

# Cook lives the dream at K-State



K-State senior, and Louisburg High School graduate, Kody Cook waves to the fans at Bill Snyder Family Stadium as he was introduced during the senior day ceremony on Dec. 5, prior to the Wildcats final home game against West Virginia.

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MANHATTAN, Kan. – As Kody Cook gazed out into the sea of purple and white at Bill Snyder Family Stadium for the final time, little pieces of him still wondered if this was a dream.

You see, Kody had been planning this moment for most of his young life. Whether it was practicing in the front yard when he was little, or working hard in high school and junior college – playing football for Kansas State wasn't just a fantasy like it is for most children around the state – it was a goal.

So as he made his way down the line of seniors before the Dec. 5 home contest against West Virginia, Kody waited patiently to greet the coach he had always wanted to play for. Yes, for the last two years he has been living his dream of playing K-State football and now it was all coming to an end.

“It hasn't quite sunk in yet that it is almost over,” Kody said. “It is weird, especially with everything that has

happened to me along the way, that there are times where I still can't believe it. One thing I can say is that it is a blessing from God that I am here. I have prayed and thought about this opportunity my whole life and all I can say is that I am blessed. I couldn't have written a better end to the story."

Kody's story is one of faith. It is one of hard work, dedication and sacrificing himself for the betterment of the team.

After all that, he turned into a starting wide receiver for the school he has loved since he was a little boy, then was thrown into a little quarterback duty, back to receiver and then quarterback again.

It was a whirlwind of a final year for Kody, but he couldn't have asked for a more memorable one. It was one filled with moments he and his family will treasure for the rest of their lives.

The story isn't quite over yet, but Kody has made sure his chapter in Manhattan has a happy ending.

## **FANTASY FOOTBALL**

As a young father, Jim Cook loved watching Kansas State football with his son Kody. Their passion for Wildcat football was one of a kind.

So as the game would be about ready kickoff on the television, Kody would sit next to his dad in utter excitement. However, like with every game, the excitement became too much for Kody.

"I don't think he ever watched a football game from start to finish," Jim said. "About midway through the first quarter, he would get so excited about the game that he would gear up and go out in the yard and start playing. He would come in and

check the score, and if they were ahead, he would watch a little then go back out and play. If they were losing then he would just go right back outside because he hated to see them lose. He hated to lose.”



Little Kody Cook would dress up in full gear to play

**outside in the front yard as a Kansas State football player.** Photo courtesy of the Cook family

That gear featured a purple K-State jersey and a vintage gray helmet with 'Cats' written on the sides. It was all business for Kody.

As he walked out into the front yard, Kody gathered himself into the imaginary huddle for the play, broke the huddle and took the imaginary snap from center. He dropped back to pass, read the defense, threw it and then ran under the ball to score the touchdown.

"He would even do the crowd noise," Jim said.

Why stop there?

"He was everything," his mother Anita said. "He was the crowd and even pretended he was in the band – everything."

As much fun as being in the crowd and band were, Kody's dream was to be on the field in Manhattan and play for his favorite coach – Bill Snyder.

Those dreams took a hit in 2005 when Snyder announced his retirement from coaching. As a 13-year old die-hard Wildcat fan, he was crushed.

"I took Kody to a book signing after coach Snyder retired the first time and he was a little less excited than I thought he would be," Jim said "When we left I asked what was wrong and he told me now that he would never be able to play for coach Snyder."

It was disheartening for Kody, but a coaching change didn't stop him playing in those pretend games in the front yard. It didn't stop him from throwing touchdowns, or catching them.

Nope, his true love was for the game of football and that continued as he got older.

## HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPION

The pressure was always on Kody from the day he stepped into the halls of Louisburg High School.

Considered one of the school's next best athletes, Kody had a lot to live up to and he certainly did his part to meet those expectations.

As a sophomore, he was named the starting quarterback on the varsity football team and guided the Wildcats to the playoffs that season. Later in the year, Kody was Louisburg's top starting pitcher on the Wildcat baseball team.

He pitched a complete game in the regional championship game and helped the program reach the state tournament for just the second time in school history.

His junior season wasn't quite as memorable as he tore his ACL before the start of football season and was out of sports for an entire year.

Kody more than made up for it his senior year, as he, and the rest of his Wildcat teammates put themselves in the school history books. Kody led Louisburg to the school's first football state championship in 2010 as the Wildcats defeated Holton 24-16.

It was Kody who threw two touchdown passes in the game and also had an interception return for a touchdown to seal the undefeated season. For a player who was responsible for all three touchdowns in the school's biggest game ever, Kody didn't let his excitement get in the way of the game

"I always told him no showboating," Jim said. "I always told him no showboating until you win the state championship. If he was high-stepping in the front yard all by himself in his imaginary game, I would go out and scold him."

It was the perfect end to his high school career and now he was ready for that next step – college football.

He had opportunities to go play smaller Division I football out of high school, but Kody wanted to make himself better to have that opportunity to keep his dream alive.

### **A BOWL MIRACLE**

Kody was offered a scholarship on the Hutchinson Community College football team and got the opportunity to earn a shot at playing the position he loves – quarterback.

He quickly found out college football is a lot different than high school. Kody was no longer one of the best athletes in school and the Hutch coaches scoured the country to find their next quarterback.

The competition was fierce and Kody soon realized that his shot to see the field wasn't going to be as a signal caller. Frustrated, he called home to his parents Jim and Anita, in hopes of getting a little advice.

He got it.

“There were times at Hutch when I thought I was getting worked over a little bit because I wasn't from a certain school or because I was from a small town and I didn't feel like they gave me a chance to do what I wanted to do,” Kody said. “So I would call home for support and they (his parents) were always there. Whenever I doubted myself or when I think I couldn't do something, they always told me I could do it.”

Kody cared more about seeing the field than playing the quarterback spot. So he told his coaches he was willing to do anything to see the field.

As a freshman, Kody served as one of the team's long snappers

before eventually getting moved to wide receiver. It would be his permanent spot at Hutch, and although he saw some playing time, he didn't get a lot of balls thrown his way.

Even then, Kody knew he was destined for greater things – maybe he was a little psychic.

Jim took his son into a Hutchinson sporting goods store to buy receivers' gloves before the start of his sophomore season.

"I was frustrated that I had to buy them because they supplied him gloves, but they weren't good enough for him and he needed another kind," Jim said as he shook his head.

So as they walked up to the counter to pay, Kody saw a stack of K-State football schedules. With his grandmother by his side, he tapped on the stack of schedules and made a bold prediction.

"Grandma, I am going to play there one day," Kody said.

Jim, on the other hand, turned around with a puzzled look on his face.

"At the time, I was thinking in my mind, 'Yeah I hope so, but I am not seeing it,'" Jim said. "At the time he wasn't gathering many stats. He was doing his job, but didn't have a lot of results. If you want to play college ball you have to have the stats for colleges to look at you and he had none of them."

Those stats would come – and at the most crucial time.

Hutchinson qualified for the Salt City Bowl and faced off with Iowa Central, but the Blue Dragons were faced with some adversity early as starting quarterback Luke Barnes had to leave in the first half with a hand injury.

Instead of going to their backup quarterback, coach Rion Rhodes decided on a gut feeling to go with Kody. He had not

taken any snaps at practice and hadn't thrown a ball in several games.

It didn't seem to matter.

Kody led the Blue Dragons to a win as he passed for 272 yards and had five touchdown passes to go along with another rushing score. Cook was named the Salt City Bowl MVP and broke four bowl records and tied another.

It was like he had never stopped playing quarterback.

"After it was over his mom and I just sat there and bawled," Jim said. "He just came out and played like he had been doing it all year. We were just so happy for him."

That one game opened several doors for Kody, including one he had been waiting for his entire life.

### **LIVING THE DREAM**

As he was thinking what to do after Hutch, the offer to walk-on at Kansas State presented itself to Kody and he really didn't take a lot of time to think about it.

He accepted the offer and actually began to work out with the quarterbacks when he first arrived there. It didn't last long as soon-to-be quarterback Jake Waters stepped on campus as he would go on to have a good career with the Wildcats for the next two years.





**Kody Cook was thrust into several different roles for the K-State football team this year.**

Kody would go on to redshirt his first season as the coaches tried to find a spot for him on the field. He spent a brief time with the running backs before they finally moved him over to receiver.

“I have been a huge K-State fan since I was a kid, so to be able to come here and play is obviously a dream come true,” Kody said. “I am just willing to do whatever for the team. If I can help them at receiver, I am going to do that.”

It didn't take long for Kody to make a name for himself. During last year's season opener against Stephen F. Austin, he caught his first touchdown pass as a Wildcat from Waters late in the contest.

“I jumped about four feet in the air and I about killed myself

on the bleachers,” Jim said. “It was cool because that was another level for him. He fulfilled another goal and it was the next step on the stair step. I was probably glowing when I walked out of there. I know he was.”

During the 2014 season, Kody caught 20 passes for 251 yards and was ready to take that next step as a senior.

“He did what he had to do to play and that is the same thing he did at Hutch,” Anita said. “He is a good boy and he has worked really hard. It prepares you for life. He has overcome the challenges that he has been dealt and he knows how to work through him. “

During the offseason, Kody was listed as a starting receiver for the 2015 season while the Wildcats tried to figure out their quarterback situation as it was a fluid one.

Starting quarterback Jesse Ertz was injured early in the team’s season opener, while incoming quarterbacks Alex Delton and Jonathan Banks were deemed unfit to play.

The job then fell to fourth-string quarterback Joe Hubener, a small-town Kansas player himself from Cheney. Hubener took the job and ran with it, but it changed when the Wildcats played in their Big 12 opener in Stillwater, Okla.

Kody’s number was going to be called once again.

## **RALLY TIME**

Jeff and Connie Ewy have always been big Oklahoma State fans. They attend several games a year and they also live in Louisburg.

The Ewys are close friends with the Cooks and their son Tyler, who played at Washburn himself, was on the state championship team with Kody out of high school and have been friends since

they were little.

Kody always told the Ewys that one day they were going to have to root against him.

“I am going to play at Oklahoma State’s field one day,” Kody told Connie when he was a young boy. “And I am not going to be wearing orange.”

Connie, of course, played along.

“Well, I will tell you what,” she said. “If you do, I am going to wear your jersey.”

So when the Wildcats made the trip to Stillwater, Connie kept her word and wore Kody’s No. 19 jersey in a crowd full of Oklahoma State fans. Needless to say she encountered a lot questions.

“You have the sea of orange and then Connie with this purple jersey on,” Anita laughed. “They were asking her if she knew No. 19 and she told them that she was like a second mom to Kody.”

Well Kody’s second mom and his actual parents were about to become prouder by the minute.

Hubener had to leave the contest two minutes in with an injury, and just like the Salt City Bowl three years earlier, Kody was going to get another chance to play quarterback.

He led the Wildcats to a touchdown on the opening drive when he scored on a 3-yard run to put K-State on top.



**Kody Cook has sparked the Wildcats this year from the quarterback spot against Oklahoma State and West Virginia.**

After the touchdown, the Oklahoma State fans started to congratulate Connie as they acted like it was Kody's only time he was going to play quarterback.

"Oh no," Connie said. "I know Kody and he is not done."

Kody sparked the Wildcats in the first half and helped the offense to 28 points and couldn't be stopped. Kody rushed for 87 yards and a touchdown, and also completed 10 of 16 passes for 122 yards and two more scores.

Unfortunately, Kody had to leave the game with an injury in the second half and the Wildcats fell 36-34 in what would be their first of six straight losses in Big 12 play.

Kody and the Wildcats entered their senior day matchup with

West Virginia one win shy of becoming bowl eligible.

It was a game he and his family will never forget.

### **SENIOR DAY**

After all the games in the front yard, hard work and obstacles he has overcome, Kody was realizing that his dream was almost over.

Kody suited up for the final time on Dec. 5 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium with all sorts of emotions going through him.

“I am just not ready for this to end yet,” Kody said. “I love this place, I love coach Snyder, the fans and everything that has to do with K-State football.”

It set in a little bit as Kody and the rest of the 18 Wildcat seniors waited in line to say thank you to the man who brought them this far – Bill Snyder.

Soon it would be Kody’s turn. Ten years ago, Kody met Snyder for the first time at the book signing in Kansas City after he retired the first time.

Thirteen-year old Kody was upset and disappointed. Ironically, the two converged once again 10 years later.



**Kody Cook gives K-State coach Bill Snyder a hug before going out onto the field for the final time in Manhattan.**

“He told me he loved me and thanked me for everything I had done for the program and to keep it going,” Kody said.

Then the public address announcer introduced Kody to the crowd.

“A wide receiver, from Louisburg, Kansas...No. 19...Kody Cook,” he shouted.

It was then Kody pointed up to the sky and ran onto the field as he waved to the crowd. With a pink flower in hand, he found his parents Jim and Anita, along with his brother Konnor and girlfriend Diann.

Tears became almost impossible for any member of the Cook family to hide.



Members of the Cook family pose for a picture during senior day ceremonies at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. Pictured (from left) are Konnor Cook, Kody’s girlfriend Diann Edelen, Kody, father Jim Cook and mother Anita Cook.

“It has been surreal at times, but other times it is like it is according to plan,” Jim said. “Kody was adamant about his plan his whole life that he is going to pull this off. It has

been a great experience for him and he has grown up a lot. I think his football career has been tougher than a lot of things he will experience the rest of his life and has prepared him for that. We are really proud of him.”

Kody and the Wildcats had another obstacle in front of them that night as they trailed West Virginia 13-3 and the K-State offense was sputtering. Then in the third quarter, Hubener had to leave the game with an injury, leaving Kody as the next man up – again. The crowd let out a big cheer when he was announced at quarterback.

“It was a great moment for me and I appreciate the fans,” Kody said. “I took maybe a second to really let it soak in, but then you have to focus on what is going on.”

And just like at Hutch, and at Oklahoma State, Kody once again proved he was ready for the challenge. He completed 4 of 12 passes for 121 yards, including a 77-yard touchdown strike and also rushed for 37 yards and a touchdown.





**Kody Cook gets some warm up throws in early in the second half before coming in at quarterback against West Virginia.**

Kody's play lifted K-State to a thrilling 24-23 win on senior day as they earned a spot in the Liberty Bowl, a Jan. 2 game in Memphis.

It was a performance coaches on both sidelines had to recognize.

"When we knocked their quarterback out, I thought we were in pretty good shape," West Virginia coach Dana Holgorsen said. "That kid (Kody) comes in and plays a thousand times better than the other one. I shook No. 19's [Cook] hand out there and told him he is a gutsy kid. He was hurt too but battled through it and threw the ball a lot better than we thought he could."

Kody's coach couldn't have agreed more.

“You know, I admire Kody so much,” Snyder said. “He is a tough young guy – tough-minded young guy. He is competitive as of anybody, I think. Our players recognize that and that is uplifting to them as well.”

As much success as Kody has had at K-State, he realizes he couldn't have done any of it without the support of his hometown of Louisburg.

“It adds significance because it just shows that no matter where you live that you can go out and be successful in whatever you want to do,” Kody said of his hometown. “The town breeds a never-give-up, hard-working attitude. You have that engrained in you from day one, and to continue to build off that and to have that in your arsenal when things get tough has been big for me.

“There is not enough that I can say about how that town developed me and made me who I am today. It is a great feeling to be one of the few that has made it this far and made a name for himself.”

It became obvious how important Kody was to the K-State offense as he was named Co-Offensive Player of the Year a week later during the team's award ceremony. Kody finished with 27 catches for 417 yards and three touchdowns as a receiver. At quarterback, he accounted two scores on the ground and three more through the air.

“When he was a little kid that is all he talked about,” Jim said. “He would go out front and go up and down the yard and throw himself passes. He has made it all come true and we are all extremely proud of him. I almost can't talk about it without crying.”

Following the senior day contest, Kody worked his way around Bill Snyder Family Stadium high-fiving fans and trying to soak everything in.

“I just didn’t want it to end,” Kody said. “I have been dreaming about this since I was a little kid and I have been a K-State football fan my entire life. It was just an unbelievable experience.”



Kody Cook gives the fans at Bill Snyder Family Stadium high-five, including Louisburg resident Mark Hildreth, his daughter Liz and sons A.J. and Zach, following the

**Wildcats come from behind win over West Virginia on senior day.**

Chants of “MVP” rained down on Kody as he took one more lap around the stadium. The band played “Wabash Cannonball” and the crowd went crazy for No. 19.

It was just like Kody drew up in the front yard all those years ago.

*Make sure to check out a full photo gallery from Kody Cook’s senior day here. You can click the download link under the photo to download a high-resolution version of the photo for free. Unfortunately you can not do it from mobile devices.*

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## **Three Wildcats earn all-state honors**



Louisburg High School senior Anders Vance (left), senior Austin Terry (middle) and junior Dustyn Rizzo each earned all-state football honors. Vance was named to the first team by the KFCA, Topeka Capital-Journal and Wichita Eagle, while Terry and Rizzo garnered honorable mention honors by the

## Eagle.

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The season has been over for a few weeks, but postseason honors continue to come in for a handful of Louisburg High School football players.

All-state football teams were released by three different organizations and the Wildcats were represented on all three lists.

Senior lineman Anders Vance, senior quarterback Austin Terry and junior lineman Dustyn Rizzo were all recognized for their seasons by the Topeka Capital-Journal, Wichita Eagle and the Kansas Football Coaches Association (KFCA).

Vance earned first team honors by all three organizations. He was selected as a first-team offensive lineman by the KFCA and the Topeka Capital-Journal. He was named as a first-team defensive lineman by the Wichita Eagle.

The Eagle also selected Terry and Rizzo to their team as well. Terry was named as an honorable mention quarterback, while Rizzo was an honorable mention defensive lineman.

"I am really happy for Anders, Dustyn and Austin for the recognition," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. "These guys are the foundation of what we are trying to build here. It's great to see that people outside our community see what types of players these kids are and recognize them for their efforts. All of three of these guys are great kids who have a bright future and I am proud that their hard work paid off."

Vance, the Wildcats' center, anchored the offensive line. On defense, Vance recorded 35 tackles from the defensive tackle spot, with six for a loss, a sack, a fumble recovery, forced fumble and two batted balls.

At quarterback, Terry completed 80 of 155 passes for 1,358 yards to go along with 13 touchdowns. As for Rizzo, he led the Wildcat defensive line with 49 tackles, 18 of which were solo and added eight for a loss. He also added five sacks, two forced fumbles and a fumble recovery.

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## **Wildcats earn 17 spots on all-league team**



Louisburg senior Anders Vance puts a big hit on an Ottawa player earlier this season. Vance earned first team all-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball for his work on the offensive and defensive line.

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Before the All-Frontier League Football teams were released, it was expected that Louisburg was going to have its fair share of representation.

The Wildcats finished second in the league and rebounded from a three-win season a year ago to tally a 7-3 record this past season. As it turned out, Louisburg tallied the second most selections in the league to match its finish.

Louisburg was awarded 17 all-league spots, which included five spots on the first team. The Wildcats had four second team selections and eight honorable mentions.

“The great thing about our team is they really didn’t care about personal honors too much, they wanted the team to succeed,” Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. “They knew those honors would come if they did well as a team and they did.”

Senior Anders Vance was well thought of by the league coaches as he garnered first team honors on both the offensive and defensive line.

Senior quarterback Austin Terry was named first-team quarterback on offense, while junior Dustyn Rizzo was awarded with a first-team defensive line selection and senior Mitchell McLellan was first-team defensive back.

Vance, who played center, anchored the Wildcat offensive line that moved up and down the field. On defense, Vance recorded 35 tackles from the defensive tackle spot, with six for a loss, a sack, a fumble recovery, forced fumble and two batted balls.

“I love Anders to death for the simple fact is that he is 100 percent coachable and he has goals set for himself, and no matter what he is not going to let anyone or anything stand in the way of his goals,” Littrell said. “In order for Anders to be a top level talent in the state of Kansas he constantly evaluated his play all season.

“At times in practice I would run a play to try and trap Anders, and when it didn’t work he would just look at me and give me this look like ‘C’mon coach you got me with that stuff as a sophomore and junior, but you can’t get me anymore.’ I have college coaches come to my office all the time and I tell them that there would not be another kid that you enjoy coaching more than Anders.”

Terry guided the Wildcats to their seven wins and put together some big stats in the process. The Louisburg quarterback completed 80 of 155 passes for 1,358 yards to go along with 13 touchdowns.



**Senior Austin Terry was named as an all-league first team quarterback.**

“Austin knew early he wasn’t going to be as big or as strong as some of the quarterbacks we have had in the past, however he has that chip on his shoulder that he is going to prove you wrong,” Littrell said. “Austin wanted to go through the season and not throw an interception, and he didn’t until week five. He ended up the season throwing just five interceptions out of 115 attempts. Never once in his three years of playing quarterback for us did I ever wonder if he was ready to play. His quiet demeanor and competitiveness were qualities that probably helped calm us down in certain situations throughout the year.”

On the defensive side, Rizzo made life difficult on a lot of opposing offensive lines. Rizzo led the Wildcat defensive line with 49 tackles, 18 of which were solo and added eight for a loss. He also added five sacks, two forced fumbles and a fumble recovery.

“Dustyn has a motor that doesn’t stop,” Littrell said. “One of



the many qualities that I love about Dustyn is there is only one speed on the football field and that is full speed. Dustyn has the opportunity to be an all-state football player next year. His work ethic and commitment to the weight room is undeniable. When he speaks, which is far and few between, everybody listens.

“The coaches at the all-league meeting were impressed with him as multiple coaches made the comment, ‘We had to game plan for that kid,’ which means they were running away from his side. That is probably about as big as a compliment as you can give a football player. I remember watching him play little league football down in Drexel and thinking to myself this kid is going to be a darn good football player. Luckily it’s here at Louisburg.”



**Louisburg junior Dustyn Rizzo records one of his five sacks on the season and was named to the all-league first team defense.**

As for McLellan, he led the defensive backfield in tackles from his cornerback spot as he finished with 54, including 35

solo stops. He also had two tackles for a loss, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery and one interception.

“I always knew Mitchell had the ability to play defense for us, little did I know that he was going to basically shut down most all of the receivers he faced,” Littrell said. “He led our defensive backs in tackles this year and was the fifth leading tackler on the team. His competitiveness and desire to win helped fuel our team at times.

“I am just so proud of the kid Mitchell is today. There were times when he could have given up or made excuses, but that is not the Mitchell I know. At the end of the day I think Mitchell learned that he didn’t need to prove anything to anybody else, he just needed to prove it to himself and I think he did that with his play on both sides of the ball this year.”

On the second team, Rizzo was named offensive line, while junior Thomas San Agustin was awarded with a second-team running back honor. San Agustin led the team in rushing with 991 yards on 191 carries, which averaged to more than five yards per carry, and finished with 15 touchdowns.

On defense, Terry was named to the all-league defense second team as he finished with 39 tackles from the safety spot. He also finished with 39 tackles, 18 of which were solo stops, two interceptions, two batted balls, a forced fumble and fumble recovery.



**Senior Mitchell McLellan earned first team all-league defensive honors for his play at cornerback.**

Senior Alex Dunn also garnered second team honors at the linebacker position. Dunn finished with 39 tackles, 12 solo stops, two fumble recoveries and two batted balls.

Junior linemen T.J. Dover and Mason Koechner each earned honorable mention honors on both the offensive and defensive lines.

Dover ended his season with 42 tackles, 17 solo, five tackles for a loss, four sacks, four fumble recoveries, two forced fumbles and one batted ball. As for Koechner, he finished with 41 tackles, 14 solo, four tackles for a loss and one forced fumble.

Senior Cole Kramer also had honorable mention honors on both sides of the ball. At receiver, Kramer had 22 catches for 471 yards and four touchdowns. At defensive back, he had 28 tackles, 17 solo, three tackles for loss, one interception and fumble recovery.

McLellan was also named as an honorable mention receiver as he

caught 29 passes for 537 yards and five touchdowns. Dunn was also selected as an honorable mention kicker as he was 1 for 2 on field goal attempts and 34 for 42 on point after attempts.

Paola led the way with 21 all-league spots, followed by Louisburg's 17 and De Soto with 15.

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL**

### **OFFENSE**

#### **FIRST TEAM**

**BACKS/RECEIVERS:** Austin Terry, Louisburg, senior; Grant Elston, Eudora, senior; Nathan Staats, Paola, senior; Joel Katzer, Baldwin, senior; Nate Thompson, De Soto, senior; Ryan Gleghorn, Paola, senior

**OFFENSIVE LINE:** Anders Vance, Louisburg, senior; T.J. Boatwright, De Soto, senior; Zane Clark, Paola, senior; Drew Bones, Ottawa, junior; Dunkan Watrous, Paola, senior

**KICKER:** Grant Elston, Eudora, senior

#### **SECOND TEAM**

**BACKS/ RECEIVERS:** Thomas San Agustin, Louisburg, junior; Jake Katzer, Baldwin, senior; Cooper Lee, De Soto, senior; Brock Reed, Ottawa, junior; Ty Straw, Spring Hill, junior; Nathan Ewing, Spring Hill, sophomore

**OFFENSIVE LINE:** Dustyn Rizzo, Louisburg, junior; Jacob Pearson, Eudora, senior; Sam Arnold, Spring Hill, junior; Beau Lynch, Ottawa, senior; Tanner Beebe, Eudora, senior

**KICKER:** Cooper Lee, De Soto, senior

## HONORABLE MENTION

**BACKS/RECEIVERS:** Cole Kramer, Louisburg, senior; Mitchell McLellan, Louisburg, senior; Austin Downing, Eudora, senior; Dalton Rankin, Paola, junior; Garrett Burkhart, Baldwin, senior; Mason Clark, De Soto, junior; Luke Snider, Ottawa, junior; Magnus Van Hoecke, Paola, junior

**OFFENSIVE LINE:** Mason Koechner, Louisburg, junior; T.J. Dover, Louisburg, junior; Michael Colwell, De Soto, senior; Alex Cigard, Baldwin, senior; Caleb McQuality, De Soto, junior; Cameron Christopher, De Soto, senior; Cam Seck, Paola, junior; Nick Sprague, Spring Hill, junior; Tanner Schneider, Baldwin, senior; Aaron Neal, De Soto, senior; Ryan Verbanic, Eudora, junior; Brock Huddlestun, Ottawa, junior; PJ Capettini, Paola, senior; Joel Auten, Paola, senior

**KICKER:** Alex Dunn, Louisburg, senior; Kyle Wokutch, Paola, senior; Carver Gerstberger, Spring Hill, senior

## DEFENSE

### FIRST TEAM

**DEFENSIVE LINE:** Dustyn Rizzo, Louisburg, junior; Anders Vance, Louisburg, senior; Zane Clark, Paola, senior; Jordan Vaughn, Eudora, senior

**LINEBACKER:** Jake Katzer, Baldwin, senior; Duncan Watrous, Paola, senior; Ryan Gleghorn, Paola, senior; Tanner Beebe, Eudora, senior

**DEFENSIVE BACKS:** Mitchell McLellan, Louisburg, senior; Grant Elston, Eudora, senior; Blain Ohlmeier, Paola, senior

**PUNTER:** Cooper Lee, De Soto, senior

## SECOND TEAM

**DEFENSIVE LINE:** Drew Bones, Ottawa, junior; Nick Nolte, Spring Hill, senior; Alex Wilson, Paola, senior; Beau Lynch, Ottawa, senior

**LINEBACKER:** Alex Dunn, Louisburg, senior; Joel Katzer, Baldwin, senior; Brock Reed, Ottawa, junior; Wyatt Stewart, De Soto, senior

**DEFENSIVE BACKS:** Austin Terry, Louisburg, senior; Cameron Mills, Spring Hill, senior; Andrew Phillips, Paola, junior

**PUNTER:** Grant Elston, Eudora, senior

## HONORABLE MENTION

**DEFENSIVE LINE:** T.J. Dover, Louisburg, junior; Mason Koechner, Louisburg, senior; Justin Howard, Baldwin, junior; Blayne Rios, Paola, junior; Reid Kelly, De Soto, senior; Noah Kennedy, Eudora, senior; Garrett Borth, Baldwin, sophomore; Austin Ormsby, Eudora, sophomore; Tanner Moala, Paola, junior; Joel Auten, Paola, senior

**LINEBACKER:** Ryan Verbanic, Eudora, junior; Magnus Van Hoecke, Paola, junior; Cooper Diel, Ottawa, junior; Van Putnam, Spring Hill, senior; Kyle Carnes, De Soto, senior; Jack Barger, De Soto, sophomore; Dalton Rankin, Paola, junior

**DEFENSIVE BACKS:** Cole Kramer, Louisburg, senior; Max Barger, De Soto, junior; Nathan Staats, Paola, senior; Auggie Lange, Baldwin, junior; Spencer Howe, Eudora, senior; Austin Downing, Eudora, senior

**PUNTER:** Jacob Letellier, Spring Hill, junior

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# Griffin overcomes obstacles to shine at Air Force



Air Force Academy senior, and Louisburg High School graduate, Garrett Griffin is all smiles now and for good reason. Griffin and the Falcons are 8-3 on the season and will soon play for the Mountain West Conference title. Griffin faced a lot of obstacles during his time at the Academy on and off the field, but he is now ready to use those to his advantage.

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COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – On a warm Saturday afternoon, Garrett Griffin was introduced to the Falcon Stadium crowd as he ran through a tunnel of teammates to celebrate senior day at the Air Force Academy.

The nerves were eating him up inside.

Garrett and the Falcons were about ready to go up against a Utah State team on Nov. 14 that had beaten them his previous two years. A win would put Air Force on top of the Mountain Division of the Mountain West Conference.

Needless to say those nerves have always been there for Garrett, whether it was senior day, the first day of practice,

the first moment he stepped on campus for basic training or his first collegiate football game.

Life in the Air Force isn't for everyone. Adjusting to military life, along with the tough curriculum and being a Division I football player, is demanding.



**Garrett Griffin (80) runs through a tunnel of players as he was honored before Air Force's final home game on Nov. 14.**

There were thoughts of taking the easier route. Thoughts of going to school closer to home, being with friends and family and living the "normal life." They were all tempting at one time or another.

Easy isn't in Garrett's vocabulary.



It is that perseverance that has now put Garrett in a position to play on one of the best teams in the Mountain West and in a bowl game, on pace to graduate from one of the top colleges in the country and possibly have a chance to get on a National Football League roster next year.

“It hasn’t sunk in yet,” Garrett said. “The academy is kind of bittersweet your senior year because you want it to go by quick so you are done with school, but at the same time it is the end of your football career. It won’t really set in until after the bowl game when it is your last time strapping it up. Right now I am just trying to enjoy it and not really thinking too far ahead.”

That Saturday against Utah State was the time for Garrett to live in the now and think back on his journey – one filled with ups, downs and everything in-between.

### **HUMBLE BEGINNING**

At Louisburg High School, Garrett was the total package when it came to athletics and academics.

He was a two-time all-state football player for the Wildcats, helped them to their first state championship in 2010 and became an unstoppable force in the backfield as he topped the 2,000 yard mark his senior season at running back in 2011.

In track, he was the state champion in the javelin in 2011 and also helped the Wildcats to a state title just months after winning one in football. He won numerous regional titles and also qualified for state in the 110-meter high hurdles.

He won three regional championships his senior year, but was unable to attend the state meet after he suffered a ruptured appendix.

Garrett was also a fixture on the Wildcat basketball team as

he was named as an all-Frontier League selection in three of his four years.

Academically, he was just as dominant as he held a 4.0 grade point average throughout his four years of high school and was a member of the National Honor Society.

It would be enough to make any high school coach gush over that type of player – unless that coach was his father. Former Louisburg head coach Gary Griffin didn't want to give his son too big of a head as he racked up several postseason honors throughout his high school career.

“He was humble and I think people appreciated that,” Gary said. “He never acted like he was good and he loved interacting with little kids. He hated being the center of attention. He always wanted to be known as someone who was a team player who never put themselves first.

“That is one of the prouder things of his high school career for me. Every coach that went up against him would mention what a good kid he was and that is pretty cool. It is important that kids are humble.”

It would have been easy to get a little cocky as he had programs like Kansas State and Air Force recruiting him, along with several Division II schools. It was a difficult choice when it came down to make his decision, but he eventually chose Air Force.

It had been several years since Louisburg had a football player go to a Division I program out of high school and the community quickly became Falcon followers.

High school life for Garrett couldn't have gone much smoother.

It was his college life that he would test him – sometimes to the limits.

## MILITARY LIFE

Garrett entered the Air Force as a two-sport athlete as he was offered spots on both the football and track and field teams.

In some colleges, they would treat their athletes like kings, but at Air Force, and any other military institution, it is a different story. They are treated like normal cadets and go through a rigorous schedule.

As soon as he arrived at his new home, which is nestled next to the Rocky Mountains, Garrett traded in his street clothes for a military uniform. Then came basic cadet training, which is a six-week program that tested him in every facet possible – emotionally, physically and mentally.

The time was also tough on his parents who didn't get a chance to talk their son much. If In fact, he could not have visitors or receive phone calls for five weeks.

"They basically had them on lock down," Gary said.

It became a little more open as he was able to call on the weekends following basic training, but contact was still limited and so were his trips home. He got a chance to come home for two weeks over Christmas and then a week during the spring.

He also had the opportunity to come home during the summer, but he spent his first two summers at the academy doing academic work.

"One of the things that makes me the most mad is I talk to other moms who have kids who come home from college and they can't wait for them to go back," Garrett's mother, Lori, said. "I would give anything for my kid to come home and call me whenever he wanted to."

The first two years were especially stressful for Garrett as he quickly found out academia at the Air Force is nothing like

high school. He started seeing grades next to his name he wasn't used to seeing -letters further down the line in the alphabet.

"I put this school's difficulty up against anyone in the world," Garrett said. "I have struggled academically quite a bit which was something I never thought I would do. I was a pretty good student in high school, but my first two years here, especially, were really hard."

In his freshman year, Garrett was enrolled in 18 hours of classes, which after football, left him zero free time. With courses like calculus, chemistry and physics on his list, along with all his football duties, the pressure to do well started to mount.

The Air Force experience wasn't what Garrett had thought it would be. He started to wonder if this was for him.

"Everyone knows the character he has, we just took for granted that he can handle anything," Gary said. "He has never not been able to handle anything in his life, but the Academy is tough. I couldn't have done it as his age."

"His buddies were texting him on a Saturday night and they were out partying and he was in his room writing a paper and I think that frustrated him a little bit. I told him you are going to do stuff that they are never going to get to do."

The temptation of attending of an "easier" school and hanging out with his friends and family weighed heavily on Garrett at times, especially when school work continued to be a bear.

But when those ideas crept into his head, he would remember all those people in Louisburg who looked at him with pride as he headed off to college.

"At one point he was thinking that it wasn't for him," Lori said. "But at the same time he would say that he didn't want

to let the whole town of Louisburg down. He didn't want to let us down. I just told him that he needs to do what is best for him."

In the end, Garrett stuck it out and now he's starting to see the fruits of his labor – especially on the football field.

### **LIFE ON THE GRIDIRON**

As overwhelming as the Air Force can be to a normal first-year cadet, throw in the life of a college football player and one can imagine the stress it brings.

Garrett wasn't worried when he started. He imagined using his freshman year to get acclimated and use it as a learning experience.

Instead, he impressed the Falcon coaches enough and made the traveling squad. He suited up in 12 games, and was mainly on special teams and slowly worked his way into more playing time.

His sophomore season, his role on the team grew even more as he was one of team's top tight ends. That year he had 13 catches for 163 yards and a touchdown

Those numbers more than doubled in his junior campaign as he finished with 16 receptions for 307 yards and four touchdowns in a run-first option offense that isn't known for throwing the ball much.

Garrett became an easy target however thanks to his 6-foot, 4-inch and 240-pound frame on a Falcon team that finished with a 10-3 record and defeated Western Michigan 38-24 in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl to end their season.



**Garrett Griffin looks for a block while quarterback Karson Roberts runs outside on Nov. 14 at Falcon Stadium.**

The Falcons did all this after finishing the previous season with a 2-10 record. Air Force also relied on Griffin for his blocking as he is a main cog in the offense to help seal off the end of the line.

Life on the football field was good, but even with all the touchdowns and bright moments, life in the Academy was still difficult and his parents knew it. Even his tough love father became a little concerned.

“My relationship with Garrett is to be a tough kid and you can get through anything,” Gary said. “I knew he was depressed and stressed. He was getting bad grades on tests and you know he was stressed. I worry about his mental state sometimes, so I

text him every day. I always start out texting him and asking him about practice and I can tell right away whether he has had a good day or not.”

Still, with all the ups and downs, Garrett realizes this experience has only made him stronger and he is better off for it.

“Military wise it is a tradition to beat you down so they can build you back up,” Garrett said. “They have definitely done a good job of beating me down and now they are starting to build me back. I really appreciate the opportunities that this place opened and it is starting to pay off and I am glad I came here.”

Following his junior campaign, Garrett knew he was going to have an opportunity for a big senior season. The Falcons returned several playmakers on offense and they had a chance to build on their 10-win season from a year ago.

Then came one more test – and it didn’t come in the classroom.

## **SENIOR SEASON**

The season opener came quickly as the Falcons took the field on Sept. 5 against Morgan State. Air Force picked up right where it left off as it rolled to a 63-7 victory.

Unfortunately for Garrett, he had to watch the rout from the sidelines.

During pregame warmups, a player was thrown into the side of Garrett’s knee and he immediately knew it wasn’t good.

“I heard it pop,” Garrett said. “Right when that happened I thought my season was done. It is weird trying to get ready for your first game of your senior year and then find yourself in the training room thinking that your season and career

might be over.”

The official diagnosis was an MCL sprain and Garrett was going to be out of action for six weeks. During that time, the Falcons went 3-3 before he could get back on the field fully healthy.

He played some in Air Force’s loss to Colorado State on Oct. 17, but watching from the sidelines was hard to handle for Garrett who had to deal with his first long-term injury.

“Once you have played a lot, and then you find yourself watching from the sidelines, you know you can’t do anything and it is hard,” Garrett said. “We had a couple weeks where we struggled against teams like Navy and it is tough. Our quarterback from last year tore his ACL and he really helped me to get through it. I had another buddy who had the same injury I did and he got back faster than I did. Having that support system and knowing I could come back was a huge thing.”

Garrett was finally healthy on Oct. 24 when Air Force traveled to Fresno State, and since then, he and the rest of his Falcon team have taken flight.





**Garrett Griffin lets out a scream following Air Force's victory over Utah State on Nov. 14.**

The Falcons have won five straight games, including a 35-28 win over Utah State and a 37-30 victory over Boise State. Griffin caught two touchdown passes in Air Force's win over Army to become bowl eligible and then had his best game of the season last Saturday against Boise.

Griffin finished with three catches for 107 yards, including a 51-yard touchdown reception and the Falcons clinched the Mountain Division title and will play San Diego State for the Mountain West Championship on Dec. 5, despite dealing with several injuries on the team.

"It seems like someone has gone down every week and we have just battled through it and that has been our thing," Garrett

said. "We just try to get better each week and Utah St. was a huge win for us. They have beat us pretty good the last couple of years and it is a big time win."

## **NATIVE SON**

Garrett has been a part of several big wins during his time at Air Force and Louisburg has been right there with him.

According to the Griffin family, several members of the Louisburg community have made the 9-plus hour drive to Colorado Springs to attend every one of Garrett's home games the last two years. Whether it is former coaches, teachers or friends, there have been familiar faces there each time.

"I am really grateful for that," Garrett said. "It just shows how great the people of Louisburg are to their athletes and their community. It really puts it in perspective for me that some guys here will only have one or two people come down to watch them and it seems like every week I am trying to get 20 tickets, which is awesome. It just shows the support system that I have personally and how good the people of Louisburg are."

Following each home game, family will make their way down onto the field for a quick visit, and the following for Garrett is obvious.

"Even other Air Force families will comment, 'Oh there is Garrett and his entourage,'" Lori said.



**Garrett poses for a picture with his parents, Gary and Lori Griffin, during the Falcons' senior day presentation.**

It is that support system that has kept Garrett going through some difficult times. Gary, who teaches at LHS, said Garrett is still a popular topic at the school.

“He is gone so much, that he mentioned to me that they probably don’t remember who he is anymore,” Gary said. “That is certainly not the case. I can’t go anywhere without someone asking me about Garrett. All the teachers on Monday morning after a game are talking about Garrett. The seniors this year were in eighth-grade Garrett’s senior year and a lot of those kids are asking me how he did.

“He really appreciates it too. He always asks how many tickets that he needs to get for a game. It is pretty neat. We have a

lot of people go to games up there.”

Lori, who is the school nurse at Rockville Elementary, said Garrett even has fans of the small variety. Lori mentions she has students who wander into her office to look at the photo montage she has of her son.

“I ask them if they know who that is and they say, ‘That is Garrett Griffin.’” Lori said. “Then I tell them I am his mom and they are like ‘No, you aren’t.’ And I am like ‘Yes I am.’

“It is crazy. It is not even just the people that come to watch him play every home game, but just people I run into at the store – people I had no idea even watched sports. He has a lot of fans.”

## **SENIOR DAY**

Air Force’s matchup with Utah State on Nov. 14 was not just another game for Garrett, it was something a lot bigger.

Garrett ran out of the Falcon Stadium tunnel for his final regular season game full of nerves. Those nerves brought back memories of his first collegiate game, his first day on the Air Force campus and many of the other obstacles he has had to face the last three years.

He had another challenge to face as he was set to go up against Utah State’s Kyler Fackrell. The Utah State linebacker is considered an NFL prospect and it would be Garrett’s biggest test of the season.

It was all he could think about.

“I was pretty nervous,” Garrett said. “This was a big time game and I was going up against their outside linebacker, who is probably going to be a second or third round draft pick. He is a stud and I was pretty nervous about going against him.”

As he made his way out of the tunnel for the final time, he looked around on the field for the two people who have always been there for him – his parents.

“I didn’t really know what to say to them,” Garrett said. “I am not really good in those moments, and neither is my dad, obviously. I saw them and it just calmed me down. It put things in perspective that I don’t have many times left to strap it up so I just need to go out and enjoy it. It was a pretty awesome moment.”



**Gary Griffin gives his son, Garrett, a quick pat on the stomach before his game against Utah State.**

It was an emotional moment for both Gary and Lori as well.

Both have spent the last four years either traveling to

Colorado Springs for games, or most of his away contests.

"It was bittersweet," Gary said. "It was bitter because he has been playing since the fifth grade and now it is coming close to the end. I have only missed a few of his college games when he was a freshman, but a big part of our lives has been watching him play football.

"The sweet part is I know how hard it is in that place and he is just about done. He can see the light at the end of the tunnel. He knows what job he is going to have and he is excited to move on to the next phase of his life. It brought a tear to my eye to be honest with you."

For Lori, she couldn't be more proud of her son and what he has accomplished already despite all the tribulations he has had to face.

"It is amazing to see how far he has gotten," Lori said. "I knew he loved football, but who would have thought he would be where he is and has the opportunity that he has. He has worked so hard.

"People will come up to him sometimes and thank him for his service and he gets embarrassed because he says he hasn't done anything, but he has. He has given up a lot. His other college friends can go out and party whenever they want and he has to be in his room every night by 11. They are his...and it is a different life."

It is a life, however, that Garrett would never give up.

"It has been hard, but I have a lot of opportunities now that I would have never had if I didn't come here," Garrett said. "Overall, it has been a great experience and I am glad that I came here. I just want to enjoy everything I can before it is over."

*For a photo gallery of Garrett's senior day game make sure to click [here](#). Then click the download icon underneath the photo to get your free digital copy.*

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## **Opinion: Wildcats' season bigger than one loss**



The Louisburg High School football team made a lot of strides this season as the Wildcats finished with a 7-3 record after tallying just three wins a season ago. The Wildcat seniors gave the program the jump start it needed and turned it into a successful year.

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Losing stinks. Let's just get that out of the way right now.

There is nothing worse than seeing your season, which you have spent months preparing for, only to watch it end prematurely. If you are a senior, it makes it even worse. The thought of not playing another game for your school hits a lot of athletes hard.

As much as students say they can't wait to graduate, there is a part of them that loves the opportunity to play in front of

their community with some of their best friends – friendships that were in some cases forged as early as preschool or kindergarten.

This brings us to what happened on a cool Friday evening in Basehor.

The Louisburg football team came up short in the hopes of advancing into the state playoffs after losing to Basehor-Linwood 41-34 in what was a back-and-forth affair. The emotional heart strings tugged hard after this one and for good reason.

For one, the Wildcats said goodbye to 12 seniors who suited up for the final time that night, but more importantly that senior class put a lot into helping the program bounce back from what was a frustrating season a year ago after tallying just three wins.

Last season, the Wildcats finished the year with just three wins and ended up missing the playoffs – a rarity when it comes to Louisburg football. However, a group of seniors wanted to make sure that didn't repeat itself.

Kyle Haith, Austin Terry, John Hastings, Mitchell McLellan, Alex Dunn, Cole Kramer, Dillin Roberts, Chris Turner, Anders Vance, Tristen Shrock, Jarod Woodward and Jaret Gilliland all led the charge in starting that work over the summer and it carried over into the season.

Along with a talented group of underclassmen, these seniors were able to complete what has been a big turnaround. It has been less than a week since the loss, so the disappointment still hasn't left some of the players or coaches, but the season was far from a failure.

In fact, I would consider it a big success.

Sure, losing in the first round of the playoffs doesn't always



equal progress, but this Wildcat group took a giant step forward.

There were times where quarterback Austin Terry put the team on his back and led the team for a go-ahead touchdown or a come-from-behind win. Fellow senior receivers Mitchell McLellan and Cole Kramer each had big catches for touchdowns that provided some highlight reel moments.

The offensive line, led by Anders Vance, gave the Wildcats a nice push up front, while senior linebacker Alex Dunn was a leader on the Wildcat defense.

Coach Kyle Littrell did a great job over the summer of regrouping his team and getting them focused on the upcoming season. Despite a couple hiccups along the way, Littrell and those seniors paved the way for even more success in the coming years.

Just like in many of the other fall sports, the future is bright for Wildcat football. Louisburg has a good group of underclassmen returning and are ready to make another run in the playoffs next season.

However, the turnaround happened thanks to a lot hard work in the summer, a lot of rigorous practices and the leadership from a group of seniors that were poised to return Louisburg football to the playoffs.

Sure losing stinks and it always will. But the team has to take satisfaction on what it accomplished – trophies or not.

Sometimes it isn't all about the hardware. Sometimes it is about the blood and sweat paving the road for those to come after you.

And Louisburg football is in a better place because of it.

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# Wildcats suffer heartbreak in playoff loss



Louisburg senior quarterback Austin Terry outruns several Basehor-Linwood defenders during Friday's regional playoff game at Basehor-Linwood High School. The Wildcats fell 41-34 to end their season with a 7-3 record.

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BASEHOR – The players and coaches knew it was going to have to come to an end one day.

Unfortunately for the Louisburg football team, the end came sooner than it had hoped. Following the Wildcats' 41-34 loss to Basehor-Linwood on Friday in the regional round of the playoffs, the realization was hard to comprehend.

Despite a rough start, the Wildcats battled to the end and took a fourth quarter lead before Basehor-Linwood followed with two late touchdowns to end Louisburg's season.

"I feel bad, but I can't imagine what they are going through right now," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. "They are the ones who have put in all the work in the summer, the camps and 2-a-days and everything we do to try and make ourselves

better. I commend each and every one of those kids for their level of commitment this year. They played hard all year long and were a pleasure to coach.”

Both teams made their fair share of mistakes to keep the other one in the game.

Early on, Basehor-Linwood took advantage of a blocked punt, several Wildcat penalties and a kickoff return that accounted for its three first half touchdowns.



**Louisburg’s T.J. Dover (70) and Alex Dunn (21) team up on a tackle Friday in Basehor.**

As for Louisburg (7-3), it ended the first half with a big touchdown and carried the momentum over into the second half. The Bobcats botched two kickoffs and had a fumble that led to two more Louisburg touchdowns and eventually the Wildcats took a lead with nine minutes left in the contest.

However, when it came down to it, the Wildcats couldn’t keep the high-powered Basehor offense off of the field.

“They didn’t punt once,” Littrell said. “In the first half,

our body language wasn't very good. We didn't come out and put four quarters together in all three phases, and when you do that in the playoffs you have the feeling that we have right now."

The game didn't start out like the Wildcats had hoped. Louisburg struggled to move the ball early and had a punt blocked on the game's opening possession.

Basehor-Linwood recovered on the Louisburg 11-yard line and scored its first touchdown two plays later. The Bobcats added another touchdown on a 7-yard pass with five minutes left in the first half to go up 13-0.

On Louisburg's next possession, the Wildcats took advantage of a Basehor miscue. The Wildcats punted the ball away, but the Bobcat receiver went out of bounds then came back inbounds to touch it. The penalty was 15 yards and gave the Wildcats new life.



**Senior lineman Anders Vance leaps to try and knock down a pass during the Wildcats' playoff loss in Basehor.**

Quarterback Austin Terry found tight end Grant Harding on a 21-yard touchdown pass to make it 13-7.

The momentum was short lived as Basehor's Jahron McPherson took the ensuing kickoff for an 82-yard touchdown. Louisburg didn't get its head down as it came right back with a big play of its own.

Terry hit senior receiver Mitchell McLellan on a bubble screen and McLellan took off down the sideline for a 68-yard touchdown with 21 seconds left and the Wildcats trailed 20-14 at halftime.

Louisburg kicked off to start the second half and got a friendly bounce on the Basehor artificial turf. Kicker Connor Green kicked the ball on the ground, a Basehor player couldn't hold on and McLellan recovered the loose ball.

Two players later, running back Thomas San Agustin scored on a 34-yard touchdown through the Bobcats defense, and after the extra point failed, the game was tied at 20-all.

Once again, the Bobcats halted the Louisburg momentum as McPherson had his second big play of the game with a 47-yard touchdown run.

Shortly before the end of the third quarter, Louisburg's offense responded with a 14-play drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown run from Terry, and after a failed 2-point conversion, Louisburg trailed by just one.

To start the fourth quarter, Basehor fumbled deep in Louisburg territory and the Wildcats took advantage. San Agustin scored on a 1-yard touchdown run, and after a Terry 2-point conversion run, the Wildcats held a 34-27 lead with nine minutes remaining in the game.



**Senior receiver Mitchell McLellan runs down the sideline for a 68-yard touchdown in the first half Friday.**

Basehor's offense came alive on its next drive as it drove 92 yards to tie the game. Then following a Louisburg interception, the Bobcats took the ball again as McPherson scored his third touchdown of the night on an 18-yard touchdown pass to put Basehor up a touchdown.

The Wildcats had the ball for one more possession with 1 minute and 18 seconds remaining, but Basehor intercepted a Terry pass down the sideline to seal the win for the Bobcats.

"We didn't execute like we should," Littrell said. "My hats off to them. They came to play all four quarters and they are a well-coached ball team. Those kids played their butts off and they deserved to win."

Junior linebacker Jake Hill led the Wildcat defense with eight tackles, while Anders Vance, T.J. Dover, Alex Dunn and San Agustin each finished with seven. Vance had two tackles for a loss and lineman Dustyn Rizzo had a sack to go along with his five tackles.

The loss also meant the final game for 12 Louisburg seniors. Kyle Haith, Austin Terry, John Hastings, Mitchell McLellan,

Alex Dunn, Cole Kramer, Dillin Roberts, Chris Turner, Anders Vance, Tristen Shrock, Jarod Woodward and Jaret Gilliland all suited up for the final time.

"I hate that these seniors have to go out like this year," Littrell said. "I don't think they will ever know how much that I love them. They were the heartbeat of this team, they were amazing leaders and kept us focused on the task at hand. It is a fun group to coach and I am going to miss that."

LOUISBURG		0	14
12	8 - 34		
BASEHOR		7	13
7	14 - 41		

### **FIRST QUARTER**

BL: Austin Ettinger 9 run (Parker Rusk kick)

### **SECOND QUARTER**

BL: Jackson Brimblecom 7 pass from Justin Philllips (kick failed)

L: Grant Harding 21 pass from Austin Terry (Alex Dunn kick)

BL: Jahron McPherson 82 kickoff return (Rusk kick)

L: Mitchell McLellan 68 pass from Terry (Dunn kick)

### **THIRD QUARTER**

L: Thomas San Agustin 34 run (kick failed)

BL: McPherson 47 run (Rusk kick)

L: Terry 1 run (run failed)

## FOURTH QUARTER

L: San Agustin 1 run (Terry run)

BL: Ettinger 22 run (Rusk kick)

BL: McPherson 18 pass from Phillips (Rusk kick)

## STATISTICS

RUSHING: Thomas San Agustin 20-88; Austin Terry 12-55; Alex Dunn 11-37; Austin Moore 4-26

PASSING: Austin Terry 7-14-129-2-2

RECEIVING: Mitchell McLellan 4-90; Grant Harding 2-29; Cole Kramer 1-10

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# Wildcats punch ticket into playoffs



Louisburg senior Anders Vance brings down a Spring Hill runner during the Wildcats' final regular season contest Friday at Wildcat Stadium. Vance was one of 12 seniors honored before the Wildcats' senior night game.



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As the rain poured on the Wildcat Stadium field Friday, it seemed as if Mother Nature was trying to throw one more obstacle in the way of the Louisburg football team.

The Wildcats needed to beat Spring Hill on Friday to earn a berth into the state playoffs – a position the same Bronco team took away from them a season ago. A little water and mud didn't seem to bother the Wildcat players much.

Louisburg used two fourth-quarter touchdowns to pull away from Spring Hill in a 37-19 victory and continued its season for at least another week.

The victory was even more special for the Wildcats as they did it on senior night as they honored the 12 Louisburg seniors and their families before the game. Kyle Haith, Austin Terry, John Hastings, Mitchell McLellan, Alex Dunn, Cole Kramer, Dillin Roberts, Chris Turner, Anders Vance, Tristen Shrock, Jarod Woodward and Jaret Gilliland all suited up for their final regular season home contest.

“We have been through quite a bit with this senior group,” Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. “I am just so proud how these seniors have grown and committed themselves to the program. Their love for Louisburg football is undeniable. I love these seniors.

“They have provided more leadership for this program than I could have ever imagined. They just come to work every day with a good attitude and ready to accept the game plan. They are a great group to be around and I love them to death.”

As for the game itself, that was something Littrell didn't love as much. Don't get him wrong, Littrell was pleased to extend the season, but he wasn't happy with some of what

happened against the Broncos.



**Senior Alex Dunn tries to keep his footing in the rain to get some extra yards while he gets blocks from teammates Jarod Woodward (63), Dustyn Rizzo (60) and T.J. Dover (70) on Friday in Louisburg.**

Spring Hill, which finished the season 2-7, opened the game with a 70-yard kickoff return for a touchdown to quickly give the Broncos the lead and put the Wildcats on their heels. The Broncos also broke open another big play with a 49-yard touchdown run in the second quarter.

“I don’t think we were prepared mentally and that falls 100 percent on my shoulders,” Littrell said. “We didn’t play our best, but we played well enough to punch our ticket into the playoffs. If we have another performance like this though, then it will be a short stay in the playoffs.”

However, the weather conditions seemed to play in Louisburg’s favor as the Wildcats were able to use their stable of backs to pound away at the Spring Hill defense. The Wildcats (7-2) finished with two backs who rushed for more than 100 yards in the contest.

Junior Thomas San Agustin took a brunt of the load as he tallied 167 yards on 31 carries to go along with two touchdowns. Freshman Austin Moore also made a name for himself the first time this season as he carried the ball 20 times for 137 yards and two touchdowns.

Both players had big nights on the ground despite the Broncos doing their best to stop Louisburg's strength.

"They were putting nine or 10 guys in the box against our heavy bone stuff," Littrell said. "We are used to seeing eight or nine, but not 10. That is something we are going to have to get used to."

Despite the two big scoring plays from Spring Hill, the Wildcat defense was able to hold their own and made the stops when they needed them. Louisburg held the Broncos to just 157 yards of total offense.



**Freshman Austin Moore races into the endzone during the Wildcats' 37-19 win over Spring Hill.**

Junior lineman Dustyn Rizzo led Louisburg with seven tackles on the night, while Vance and Mason Koechner each finished with six tackles. Koechner also had a forced fumble.

Fellow junior T.J. Dover added five tackles and had a fumble recovery to help out the Wildcats.

Following the kickoff return for a touchdown from Spring Hill, the Wildcats were able to tie it up on their first possession when San Agustin scored on a 7-yard touchdown run.

Early in the second quarter, the Wildcat defense forced the Broncos to punt from their own endzone, but the snap sailed out of the endzone for the safety to give Louisburg a 9-7 lead.

On its next possession, Louisburg faced a fourth down near the redzone. The Wildcats went for it and Moore did more than get the first down. He broke several tackles for a 21-yard touchdown run to put Louisburg up 16-7.

Spring Hill then used its speed to cut the Wildcat lead to three points on the 49-yard touchdown scamper, but Louisburg answered right back before halftime when San Agustin scored on a 1-yard run.

Late in the third quarter, Spring Hill once again cut into the Louisburg lead when it scored on a 10-yard touchdown pass, and after a blocked extra punt, the Wildcats still led 23-19.

The Wildcats put it away in the fourth quarter and it started with arm of Terry, the senior quarterback. Terry found Grant Harding in the middle of the field and Harding broke away from the defense for a 45-yard touchdown pass.

Then later in the fourth, the Wildcats faced a fourth down again, and once again Moore came through. Moore scored on a 17-yard run this time to seal the win for the Wildcats with under two minutes left in the contest.

Louisburg begins its quest toward the state title game this Friday when it travels to Basehor-Linwood for a bi-district matchup. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. Should the Wildcats

advance, they will play the winner of Eudora and Fort Scott next week.

<b>LOUISBURG</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>37</b>					
<b>SPRING HILL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>- 19</b>					

### **First quarter**

SH: 70 kickoff return (kick good)

L: Thomas San Agustin 7 run (Alex Dunn kick)

### **Second quarter**

L: Safety (punt sailed out of endzone)

L: Austin Moore 21 run (Dunn kick)

SH: 49 run (kick blocked)

L: San Agustin 1 run (Dunn kick)

### **Third quarter**

SH: 10 yard touchdown pass (kick blocked)

### **Fourth quarter**

L: Grant Harding 45 pass from Austin Terry (Dunn kick)

L: Moore 17 run (Dunn kick)

### **STATISTICS**

RUSHING: Thomas San Agustin 31-167; Austin Moore 20-137; Alex Dunn 6-28; Will Ridley 6-15

PASSING: Austin Terry 2-2-48-1

RECEIVING: Grant Harding 1-45; Will Ridley 1-3

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## Louisburg hangs with top-ranked Miego



Louisburg running back Thomas San Agustin leans toward the goal line while getting some blocks from Dustyn Rizzo (60), Garrett Lowry (68) and Alex Dunn (21) during Friday's district playoff game at Bishop Miego High School.

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SHAWNEE MISSION – The task wasn't going to be easy – in fact – the obstacle seemed mountainous.

To get the chance at a district title, the Louisburg football team had to go through the No. 1 team, and defending state champion in Class 4A, Division I – Bishop Miego. All the Stags have done is beat up on a lot of Class 5A and 6A teams.

The Wildcats didn't back down from Friday's road contest. They embraced it.

Louisburg held the Stags to just 14 first-half points and

trailed by only eight at halftime. Eventually the sheer number of players wore the Wildcats down in a 42-6 loss at Bishop Miege.

The loss was certainly nothing to be ashamed about as the Wildcats slowed down a Miege team that has put up points all season.

“At the end of the day, their platooning wore us down,” Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. “We just don’t have that luxury here and I understand that. The product that we put out on the field are the toughest kids in the state of Kansas and I think they proved that.”

For most of the night, the Wildcat offense was able to move the ball against a big Miege front line, but two interceptions and a partially blocked punt in the first half kept the Wildcats out of the endzone and gave Miege a short field.

In its first drive, Louisburg picked up three first downs, including a pass from Austin Terry to Grant Harding on fourth down that put the ball near midfield. The Wildcats eventually had to punt, but Louisburg’s defense rose to the occasion.

Juniors T.J. Dover and Dustyn Rizzo teamed for a sack that forced a third-and-long and an eventual Miege punt. Louisburg’s next drive also resulted in a punt that was partially blocked and set up Miege’s first score to put it up 7-0.



**Louisburg juniors Dustyn Rizzo (left) and T.J. Dover team up for a sack on Bishop Miege quarterback Carter Putz on Friday at Bishop Miege High School.**

The Wildcats (6-2) didn't back down as they answered on their next possession. Running back Thomas San Agustin broke free for a 19-yard run to midfield, then Terry found Harding for a 15-yard pass to put the Wildcats in scoring position.

Louisburg faced another fourth down, but Terry converted the quarterback sneak to set up a first-and-goal. San Agustin eventually scored on a 3-yard touchdown run, and after a missed extra point, trailed just 7-6.

Miege was forced to punt once again on its next possession and the Wildcat offense appeared ready to take the lead right before halftime. Terry found receiver Cole Kramer on a 44-yard pass, and after a run from San Agustin and a pass play to Alex Dunn, the Wildcats had the ball in the redzone.

However, the Stags picked off a Louisburg pass with just more than a minute remaining. Miege didn't waste any time as they moved the ball quickly up the field that ended with a 27-yard touchdown pass as time expired.



“Our kids did a great job on defense,” Littrell said. “They have some good pass blockers on their line, but we got some holding penalties to go our way and that helped. The kids executed our game plan well and we were there to make tackles. There is a reason why they are the No. 1 ranked team in the state.”

For the game, the Wildcats racked up 227 yards on the ground and 338 yards of total offense for the game, that included 15 first downs.

“We did a great job of running the football,” Littrell said. “They have a kid on the (defensive) line that is going to North Carolina State for a reason and he is good. It took us awhile to figure out what their defensive ends were going to do and we struggled on our sweep play a little bit, but I thought our iso was good, our traps were good, our powers were good and even at times our passing was good.”

Defensively, the Wildcats were strong as they forced a turnover and had four tackles for a loss. Senior Mitchell McLellan led the way with a team-high nine tackles and linebacker Jake Hill finished with seven.

Rizzo added six tackles, including two for a loss. Terry also had an interception for Louisburg.

Bishop Miege opened the second half with a big play and used that final score at the end of the first as some momentum. The Stags struck for a 75-yard touchdown pass to make it a two touchdown lead and the Wildcats were unable to get any closer.

“They just wore us down in the second half,” Littrell said. “When you hold a team that averages 60 points a game to 28 in the first three quarters, you are doing something. I think those last two drives our kids were just completely exhausted and for good reason. They left everything they had out on the field and as a coach that is what you want to see. I am happy with how our kids represented their school and community with

how tough they were.”

Louisburg will now try to make its way back to the state playoffs after falling short last season. The Wildcats will host Spring Hill on senior night Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

The Wildcats were the same situation a year ago when they traveled to Spring Hill and needed a win to get into the playoffs, but left with a rough loss.

“I am looking forward to it and I know the kids are looking forward to it because we walked off the field with a sour taste in our mouth,” Littrell said. “We knew it wasn’t our best football game and it wasn’t our best effort and I think everyone was ashamed of that. That is not going to happen this time around. It is a chance to get into the playoffs and beat a team that ended your season last year, and if you can’t get up for that, then don’t bother showing up.”

LOUISBURG		0	6
0	0 – 6		
MIEGE		7	7
14	14 – 42		

### **First quarter**

M: Dawson Downing 3 run (Jake Heyen kick)

### **Second quarter**

L: Thomas San Agustin 3 run (kick failed)

M: Jafar Armstrong 27 pass from Carter Putz (kick good)

### **Third quarter**

M: Armstrong 75 pass from Putz (kick good)

M: Cameron Clark 14 pass from Putz (kick good)

### **Fourth quarter**

M: Downing 3 run (kick good)

M: Downing 19 run (kick good)

### **STATISTICS**

RUSHING: Thomas San Agustin 14-66; Will Ridley 18-65; Austin Terry 9-46; Austin Moore 7-23; Alex Dunn 4-22; Jake Hill 1-5

PASSING: Austin Terry 9-16-111-0-2

RECEIVING: Cole Kramer 1-44; Grant Harding 2-29; Mitchell McLellan 2-21; Alex Dunn 2-12; Thomas San Agustin 1-5

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# **Louisburg runs away from Sumner**



Louisburg's Grant Harding gets a block from teammate Alex Dunn and runs down the sideline for a touchdown during Friday's district playoff game against Sumner Academy at Wildcat Stadium. The Wildcats won going away, 63-6.

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The Louisburg football team left a lasting impression on Sumner Academy during Friday's district playoff opener at Wildcat Stadium.

Sumner Academy couldn't seem to shake the image of the back of the Wildcat jerseys. It was what the Sabres saw most of the night.

Louisburg scored early and often and racked up 56 first half points and came away with a 63-6 victory. The Wildcats picked up their third consecutive victory as well as they are one win away from making the state playoffs.

"The thing about this whole week was getting better," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. "It didn't matter who our opponent was, we just wanted to make sure that we got better."

It is hard to dispute that Louisburg (6-1) didn't get better.

The Wildcats ran up and down the field on the Sabres and they couldn't be stopped, especially in the first half. Louisburg accumulated 387 yards on the ground and 446 total yards despite having a running clock the entire second half.

Louisburg had several different options in the backfield as 11 different players had rushing attempts for the Wildcats. Junior Korbin Hankinson led the way with 91 yards on just seven carries with two touchdowns, while teammate Thomas San Agustin had 88 yards on just four carries with a pair of touchdowns.

"That is a luxury that we have right now," Littrell said. "We have some tough running backs back there that have a little bit of speed and they enjoy the physical style of play. Most smaller backs would like to be on the perimeter running a lot sweeps, but our backs love to run iso and they love to run in

the middle of the field. We have done a good job of opening holes for them. The thing I have been most impressed with is they are protecting the football and that is key.”



**Louisburg’s Austin Moore (48), Nick Hull (44), Matthew Rison (56) and Tucker Batten (80) surround a Sumner Academy player Friday.**

The Wildcats took off running from the opening kickoff as junior Jake Hill broke free for a 44-yard return that set up a short field. Two plays later, San Agustin found the endzone on a 29-yard run to put Louisburg up a touchdown less than a minute into the game.

It was Hankinson’s turn on Louisburg’s next possession as he ended the Wildcat drive with a 3-yard touchdown to go up two scores.

Defense was also key for the Wildcats as they forced four turnovers, including an interception by Cole Kramer after Hankinson’s touchdown.

Louisburg’s offensive line of Anders Vance, Dustyn Rizzo, Garrett Lowry, Mason Koechner, T.J. Dover and Jarod Woodward opened holes all night for the running game and San Agustin took advantage on the Wildcats’ next possession. San Agustin

scored on a 40-yard touchdown run to put Louisburg up 21-0 that was set up by a 21-yard pass from Austin Terry to Grant Harding.

Right before the end of the first quarter, the Wildcats added more points when Hankinson scored on a 15-yard touchdown run to put the game out of reach.

The Wildcat defense forced three turnovers in the second quarter. Linebacker Alex Dunn recovered a fumble and then was rewarded with a 3-yard touchdown run.

On Sumner's next possession, Dover forced a fumble on the line of scrimmage and Vance picked it up. Hill then scored the team's sixth touchdown of the night on a 9-yard run to go up 42-0.

Harding picked off a Sumner pass on the Sabres' next drive, and then entered as quarterback for the rest of the quarter. Harding ran the option for a 30-yard touchdown and then found the endzone with a 13-yard run just minutes later to put Louisburg up 56-0.

The Wildcats put in a lot of their reserves with a running clock in the second half, but that didn't make anything less exciting. With the chant of "Owen" from the crowd, Littrell put in backup running back Owen Staver in the fourth quarter and he scored his first varsity touchdown on a 3-yard run to seal the win.

Staver was greeted by an excited sideline after his score as it was hard to wipe the smiles off the faces of his teammates and coaches. It was just one of many moments that the starters had a chance to watch the reserves in action.

"It is awesome because those kids do the same amount of work those kids do that get to play every Friday night," Littrell said. "They do the summer work and 2-a-days and their role on this team is just as important as anyone else's."

“One thing I mentioned to the kids at halftime was that this was an opportunity for them to provide leadership. When they are out there, help them out and make sure they are in the right place or help them out if they have done something wrong. That is leadership. That is what we want to establish from top to bottom. I thought our kids responded well and supported each other great.”

The challenge will be far greater this coming Friday when Louisburg travels to No. 1-ranked, and defending state champion, Bishop Miege.

“It is a huge challenge, but it is another ballgame,” Littrell said. “We can’t make it bigger than what it is. I think that is maybe what our problem was in the Paola game is we got too amped up. It is district play and I get that, but at the same time it is not the state championship game. It is just a game. We are going to do all our usual stuff and try to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

“I just want to be as physical as we can with them. We are not scared of them. If they get us, they get us. If they don’t, then they don’t. We are going to go out and play the most physical brand of football we know how to play and let the chips fall where they may. I know our kids are going to play their rear ends off and they are going to give it everything they have.”

LOUISBURG		28	28
0	7 - 63		
SUMNER		0	0
0	6 - 6		

**First quarter**

L: Thomas San Agustin 29 run (Alex Dunn kick)

L: Korbin Hankinson 3 run (Dunn kick)

L: San Agustin 40 run (Dunn kick)

L: Hankinson 15 run (Dunn kick)

### **Second quarter**

L: Alex Dunn 3 run (Dunn kick)

L: Jake Hill 9 run (Dunn kick)

L: Grant Harding 30 run (Dunn kick)

L: Harding 13 run (Dunn kick)

### **Fourth quarter**

L: Owen Staver 3 run (Dunn kick)

S: 58 run (kick failed)

## **STATISTICS**

RUSHING: Korbin Hankinson 7-91; Thomas San Agustin 4-88; Grant Harding 2-43; Jake Hill 5-37; Alex Dunn 4-28; Will Ridley 5-22; Nick Hull 2-21; Kyle Allen 4-19; Austin Moore 2-18, Owen Staver 3-18; Austin Terry 1-4.

PASSING: Austin Terry 3-3-59

RECEIVING: Grant Harding 2-55; Mitchell McLellan 1-4

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# Victory puts Wildcats in a tie for first in league



Louisburg junior T.J. Dover sacks the De Soto quarterback Friday night at Wildcat Stadium in Louisburg. Dover and the Wildcats picked up their second straight win with a 43-28 victory over De Soto.

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It was a must-win game for Louisburg on Friday night.

Sure, it was only the Wildcats' sixth game of the season. District playoffs haven't even started yet and there is still a long way to go.

However, if Louisburg wanted to claim at least a share of the Frontier League title, they needed to beat De Soto, which was undefeated in the league.

Louisburg rose to the challenge and did so with a lot of flair.

The Wildcats put away De Soto with big plays in their 43-28 win at Wildcat Stadium. Louisburg scored on plays of 20 yards or more on four different occasions and put De Soto in a big hole in a hurry.

Louisburg (5-1, 4-1) is now tied with De Soto and Paola at the top of the league standings and the Wildcats only have one

more league game remaining.

“It was a big win,” Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. “It was two 4-1 teams going at it and they got a win against a team (Paola) that we lost to. We just wanted to come out and establish our physicality today and that was the bottom line.”

Scoring wasn't a problem for Louisburg as it was able to do whatever it wanted for most of the game. Whether it was through the air or on the ground, the Wildcats were able to pick up big chunks of yards.



**Junior running Korbin Hankinson (left) waits to get a block from teammate Thomas San Agustin on Friday in Louisburg.**

Senior quarterback Austin Terry provided a lot of that firepower as he accounted for four touchdowns, included three on long pass plays. Terry found seniors Mitchell McLellan and Cole Kramer on touchdowns of 52 yards or more.

Terry finished the night 9 of 12 passing for 241 yards to go along with those three scores. McLellan had five catches for 137 yards and two touchdowns, while Kramer had four catches for 104 yards and a score.

“Those are our guys,” Littrell said. “We want to get them the ball and give them the opportunity to do their thing. I thought we did that a few times. If we throw the hitch enough times they are going to bite on it and they did.”

Louisburg also welcomed back junior running back Korbin Hankinson as he returned to the backfield for the first time in three weeks. Hankinson didn't have much rust to shake off as he led the Wildcats with 132 yards on the ground on 18 carries.

As a team, the Wildcats gashed De Soto for 278 yards rushing with the combination of Hankinson, Thomas San Agustin, Alex Dunn and Terry. Louisburg also put in a different wrinkle to its offense as it ran a wishbone set and had three backs in the backfield.

“We put in a little bit of bone this week,” Littrell said. “It was nice to have Korbin back, but even if he wasn't back, we still probably would have run a little bit of it. We wanted to give them something that they haven't seen a whole lot out of us and we were able to some nice things with that in the first half.”

Defensively, the Wildcats were just as good through the first three quarters. Louisburg held a good De Soto offense to two touchdowns – one on a 72-yard run on a missed assignment and the other where De Soto had a short field. Overall, Louisburg held De Soto to just 159 total yards of offense.

Junior lineman T.J. Dover had a big night on the defensive line. Dover led Louisburg with seven tackles to go along with two sacks.

Dustyn Rizzo and McLellan each finished with five tackles and Rizzo also forced a fumble. Jake Hill and Dunn also had four tackles each from the linebacker spot.

Louisburg set the tone early as it opened the game with a 13-

play, 80-yard scoring drive that ended with a 1-yard touchdown run from Terry.

The Wildcat defense responded to hold De Soto on its first possession thanks to a Dover sack. Five plays later, Louisburg made it a two score game when Terry found McLellan on a 52-yard touchdown pass.

Right before halftime, the Wildcats put together another long 11-play, 80-yard drive that ended with a 1-yard touchdown run from San Agustin to put Louisburg up 21-7.

Terry and Kramer connected on a 72-yard touchdown pass down the sideline to open the third quarter. Kramer caught the pass near the sidelines, stopped to let the defender fly by and then ran the rest of the way untouched.

De Soto added a score to cut the Wildcat lead in half, but Louisburg opened with two touchdowns to start the fourth quarter, including a 20-yard touchdown run from Hankinson and a 68-yard score from Terry to McLellan.

The Wildcats open district play Friday when they host Sumner Academy. The top two teams in each district then advance to the state playoffs and the Wildcats hope to continue the momentum they have built.

"We are 0-0 like everyone else," Littrell said. "We aren't going to forget what we have done these last six weeks. We are just going to try and build on this win and get better. If we can eliminate our mistakes, then maybe we can turn into the team that we want to be. With that being said, it is going to take four quarters to get that done and we haven't done that yet. I am still looking for that game."

DE SOTO

7

0

7

14 - 28

### **First quarter**

L: Austin Terry 1 run (Alex Dunn kick)

L: Mitchell McLellan 52 pass from Austin Terry (Dunn kick)

D: Anthony Slaughter 72 run (kick good)

### **Second quarter**

L: Thomas San Agustin 1 run (Dunn kick)

### **Third quarter**

L: Cole Kramer 72 pass from Austin Terry (Dunn kick)

D: Cole Schmitt 8 run (kick good)

### **Fourth quarter**

L: Korbin Hankinson 20 run (Dunn kick)

L: Mitchell McLellan 68 pass from Austin Terry (Terry run)

D: Schmitt 19 run (Kick good)

D: Noah Wilson 11 pass from Nate Thompson (kick good)

### **STATISTICS**

RUSHING: Korbin Hankinson 21-132; Thomas San Agustin 18-84; Austin Terry 10-28; Alex Dunn 6-23; Mitchell McLellan 1-9; Jake Hill 1-2

PASSING: Austin Terry 9-12-241-3

RECEIVING: Mitchell McLellan 5-137; Cole Kramer 4-104