger 8 run (Drake Varns kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Austin Moore 19-90; Madden Rutherford 10-62; Blue Caplinger 5-26

PASSING: Madden Rutherford 8-11-104

RECEIVING: Austin Moore 3-39; Weston Guetterman 2-23; Michael Waldron 1-11; Josh Casey 1-8; Brayden Gage 1-6.

TACKLES: Garrett Harding 7, Austin Moore 6; Brayden White 6, Andy Hupp 5, Kiefer Tucker 5, Jorge LeBron 4, Beckett Rasmussen 3, Noah Larson 3, Brayden Gage 2, Brian Houck 2, Brandon Cooper 2, Cole Williams 2, Gabe Rader 1, Charlie Koontz 1, Ben Wiedenmann 1, Jay Scollin 1, Tanner Belcher 1

Wildcats overcome miscues to

defeat Spring Hill in opener



Louisburg senior Austin Moore runs through a big hole during the Wildcats' season opener Friday against Spring Hill at Wildcat Stadium. Moore rushed for a game-high 208 yards and also had two touchdowns in Louisburg's 21-17 win over Spring Hill.

Penalties, turnovers and miscommunication are all signs of a team playing its first game of the season and the Louisburg football team fit right into that category Friday.

Despite all those things going against them, the Wildcats also showed what they are capable of when things are going right. Down at halftime to Spring Hill, Louisburg regrouped and put together a long scoring drive in the second half to take the lead and then the defense took care of the rest.

The Wildcats held Spring Hill scoreless in the second half and Louisburg came away with a 21-17 victory at Wildcat Stadium.

"We did everything we wanted to do when we didn't shoot ourselves in the foot," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said of the team's 10 penalties and one turnover. "We knew exactly where they (Spring Hill) were going to be, and what they wanted to do, but we just had too many penalties and a couple fumbles that hurt us.

"We talked all week about how no one can stop us but ourselves, and we made so many mental mistakes. We are happy

to get a win, but we know we are not anywhere near where we potentially should be, or could be, right now.”

Offensively, when the penalties and mistakes weren’t slowing them down, the Wildcats moved the ball down the field, including two scoring drives that had 11 plays or more, which also took Spring Hill out of rhythm offensively.

Louisburg (1-0) racked up 408 yards of total offense, including 358 yards on the ground and a bulk of those came from running back Austin Moore. The Wildcat senior rushed for 208 yards on 26 carries and 80 yards of that came on a touchdown run that gave Louisburg its first score of the season, and a 7-3 lead over Spring Hill in the first quarter.

The Wildcats also got a strong push from its offensive line of Noah Larson, Kiefer Tucker, Garrett Harding, Jonathan DePriest and Brayden White and helped Louisburg put together those long scoring drives.



Sophomore linebacker Andy Hupp brings down a Spring Hill runner Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

Following Moore's touchdown, the Broncos were able to answer right back when Spring Hill quarterback Corbyn Meyers connected with Easton Jones on a 63-yard touchdown pass. Spring Hill was able to move the ball through the air on the Wildcat defense, especially in the first half.

"Practicing against a team like us in practice and all preseason, where we just run the ball all the time is one thing, but to then come out against a passing team like Spring Hill in your first game is hard to prepare for," Ebenstein said. "The quarterback they have slings it pretty well and their receivers run nice routes. Coming out after two-and-a-half weeks of just practicing against the run, takes a minute to catch up to going up against a passing offense like theirs.

"We saw some stuff at halftime and we made some slight

adjustments. Coach (Jeff) Lohse is the best person we can have running our defense and he made the adjustments, stayed on our kids and we were able to shut them out in the second half.”

Louisburg answered right back late in the first quarter when the Wildcats completed an 11-play drive that ended on a 3-yard touchdown run by Moore to give Louisburg a 14-10 lead.

The Wildcats looked like they were going to score again as they drove into Spring Hill’s side of the field, but lost the ball on a fumble and the Broncos recovered. Spring Hill took advantage as Brennen Feeback scored on a 1-yard touchdown run and the Broncos took a 17-14 halftime lead.

After the Louisburg defense forced a Spring Hill punt to start the third quarter, the Wildcat offense put together a 14-play, 80-yard scoring drive that lasted nearly eight minutes as senior Brayden Gage scored on a 13-yard touchdown run to give the Wildcats a 21-17 advantage after a Drake Varns extra point.



The Wildcat football team runs onto the field before the start of their season opener with Spring Hill.

Quarterback Madden Rutherford reeled off several first down runs on the drive and even called a play of his own to keep the long drive alive on a third down.

“Madden owned the huddle,” Ebenstein said. “There was one play in that drive where I got the play in late and he did what every quarterback should do. He owned the huddle and he called his own play and it got a first down on a third down play. He led like a leader should lead.”

The Wildcat defense took care of the rest as it shut down the Spring Hill offense and Gage intercepted a Spring Hill pass late in the fourth quarter to help seal the win.

Louisburg will try and make it two wins in a row Friday when it travels to new Frontier League member, Tonganoxie, for a 7

p.m. kickoff.

“Spring Hill was ready to play, but coming out here and getting a gutsy 21-17 win is better for us long term with where we are at right now than getting a 50-0 win,” Ebenstein said. “Now we can go back, look at things on film and we can grow. A win is a win, and I like the way that we fought, but we have to get a lot better.

“Tonganoxie was 9-1 last year and I know they will be ready to play. They have a new coach, but I don’t know a lot about them. I just know that we need to be ready to go from the start.”

LOU	**14**	**0**	**7**	**0 — 21**
SH	**10**	**7**	**0**	**0 — 17**

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

SH: Barret Gardner 47 FG

L: Austin Moore 80 run (Drake Varns kick)

SH: Easton Jones 63 pass from Corbyn Meyers (Gardner kick)

L: Moore 3 run (Varns kick)

Second quarter

SH: Brennen Feeback 1 run (Gardner kick)

Third quarter

L: Brayden Gage 13 run (Varns kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Austin Moore 26-208; Madden Rutherford 16-67; Brayden Gage 5-58; Blue Caplinger 6-25. Totals: 53-358

PASSING – Madden Rutherford 4-8-50

RECEIVING – Brayden Gage 2-39; Austin Moore 1-7; Josh Casey 1-4

TACKLES – Austin Moore 7, Andy Hupp 4, Brayden Gage 4, Kiefer Tucker 4, Garrett Harding 4, Gabe Rader 3, Jorge LeBron 3, Brian Houck 3, Noah Larson 3, Blue Caplinger 3, Beckett Rasmussen 2, Dylan Knipp 1, Eli Johnson 1, Brayden White 1.

Former state champs return to Wildcat sideline – as coaches



Louisburg High School assistant football coaches Alex Gentges (left) and Kade Larson joined the Wildcat staff this season

after helping Louisburg to its first state title in 2010. Gentges (class of 2011) and Larson (class of 2013) are excited to back on the sidelines when the Wildcats host Spring Hill tonight at Wildcat Stadium.

The last time Alex Gentges and Kade Larson were on the same football field together they were both wearing the purple and white of Louisburg and they were all smiles – and for good reason.

On a sunny November afternoon in 2010, Gentges and Larson started on the Wildcats' state championship team that day in Salina after Louisburg defeated Holton 24-16 to earn the school's first, and only, state football title.

The two then went their separate ways, only to be reunited about eight years later. The two Louisburg High grads will be putting on the purple and white again and standing on the Wildcat sideline – this time as coaches.

Gentges and Larson were hired as assistants for the Wildcat program in the offseason and both players are happy to be back coaching their alma mater.

"I'm extremely excited to be back in a community that has given me so much," Gentges said. "I always talked about possibly teaching and coaching in Louisburg, but I didn't know it would happen so soon. I truly feel blessed and I'm glad everything fell into place the way it did."

It was much of the same for Larson, who had just graduated from the University of Tennessee-Martin, before he was hired to teach seventh-grade math at Louisburg Middle School. Gentges, who recently graduated from Pittsburg State, teaches physical education at LMS.

"I am extremely excited to be back coaching at Louisburg,"

Larson said. “I really hoped the opportunity would present itself and it just so happened to. I was lucky enough to be hired at LMS and am glad I am able to be coaching football.”

Both were fixtures on the Wildcat state championship team. Larson, who was a sophomore at the time, started on the line, while Gentges was a starting linebacker and running back.

So when both were hired as teachers in the district, the opportunity to add them to the coaching ranks at LHS made too much sense for Louisburg head coach Robert Ebenstein. Gentges and Larson join currently assistants Jeff Lohse and Drew Harding as LHS alums that are on the staff.

“It is invaluable having those two back with this program, especially when you consider the success they had going through the same workouts, in the same weight room, and on the same field,” Ebenstein said. “Then you put coach Lohse and coach Harding into that same conversation as people who graduated from Louisburg and have chosen to come back here. It definitely says something about this town and the tradition that this program has.

“I was fortunate enough to coach Kade when he was a senior and I know the type of player and person he was. When Alex was hired here, I spoke with Griff (former coach Gary Griffin) and Jeff about him, and once I spoke with them I could not wait to get him on the coaching staff. These two will hopefully be here for a long time and our students athletes will greatly benefit from having these guys in their corner.”

Larson, who played collegiate football at the University of Tennessee-Martin, is currently working with the offensive and defensive lines and is a freshman defensive coach. Gentges, who played football at Hutchinson Community College, along with throwing the javelin at Pittsburg State, is a junior varsity assistant and also coaches running backs and linebackers.

With all the success that both had in high school, they believe they can pass what they've learned on down to the current generation and continue the Louisburg football tradition. Of course, winning a state championship doesn't hurt with gaining respect from the current players.



Kade Larson celebrates with a teammate after intercepting a pass for a touchdown during the 2010 playoffs.

"I think it helps the guys a lot knowing that we have been there and done it," Larson said. "We know what it's like to go win a state championship and know that it can be done. They have one goal this year and that is to win the state championship and I feel like they see through us how much you do remember it down the road in life. I think a big thing they see through Alex and I is how much of a family the team becomes and that is a big factor in making a state championship run."

With having a former teammate around, comes a fair share of reminiscing. The two new coaches, along with coach Lohse, are the only ones still around from that state championship team.

“It’s still one of the best memories I have,” Gentges said. “There is nothing like experiencing something that special with all your buddies with you. The coaching staff was something that really stood out to me that year. I believe they are a big reason why I wanted to become a teacher/coach. They seemed to have a special bond with each other and I can only hope to achieve that with this group of coaches as well.

“I couldn’t ask for a better coaching staff this year. They welcomed me with open arms and I’m excited to work with them. I have high expectations this year and we have a lot of potential, but like Coach E says to the players, potential doesn’t win you anything…we have to go prove it.”



Alex Gentges had several big carries for the Wildcats in

2010 as they went on to win a state title.

As for the season that lies ahead, both coaches are excited to get back under the Friday Night Lights and help the current players reach their goals.

“It’s hard to develop a brotherhood as strong as what you can in high school, but I enjoyed playing and I’m grateful for all the challenges I faced and overcame because it helped make me who I am today,” Gentges said. “I miss playing more than anything, but I’m living through these Louisburg athletes now and I hope I can help them get to bigger and better things.”

As much as they miss their playing days, getting the opportunity to join the Louisburg coaching staff has been a great opportunity for both.

“This staff is great,” Larson said. “There is so much football knowledge throughout the staff. I am very excited to keep working with them. We should be a pretty solid team this year. We have a lot of returners so that means a lot of experience. I am very excited to get the season started.”

Wildcat football hoping for big season after missing playoffs



Louisburg quarterback Madden Rutherford returns as the Wildcat signal caller for his junior season after he earned second team All-Frontier League honors a season ago. The Wildcats finished 6-3 a year ago and are hoping for a big season as they return 16 starters.

The Louisburg High School football team had its fair share of successes last season as it finished with six wins under then first-year coach Robert Ebenstein.

As nice as it was, that season has bugged Ebenstein and his players the entire offseason. The Wildcats missed the playoffs by just one game and saw their campaign end in a loss to their rival, Paola.

The Wildcats have used the ending as motivation all offseason to get better. There is no mistake this time around, as Louisburg will definitely have a spot in the playoffs under the new postseason format.

All the teams on each side of the state will be seeded into a bracket by record, which will determine the matchups, starting with week nine. The format eliminates district play, which took the top two teams in each district into the playoffs.

“Honestly, 6-3 and missing the playoffs was a brutal end to the season, but our motivation is much more than just playoffs,” Ebenstein said. “With the new playoff format we are looking to make a statement and that drive has to come from within and has to be present every day of weights, practice, and game days.”

Games haven’t started yet, but the Wildcat players have put in the work over the summer and during practice and are ready to make some noise. Louisburg returns 16 starters and also has an 18-member senior class.

That experience has given the Wildcats high expectations for themselves as they figure to be one of the favorites to win the Frontier League that includes three new teams in Tonganoxie, Piper and Bonner Springs.

“We want to win every game on our schedule and go 8-0 and we think have a chance to do that,” senior captain Austin Moore said. “It is going to be a challenge, but we have been working hard. We want to win the league and then see where we get put in the playoffs. We are excited to get going.”

Offensively, Louisburg had its highs and lows last season as it ran a new offense, but the Wildcats have since put those challenges behind them as they return eight starters and hope to take it to another level.

It starts with running back Austin Moore, who was a first team All-Frontier League selection a year ago after he recorded 1,200 yards on the ground to go along with 15 touchdowns. Seniors Blue Caplinger and Brayden Gage also figured to get touches at the running back spot.

“I think Austin has the potential to have a huge year,” Ebenstein said. “Off a 1,200-plus yard season last year and returning four offensive lineman, I think all of our running backs have the ability to get huge chunks every time they touch the ball.”

The offensive line will be key for the Wildcats as senior Kiefer Tucker leads the group after earning honorable mention all-league honors a season ago. Senior Noah Larson returns at center, while juniors Brayden White and Garrett Harding all hope to have big years on the line.



Louisburg junior Brayden White is one of four returning starters on the Wildcat offensive line.

Louisburg does have to replace Garrett Lowry's spot a tackle from last year and it is a big hole to fill as Lowry was a first team all-league selection. Seniors Jonathan DePriest and Hunter Day, along with James Nelson and Cole Williams are all competing for the final spot.

At tight end, the Wildcats have three players competing to help out the offensive line in Michael Waldron, Eli Johnson and Andy Hupp. Josh Casey, Weston Guetterman, Beckett Rasmussen, Gabe Rader and Konnor Vohs all figure to see time at wide receiver.

Leading the offense will be second-year quarterback Madden Rutherford. The Louisburg junior, who was a second team all-league player, got a lot of experience guiding the Wildcats last season and Ebenstein has seen a lot out of his signal

caller so far.

“Madden is in a position to have a breakout year,” Ebenstein said. “Last year we tried to hide him a bit as a runner to let him get comfortable in that role on Friday night and to protect him from taking hits, but if you watched him grow last season he is a tough kid and runs hard.

“He is also extremely smart, almost to the point where he drives me crazy. When I am thinking through something he usually fixes it for me before the words come out of my mouth. His understanding of this offense makes my job calling plays a lot easier.”



(From left): Austin Moore, Noah Larson and Kiefer Tucker team up on a tackle last season.

On defense, Moore is the quarterback of that group at middle linebacker as he returns to lead the eight starters on that

side of the ball. Moore racked up 70 tackles last season to go along with five sacks and two forced fumbles.

It is a defense that Moore takes a lot of pride in and he believes it can be a strength this season.

“I think the defense will be strong as usual, and I think it will be stronger than last year because we are bringing back so many people,” Moore said. “I know the linebackers are going to be young, but (Jorge) LeBron is going to step up and Hupp is going to be there too and he is a really good player. It will be a good defense.”

The Wildcats returns three starting linemen in Tucker, Larson and Harding. Tucker was a second team all-league defensive player last year and Larson was an honorable mention.

DePriest, White, Day, Brian Houck, James Foote and Johnson are all vying for playing time on the defensive line as well.

Louisburg is young, experience-wise, at linebacker alongside Moore. Hupp, LeBron, along with Ben Wiedenmann, Dylan Knipp and Jay Scollin are all competing for the other spots.

Caplinger and Gage bring a lot of experience to the secondary as both were honorable mention all-league players last season. Waldron, Rasmussen, Rader, Guetterman, Brandon Cooper and Tanner Belcher also figure to see playing time in the back of the defense.

As much talent as the Wildcats have returning, it is their willingness to work hard that has Ebenstein excited about the season more than anything.

“I think our strength as a team is our stubborn hard-nosed attitudes,” Ebenstein said. “We have a lot of kids who are just football guys. It’s something you can’t really explain, but when you watch them play they just get it. As coaches, if we skip dirty chutes and dig drill, the kids are

asking what is going on because they look forward to those physical drills where ‘football guys’ shine.

“Another strength of this team is how the kids and coaches truly enjoy each other’s company. I have been a part of others where when practice ends it’s almost a race of who can get off the field the fastest. With this group, practice ends and it almost seems that kids and coaches just linger around and keep playing catch, having kicking contests or whatever it may be on that day.”

The season is almost upon them as Louisburg will host Spring Hill at 7 p.m., Friday at Wildcat Stadium as they hope it is a start to what is a special year.

“I’m really excited for Friday,” Moore said. “We have all been waiting for this day for a long time. We will be ready.”

New rules create different vibe for first day of fall practice



The Louisburg High School football team opened the 2018 season with its first day of practice Monday and did so under different guidelines. Despite that, the Wildcats are excited for the start of the season.

On the horizon, it looked like a normal first day of practice.

More than 150 athletes took to their respective field, court or course to begin their journey to greatness Monday for the 2018 fall sports season. Excitement was abound and coaches were happy to be back with their players.

However, the first day of practice was a little bit different this year as the Kansas High School Activities Association implemented new fall heat acclimation rules in late July. The rules, applied to all sports, includes:

- Only one practice per day is permitted during the first five days of practice. All individuals shall only practice once per day for the first five days the individual practices, no matter when the person joins the team or if the person misses days due to injury/illness.
- No single practice may last longer than three hours. All warm-up, stretching, conditioning and weight lifting is included as part of the three-hour limit.
- A separate walkthrough is permitted in addition to the single practice. The walkthrough cannot be longer than one hour and must be separated from practice by at least three hours of rest. A walkthrough is defined as a teaching opportunity with the athletes in which no protective equipment is worn. No physically exerting activity, including any conditioning or weight lifting, may take place during the walkthrough.
- Beginning on practice day six, double practice sessions are permitted for any individual who has completed five days of single practices. Double practice sessions cannot be held on consecutive days. The day following a double practice day would be either a single practice day or a rest/recovery day.
- On days of multiple practices, no single practice may

last longer than 3 hours and total practice time combined shall not exceed five hours.
- To be deemed a practice, a majority of the squad members must participate in the organized team training session.

Those rules left most of the coaches at Louisburg High School having to readjust how they run their practices or tryouts.

The Wildcat boys soccer team, which normally conditioned in the morning and worked on skills in the afternoon, were forced to cram everything into one practice.

“I am extremely frustrated with the new KSHSAA rule,” Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. “Before to protect the student athletes, we ran in the morning before the sun was up and when it was cooler out. Now we have to practice and condition in the afternoon in the heat of the day. Personally, I fill this will lead to more issues. It would be interesting to see who all was included in this decision and what the data said.”



Eli Minster passes a ball to a teammate during a drill Monday during the first official day of practice.

Louisburg volleyball, which also holds tryouts, had to split up the grade levels during the process. Senior and juniors had tryouts in the morning as a group, while sophomores and freshman practiced in the afternoon.

“In the past, we were able to put every athlete, freshman through senior, on the court at the same time and separate out the tested areas,” Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. “Physical testing had been in the morning with volleyball skill testing in the afternoon. Due to the change in the rule, we could no longer use that set up.

“It has forced a ‘split’ in the athletes because they can’t all work out together like they have been all summer long. Because of our numbers, and the tests we feel are necessary in order to make cuts and squad roster decisions, we need to run

the athletes through each test. We would not have enough time to do that if we had kept them all together and brought them in for only one session. Which means the athletes are that more anxious and excited to finish tryouts and start the season with their teammates."

There were also specific rule changes in regards to football, which forced Wildcat coach Robert Ebenstein to adjust his practice schedule as well, including the removal of two-a-days for the first week practice. Other changes include:

- Players must have a minimum of one day of rest/recovery during any week (Sunday- Saturday). Only injury treatments are permitted on a rest/recovery day.
- Days No. 1 and 2 of practice: Helmets only (air and bags only are permitted.)
- Days No. 3 and 4: Helmets and shoulder pads are permitted (Day 3: control permitted; Day 4: thud permitted.)
- Days 5 through Saturday of third week of practice: Full contact (air, bags, control, thud and live action permitted) may begin with exceptions that on any day involving multiple practices, only one practice may involve thud and/or live action.

"The changes with KSHSAA policies are what they are," Ebenstein said. "I think they were created with good intentions. Personally I feel that our practice tendencies over the last few years have put player safety as the No. 1 priority always, so in that regard not a whole lot will change for us. You are allowed to do a separate 'walk-through" other than practice which we will still do every morning at 6 a.m., so we still have that old school two-a-day feeling just the approach of what we do and how we will do it has changed.

"The only thing that confused me is the purpose of the change is for heat acclimation, but the wording of it will force us to condition our players in the afternoon when it is hot

instead of in the morning when it is typically cooler. But most all of our players have been working their tails off all summer and are already in pretty good shape.”

Despite the changes in practice, all four Wildcat programs are excited for what their season has in store. LHS had a large number of participants for the first day of fall practice as 163 athletes participated.

Ebenstein had 70 players attend the first day of practice, which is the highest number the Wildcats have had since he joined the staff in 2012. Louisburg also hopes to improve off its 6-3 record last season as they return 18 seniors, including several starters on both sides of the ball.

“Practice went well and it was good to finally get back on the field with the guys,” Ebenstein said. “We are very excited for this season, as in every team in the state. The thing that separates us is how players, managers and coaches alike all really enjoy our time together. I am excited to coach, but I’m honestly excited to be around these coaches and kids again and give this season the best run we can.”



LHS freshmen and sophomore volleyball players gather at center court during tryouts Monday.

On the volleyball side, the Lady Cats had 34 athletes show up for the first day of tryouts, which will end on Wednesday as Louisburg begins its quest to get back to the state tournament after finishing second a year ago.

“The first couple days are focused on running each athlete through a set of volleyball skills and physical skills tests,” Compliment said. “The athletes did a good job for the first day, and we are looking forward to the next couple of days.

“Over the course of the summer, we had a lot of athletes participate in summer league matches, summer camps, team camps, open gym and weights. They are ready to get the season going. There is a lot of excitement among the athletes and a lot of anticipation for the season.”

Coming off a spot in the state quarterfinals, the Wildcat boys soccer team had 38 athletes compete for a spot on the team as they try to make another run in the playoffs.

“It was nice to see so many kids out for the team,” Conley said. “The boys work incredibly hard and we very supportive of each other. With having so many new players coming out for the team, we did a lot of teaching and developing expectations for the drills and why we do things. It was actually the first time in three years the majority of the team completed the mile under six minutes, which was fantastic.

“It is a great time of the year with a lot of optimism. The boys were very upbeat and very focused on getting better. With only four seniors, we are extremely young and we will need to do a lot of teaching.”



Trinity Moore (center) leads a pack of runners during the first day of practice Monday at LHS.

As for cross country, numbers have dwindled a little for head coach John Reece as he has close to 25 runners out this season, but he has a good group of runners coming back, including state medalist Trinity Moore.

The girls team is also hoping to make a return trip to state this season after qualifying for the first time in school history last year.

“The first practice was great,” Reece said. “We are going to have more girls than boys, but it seems like they are in shape and ready to start training for our first race.

“The kids are jazzed about the season and the girls are wanting to do even better than last year. I believe success builds the team numbers.”

Hinkle ready to take on role as LHS activities director



Walking into Scott Hinkle’s office, it doesn’t appear he started a new job two weeks ago.

The moving boxes are mostly gone. His desk is organized with everything in its place, along with a calendar crammed full of upcoming events.

Hinkle is not shy to tell people about his love for the Boston Red Sox. Sitting on one wall are two older chairs from Fenway Park, along other memorabilia.

The one thing that Hinkle hasn't caught up on is his efforts to get some purple gear. An avid Kansas Jayhawk fan, he hasn't had need to purchase any purple flair in the past. Seems like that will change shortly as he was hired as the new activities director and assistant principal at Louisburg High School earlier this summer.

"I have been a Jayhawk fan all my life," Hinkle said. "It will be a little weird to wear purple that is for sure, but I am sure I will get used to it. Before I left my old job, people found out where I was going so they started giving me little gifts with purple on it, like markers and stuff like that. They definitely got a kick out of that."

Hinkle takes over for Jeremy Holloway, who was promoted to principal at LHS and becomes the third activities director in as many years to take over that spot.

"My wife has family in Kansas City and I have family in Wichita and so we were looking to come this way," Hinkle said. "I had a couple friends that told me that the Louisburg position had opened up. I had heard of Louisburg a long time ago. I actually coached at Ottawa University in the early 90s and was familiar with the area. I came up, interviewed and here I am. It has obviously worked out well.

"Everyone has been so helpful and friendly and it is a good time to be coming to Louisburg. I am excited to be here."

Before taking the job in Louisburg, Hinkle had spent the last 22 years in the Liberal school district in a variety of roles. He served as the boys high school basketball coach, along with nine years as an activities director, a year as the head girls basketball coach at the local community college and last year he served as assistant principal at the high school.

Hinkle graduated from Valley Center High School, and went on from there to earn his bachelor's degree from Friends University, where he played basketball, and his master's from the University of Kansas.

Basketball has always been a passion for Hinkle, but during his time as activities director at Liberal, he had a chance to learn the life of other sports as well.

"Liberal changed a lot from when I first got there in the mid 90s when they were a football and track powerhouse," Hinkle said. "There were just athletes galore, but the culture kind of changed. We were really good in soccer and decent in track and volleyball. We still had good kids and good athletes, but it was a big transition as far as sports go when I first got there. My kids grew up there and being involved and being able to watch their events was something that has always appealed to me.

"Basketball has always been in my blood. Other than my nine years as athletic director, I have coached in some capacity and I am a big basketball fan. Obviously, being an athletic director I am just a big sports fan in general."

Still new in town, Hinkle is still trying to get to know his coaching staff, but he is excited about the situation he is walking into with the Wildcats finishing as state runner-ups in volleyball and girls soccer last season. Several cross country, golf, wrestling and track athletes also earned state medals.

However, if there is one thing he wanted to relay to everyone is that he wants to give his coaches the freedom to run their programs.

"I want to let the coaches, coach," he said. "I am not going to be the guy that says this is how we did things in Liberal and I am not that type of leader. If it comes to the point where they need some advice, I want to be a resource for them.

I don’t want to be someone that is looking for something.

“I have met a few of the coaches. I have let them know that I am here if they need anything. I have stopped by the weight room to speak to a few coaches and some have stopped by to introduce themselves. I am still learning names and faces. We have a coaches meeting on the 10th and I will see and learn a lot more about them then.”

With all the success the Wildcats had last season in the sports arena, Hinkle is happy to be a part of the LHS family and is learning new things about the town every day.

“I have heard all types of things,” he said. “I have heard they take football pretty seriously here. I know they were state runner-up in volleyball and girls soccer last year and that is an exciting thing to walk into. I think expectations are obviously high in those sports, but I think everyone always has high expectations. I am not going to do anything different than normal and I am just going to sit back and observe for a while and take it all in.”

Hinkle will experience some different things along with his new position. This season, the Frontier League will welcome three new teams – Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie – and will say goodbye to De Soto.

Another big change will be the postseason formats with several sports as the Kansas State High School Activities Association reshuffled their classification system, eliminating Class 4A-Division II.

“With the changes in the league, the classification system and being a new AD, it is probably a good time to be coming on,” Hinkle said. “The learning curve is going to be the same for all of us.

“I walked into a good situation for scheduling because (Holloway) already had everything all taken care of,” he said.

“I think the dynamics of the league are going to change. Liberal’s former girls basketball coach is the coach at Piper and I know a little bit about them. As far as the programs and rivalries, that is something that is going to come with time.”

Even with all the changes in his life – moving, starting a new job, getting to know new faces – Hinkle is ready for what lies ahead and the staff at Louisburg has helped with that transition.

“It has been a whirlwind and it has been information overload,” he said. “It is a lot of the same things I did in Liberal as athletic director, I just haven’t done it for the last five years. Being an assistant principal at Liberal last year, I think, helped me prepare for the principal side.

“People have just gone out of their way to be helpful. From the administration to the custodial staff to the secretaries, everyone has been super helpful. When I was out around town, people have welcomed me and it has been a friendly feel everywhere I have been.”

Wildcats hope summer work pays dividends in fall



Running back Austin Moore breaks free from a Prairie View defender thanks to a block from teammate Brayden White during

Louisburg’s scrimmage with the Buffalos in June.

In his first season as the Louisburg High School head football coach, the 2017 campaign was a successful one for Robert Ebenstein.

Ebenstein helped guide the Wildcats to a 6-3 record on the season, and did so while implementing many different aspects to the Louisburg program. However, the one part that left a bad taste in the Wildcats’ mouth was the fact they missed the playoffs by one game.

Louisburg finished with a 1-2 record in district play and the Wildcats are hoping for a different outcome in 2018. To make sure that doesn’t happen again, the Wildcat coaches and players went right to work at the beginning of June and haven’t let up.

“To say our guys are pumped for the season to get here is an understatement,” Ebenstein said. “Returning eight starters on both sides of the ball, with a lot of kids pushing for those positions, has made for a very committed and competitive off season. Being 6-3 last season and missing the playoffs has left us with a terrible feeling.

“We have some pretty high season goals and expectations, and our guys have been backing those goals with their weights attendance and efforts. With our high goals our guys have stayed grounded, and understand that right now we are just looking at beating Spring Hill on August 31.”



Louisburg head coach Robert Ebenstein talks to his team prior to a scrimmage last month.

The Wildcats do return several starters from last season as they try to make a run at a Frontier League title, which will have a little different look to it. Gone from the league is De Soto, and the Frontier will welcome three new teams in Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs.

Adding those extra teams will make winning the league even more difficult, but Ebenstein has liked what he has seen from his group so far this summer, especially in the weight room. Louisburg also had a pair of scrimmages to go along with their team camp.

“Like always were are putting our focus on our summer weights program,” Ebenstein said. “Our weights program is as tough as any other program in the state both physically and mentally. Besides weights, we had our camp, review sessions

through June and two ‘jamboree’ sessions. Our first session was against Olathe West and Prairie View and our second session was against Basehor-Linwood and Prairie View.”

At this time a year ago, Ebenstein and the Wildcats spent most of the summer instituting a new offense. Now, they are able to take it a step further and the players have even taken in upon themselves to get better.



Louisburg senior Noah Larson reaches out to bring down an Olathe West runner during the team’s scrimmage in June.

Instead of organized 7-on-7 activities, players got together on their own every Sunday evening to go through workouts. The Wildcats also used the team camp to fine tune their offense as they had more than 60 athletes out for the week-long session.

“Overall the coaching staff thought that camp went really well,” Ebenstein said. “As a team we are far more advanced

compared to where we were a year ago in our understanding of concepts and assignments.

“This year we already had the basic concept of the offense installed so we were able to go back and focus on the details. We were able to focus on technique that will allow us to be even better. Last year we were spinning mentally at times with terminology and concepts, this year being able to focus on the small things and perfect our steps, hand placement and timing will be very beneficial in the long run.”

Moore named Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year



No matter the sport, Austin Moore didn’t back down from a challenge and it was evident whenever he took to the field, the wrestling mat or a track runway.

Moore was an all-league and all-state player on the football field, found himself one victory away from a state wrestling medal and improved throughout the season in the javelin.

It was his success in those athletic avenues that earned him the 2018 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year honor.

The award, which is in its first year, is to recognize an outstanding Louisburg High School student athlete. Louisburg

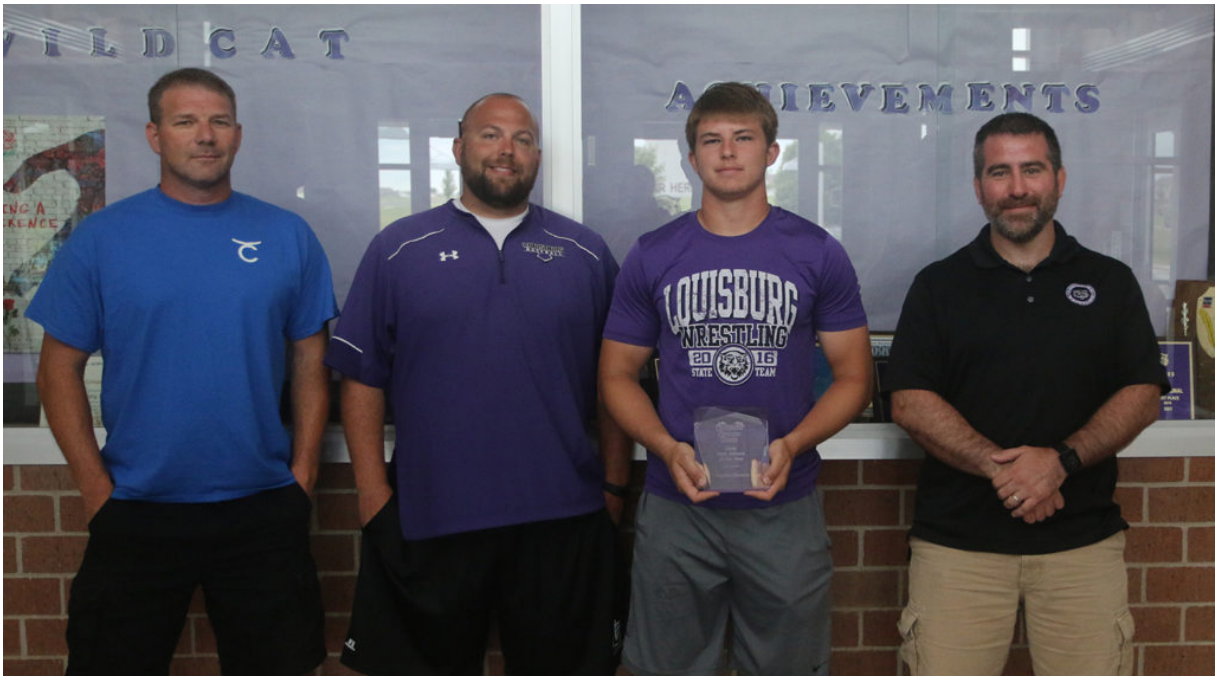
Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the winner.

On the football team, Moore was named a captain and had success on both sides of the ball. As a running back, he recorded 1,215 yards and 15 touchdowns. Defensively, he tallied more than 70 tackles from the linebacker spot.

Moore, a junior, was named to the all-Frontier League first team on both sides of the ball and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the Topeka-Capital Journal. He was also named an all-state, all-purpose player by K-Preps. Moore was also selected as the team's Offensive Player of the Year and recipient of the BAC Award.

"Austin is a great leader and is always looking to improve himself and his game," Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. "He is an extremely dedicated athlete to the program, but the most impressive thing about him is how he puts the team before himself all the time. Austin is not a real vocal kid, but actions speak louder than words and Austin is always leading by example."



Pictured (from left) is Louisburg boys track coach Andy Wright, football head coach Robert Ebenstein, Austin Moore and Wildcat wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird.

On the wrestling mat, he was also a team captain where he earned a 43-7 record and eclipsed the 100 career win mark. Moore was a state qualifier at 195 pounds and was a regional runner-up to go along with a Frontier League title. He won the team's Workhorse Award and set a program record with 38 pins. Moore also had the highest GPA on the team.

"Austin has been a pivotal part of our team's success since he joined us as a freshman," Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird said. "He has a phenomenal work ethic in the practice room, and he is a relentless warrior in competitions. He knows how to set goals and pursue them with all his heart. He doesn't panic in adverse situations and he finds a way to prevail. No one wants to wrestle him twice. He's all about competitiveness, dedication, improvement and honor."

Moore threw the javelin for the Wildcat track and field team as recorded a season best throw of 151 feet in the regional meet and finished eighth.

With all he accomplished during the 2017-18 season, Moore will

get another crack at it all when he competes for the Wildcats in his senior season.