

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

LOUISBURG	7	16	0	14 –
37				
SPRING HILL	7	6	6	0
– 19				

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

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.

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 Lousiburg 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

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.

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

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.

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 score 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

Wildcats end losing streak against Baldwin



Louisburg linebacker Alex Dunn (21) brings down a Baldwin runner while Anders Vance looks to clean up the play Friday in Baldwin City. The Wildcats defeated Baldwin 24-7 to go to 4-1 on the season.

BALDWIN CITY – It had been a while since the Louisburg football team had left Baldwin City with a smile on its face.

After Friday's game with the Bulldogs, the Wildcats couldn't help but flash a few grins.

For the first time since 2006, Louisburg defeated Baldwin on the road with a 24-7 win at Baker University. It was also the first time since 2010 since the Wildcats had defeated Baldwin at all.

"Now we have that monkey off our back," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said.

It was a big win for the Wildcats after coming off a heartbreaking one-point loss to rival Paola the week before. Facing another physical team in Baldwin gave the Wildcats another tough test, but this time they walked away with a crucial win.

"We preached all week that we didn't want Paola to beat us twice," Littrell said. "Last year I think they beat us two or three times. We were determined to get back to our physical style of football.

"I got away from what I thought we could do last week against Paola. I think the kids responded and appreciated the honesty on my part, but I also think they take responsibility. That is what family does when they screw up – they admit it, move on and try to get better."



Mitchell McLellan looks to haul in a pass Friday in Baldwin. McLellan made the 37-yard pass that helped set up a touchdown.

The Wildcats (4-1) seemed to get better as they were able to move the ball against the Bulldogs thanks to several different

options. Louisburg had five different players carry the ball, while quarterback Austin Terry carved up the Bulldog defense on a lot of screen passes to Cole Kramer and Mitchell McLellan.

Terry completed 12 of 16 passes for 155 yards and a touchdown. McLellan led the way 84 yards receiving, while Kramer was responsible for one of the Wildcats' four touchdowns.

"Their corners were seven yards out and backpedaling before the snap, and if they are going to do that, I trust our quarterback to throw it, I trust our receivers to catch it and get an outside shoulder and make a play," Littrell said. "Kramer did a good job on that first touchdown. We ask our receivers that when we run any hitch is to get five yards or make a move and be an athlete. I thought our kids were athletic tonight and made plays."

Louisburg started the game off with a 14-play drive and were able move the ball at will, but Baldwin intercepted a pass at the goal line to stall the drive. The Wildcats defense responded as they forced the Bulldogs to turn the ball over on downs on their first possession.

On the Wildcats' next drive, they didn't make any mistakes as they used a 13-play drive that ended with a 3-yard touchdown run from Thomas San Agustin to put Louisburg up 6-0 after the missed extra point.

It looked like the Wildcat defense was going to have a stop again as they had Baldwin on a fourth-and-1, but the Bulldogs' Justin Howard was able to break free for a 38-yard touchdown run to put Baldwin up 7-6.

Terry and the Wildcats responded right before halftime as the Louisburg quarterback hit McLellan on two big gains, including a 37-yard pass to the Baldwin 13-yard line. It was there Terry hit Kramer on a screen pass and he ran for the 13-yard score

to give Louisburg a 12-7 lead at the break.



Anders Vance (above) and Grant Harding bring down a Baldwin running back Friday.

Despite the late score, Littrell didn't like what he was seeing from his team.

"At halftime we had a nice, pleasant talk and I thought we responded well with the way we tackled and played defense," Littrell said.

The Wildcat defense shut out Baldwin in the second half and didn't let the Bulldogs cross the 50-yard line until late in the fourth quarter. Mason Koechner led the Wildcats with nine tackles on the night and Terry finished with eight.

Linemen Dustyn Rizzo and Anders Vance each added a sack, while Terry forced a fumble and Kramer got the fumble recovery in the win.

After the Wildcats gave a bulk of their carries to San Agustin and Alex Dunn in the first half, Littrell decided to put some new faces in the backfield – most notably Will Ridley. The Louisburg sophomore rushed for a team-high 70-yards in the second half to go along with his first touchdown of the season.

The line of Vance, Rizzo, Koechner, Garrett Lowry and T.J. Dover gave the Wildcats holes to run through as they racked up 205 yards on the ground.

"Thomas does some really nice things for us," Littrell said. "He had 38 carries in the Piper game and I didn't want to get up there close again to that. We have been repping Ridley and (Austin) Moore in practice so I just wanted to get some fresh eyes and legs in there.

"Will Ridley has paid his dues, and while he is a sophomore and has more dues to pay, he has had a positive attitude about the whole thing. He gave us a shot in the arm, fresh legs and ran tough. Hopefully we will get Hank (Korbin Hankinson) back next week, and if we can keep a fresh stable of backs, we can wear teams out throughout the season."

The Wildcats seem to wear the Bulldogs out a little bit as they put together two fourth-quarter drives to put the game away. Louisburg used an 11-play drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown run from Terry to put the Wildcats up 18-7 after several big runs from Ridley.

Ridley found the endzone a few minutes later as he scored on an 8-yard touchdown run that was set up thanks to a Baldwin fumble.

"Anytime you can go on the road and win in this league it is extra special," Littrell said. "The way that we physically did it makes it even better because that is a physical ball team with some good-size kids and tough hard-nosed kids. I respect Coach (Mike) Berg and his program, always have. He is one of the best coaches in the state and he always has his team ready to play."

Louisburg will try for another win Friday when it hosts De Soto. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

LOUISBURG	0	12
0	12 - 24	

BALDWIN	0	7
0	0 - 7	

Second quarter

L: Thomas San Agustin 3 run (kick failed)

B: Justin Howard 38 run (kick good)

L: Cole Kramer 13 pass from Austin Terry (pass failed)

Fourth quarter

L: Austin Terry 1 run (kick failed)

L: Will Ridley 8 run (run failed)

STATISTICS

RUSHING: Will Ridley 10-70; Thomas San Agustin 17-53; Alex Dunn 9-38; Austin Terry 9-27; Austin Moore 4-14

PASSING: Austin Terry 12-16-155-1

RECEIVING: Mitchell McLellan 5-84; Cole Kramer 4-38; Grant Harding 1-21

Paola edges Louisburg in rivalry contest



Louisburg's Cole Kramer pins the ball to the back of a Paola defender Friday at Wildcat Stadium. Kramer later came down with the catch and ran for a 62-yard touchdown. It was the Wildcats' lone touchdown in the 11-10 loss to Paola.

Friday night's homecoming matchup between the Louisburg and Paola football teams was much of the same the two fan bases have enjoyed in recent years.

It was a close, hard-hitting, grind it out football game.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, the result wasn't any different.

Thanks to a fourth quarter touchdown and 2-point conversion, Paola edged Louisburg 11-10 at Wildcat Stadium for the Panthers' fifth-straight victory over the Wildcats. Louisburg had the ball two different times late in the fourth quarter to try and win it, but both drives came up empty.

"It was a classic Louisburg/Paola football game," Louisburg coach Kyle Littrell said. "Both teams played hard and physical, but the difference was Paola made one more play than we did. Both defenses played well, but they shut our run game down completely and it was hard for us to get anything going."

After rushing for more than 300 yards the week before against Piper, the Wildcats (3-1) managed just 29 yards on the ground and they didn't have many holes to run through.

Louisburg looked to quarterback Austin Terry as he opened up the offense through the air and gave the Wildcats a lot of momentum going into halftime thanks to the hands of his receiver Cole Kramer.

Late in the second quarter, Terry lofted a pass down the sideline and Kramer reached over a Paola defender to try and make the catch. As Kramer came down with it, he pinned the ball to the back of the Paola defender, maintained control and raced 62 yards for the Wildcats' lone touchdown and a 7-3 halftime lead.



Mason Koechner (53) signals Louisburg ball while T.J. Dover holds the ball up after he recovered a fumble Friday in Louisburg.

"It was a fantastic catch by Cole and that did give us a lot of momentum going into halftime, which was something we needed because we couldn't get much going on offense," Littrell said. "With his speed, Cole is able to get behind most defenders he plays against and he did a great job of making that catch."

Offense was hard to come by in the first half as Paola dominated the time of possession. The Wildcats had just three offensive plays in the first quarter and another 12 in the second quarter.

Despite that, the Louisburg defense held strong and kept the Panthers at three points until the fourth quarter. It was the Wildcats defense that gave their team ample opportunity to put the game up two scores late in the third quarter.

Junior lineman T.J. Dover forced, and recovered a fumble at Paola's 20-yard line and gave the Wildcat offense their best field position of the night. It looked like they were going to take advantage as Terry scrambled for what appeared to be a touchdown run

However, the score was called back due to a holding penalty and the Paola defense held, forcing a field goal. Senior Alex Dunn connected on the 35-yard field goal to give Louisburg a seven-point lead.

"That was a big sequence there for us," Littrell said. "A touchdown would have put us up 14-3, and the way we were playing, I think that might have been enough and it would have forced Paola to do some different things on offense.

"Looking at the hold on tape, it looked very minimal to me, but you have to go with what the official called and we needed to do a better job of executing."

Paola got new life and they took advantage. The Panthers went on a 14-play drive, that ate up nearly seven minutes on the clock to start the fourth quarter, and scored on a Ryan Gleghorn 2-yard touchdown run.

The Panthers lined up for the extra point to tie the game with five minutes remaining, but Louisburg was called for offsides, which moved the ball close to the 1-yard line. Paola elected to go for the 2-point conversion and got it to take the 11-10

lead.

Louisburg was able to drive the ball to midfield on its next possession after a couple of completions from Terry to Mitchell McLellan, but the Wildcats eventually turned the ball over on downs.

The Wildcat defense forced the Panthers to punt one last time and got the ball back with a little more than a minute remaining. But with no timeouts, Louisburg didn't have enough time left.



Seniors Ben Brummel and Cate Stambaugh were crowned the 2015 Fall Homecoming King and Queen before Friday's game with Paola.

"The play calling at the end of the game wasn't very good and that is my fault," Littrell said. "It was just hard to get into any kind of rhythm when we didn't have the ball that much. We just couldn't get Paola off the field and they did a good job running the ball and eating up a lot of clock."

Louisburg will try and get back on the winning track Friday

when it travels to Baldwin for another Frontier League matchup. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

PAO	3	0	0	8
– 11				
LOU	0	7	3	0
– 10				

First quarter

P: 29-yard FG

Second quarter

L: Cole Kramer 62 pass from Austin Terry (Alex Dunn kick)

Third quarter

L: Alex Dunn 35 FG

Fourth quarter

P: Ryan Gleghorn 2 run (Gleghorn run)

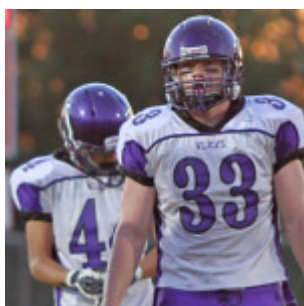
STATISTICS

RUSHING: Thomas San Agustin 12-31; Austin Terry 4-6; Alex Dunn 1-3

PASSING: Austin Terry 10-16-156-1

RECEIVING: Cole Kramer 4-95; Mitchell McLellan 2-48; Thomas San Agustin 3-11

Hupp earns spot on Oklahoma State football team



After months of training, Luke Hupp, a Louisburg High School graduate, earned a walk-on spot on the Oklahoma State football team last August. Hupp, who will redshirt this season, will lineup as a 'Cowboy Back' which is hybrid position of a fullback and tight end.

Luke Hupp made quite the jump in the football world in the last year, and did all of it without playing a single snap.

Hupp, a 2014 Louisburg High School graduate, went from intending to play football at Fort Scott Community College to finding himself on the campus of a Division I program in a matter of months. It turned out to be quite the journey for Hupp as he transformed himself to compete at the highest level.

He saw his hard work pay off when he was told in August that he was invited to walk-on to the Oklahoma State football program and officially became a member of the Cowboys.

"I just realize how blessed I am to have this opportunity,"

Hupp said. "A lot of kids, especially from small towns like Louisburg, don't get to experience what this is like and play at this level. I am not where I want to be yet, though. I want to eventually get on the field."

Hupp's road to Oklahoma State started in Fort Scott, where he originally signed to play football out of high school. However, when Hupp arrived, he was having second thoughts and wondered about giving up football entirely.

"When I left there I wasn't sure what I wanted to do," Hupp said. "I just wanted to take some time to think about things. Football is one of the things I truly did love and sometimes it takes you awhile to realize that."

His love definitely came back to him, but Hupp had to work for it.

When he realized he wanted to play football again, Hupp went to train at Simoneau Sports Performance in Overland Park, a training facility that is run by the former Kansas State linebacker Mark Simoneau.

For the next seven months, Hupp made the trek almost every day to train and get in better shape. While he was there, he would train alongside NFL players like Andy Studebaker, Chase Coffman and Ryan Mueller.

"It was great training against those guys because I would just push myself to try and keep up with them because I knew I would be facing that type of competition at Oklahoma State," Hupp said. "They gave me a little bit of advice on what to expect, but just training with him helped me out a great deal."

At the same time, he was checking out possible programs to walk-on to and Hupp had family in the Stillwater, Okla., area.

He contacted the Oklahoma State coaches and sent them film but

never heard anything back. Hupp sent them another email, and again, nothing.

That didn't stop him.

"I think I probably emailed their recruiting coordinator every day," Hupp said. "I know they probably gets lots of email from kids with film so they have to pick out who they pay attention to, but I wanted them to know that I was going to school here and that I was serious. This was something that I really wanted."

Hupp's persistence paid off as he was one of 110 players that were invited to the walk-on tryouts. The coaches recorded his 40 time, bench press numbers and also did some route running drills among other things.



Hupp was welcomed to the Oklahoma State football team and given his own locker for earning a walk-on spot.

Based on the sheer number of participants, the odds were stacked against Hupp. Then a few days later, he received a

phone call.

Hupp got the news he was waiting for as he was officially a member of the Oklahoma State team. He was one of just seven players to earn walk-on spots.

"I was just very excited to get the call," Hupp said. "I was beyond thrilled. But after I hung up the phone, it was strictly business right after that. I didn't want to celebrate too much because this was just one step on where I want to go, and that is on the field. Honestly, the whole time I was thinking that I had no other option but to make the team."

The joy of making the team was quickly doused when he went to his first college football practice against some of the top players in the Big 12 Conference and the nation.

"I hadn't put on the pads since I left high school probably," Hupp said. "Then when I get there, it is an eye-opening experience. The hardest hit I ever got in football in high school – that is what it is like every time they hit you in college, if not harder."

As for his spot on the field, the Cowboys have slotted Hupp as a "Cowboy back" which is a hybrid fullback and tight end in their offense. He is one of nine players on the roster at that position.

The coaches also told Hupp that he will redshirt this year to help him get acclimated to Division I football.

"I just need to keep working hard and getting stronger," Hupp said. "It is very hard to be a college football player because you are either in class, practice or in the weight room. There isn't much time for anything else. I just love it down here. The atmosphere around the program is great and they are excited for football."

"I am in it for the long run. I put in a lot of hard work to

get to this point and I want to keep going and eventually see the field one day. I have been given a good opportunity, and I am not going to give this up."