

# Frontier champion Wildcats earn 18 spots on all-league team



*The Louisburg football team earned 18 spots on the all-league team that was released last week. Overall, 13 Wildcats were named to the all-league team.*

Going undefeated in the Frontier League and winning its first league title since 2018, the Louisburg football team caught the eyes of a lot of opposing coaches.

So when the all-league teams were released last week, it came as no surprise that there were plenty of Wildcats to be found on it.

Louisburg earned 18 spots on the all-league list, that includes eight on the offensive side, seven on defense and three on special teams. In all, 13 Wildcats earned all-league honors as a few of them earned spots on both sides of the ball.

"I felt like we were represented well," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "We said at the banquet that team success leads to individual recognition and I think that is shown by the amount of kids that were selected to all league teams. You don't get to vote for your own athletes, but the league coaches must have noticed our players and the quality of athletes we were able to have on the field this year."

On offense, four Wildcats were named to the first team in junior quarterback Declan Battle, senior running back Riley Van Eaton, senior receiver Mason Dobbins and senior lineman Nathan Vincent. Senior J.R. Rooney was named to the second team offensive line.

Seniors Will Hutsell (lineman), Mack Newell (tight end) and junior Caden Caplinger (multi-purpose) were named as honorable mentions.



Louisburg also earned four spots on the all-league first team defense. Sophomore Ashton Moore was selected as linebacker, while Rooney was named to the first team for his play at defensive tackle.

Senior Jase Hovey was named as a first team defensive back, while Layne Ryals was a first team multi-purpose player.

Junior Wyatt Holland was a second team linebacker and Vincent earned second team honors at defensive end. Hutsell was an honorable mention selection at defensive tackle.

In the specialist category, Ryals was selected as a second team kicker and honorable mention punter. Junior Hunter Heinrich was also named as an honorable mention returner.



Offensively, Battle led the Wildcats as he finished the season with more than 1,700 yards of total offense. Battle threw for 1,027 yards and eight touchdowns and he also rushed for 709 yards and 10 touchdowns.

“Declan was huge for us all year,” Harding said. “He was an effective passer for us and when he carried the ball he was a big play threat. He was able to run our offense really well and we are excited to see him take another step next year.”



On the outside, Dobbins was one of Battle’s favorite targets. Dobbins led the team with 25 catches, 382 yards and four touchdowns.

“Mason was a big play threat for us at all times,” Harding said. “You don’t get a lot of athletes with his combination of



height and speed. Mason generally had a corner playing off of him and a safety over the top to prevent the big play and for him to still be able to make some of those big plays is a testament to his skill set and his athletic ability.”

RILEY VAN EATON | RILEY VAN EATON | RILEY VAN EATON | RILEY VAN EATON | RILEY VAN EATON

R. YARD

RE YARD

TDS

1,043

188

15

L

RILEY VAN EATON

ALL FRONTIER LEAGUE FIRST TEAM-RUNNING BACK

LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE



The Wildcats were also successful on the ground thanks to Van Eaton. He carried the ball 172 times for 1,043 yards and 15 touchdowns. He also had 188 yards receiving out of the backfield.

“Riley was tough to tackle all year,” Harding said. “He made a lot of extra yards by his ability to slip through tacklers. I am proud of Riley for picking up the offense and executing it well. He was also a threat for us to catch passes out of the backfield.”

NATHAN VINCENT | NATHAN VINCENT | NATHAN VINCENT | NATHAN VINCENT | NATHAN VINCENT

TACKLES

SACKS

TPG

TFL

80

6.5

8.0

8.5

L

NATHAN VINCENT

ALL FRONTIER LEAGUE FIRST TEAM OL, SECOND TEAM DL

LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE



Vincent also provided the Wildcats with strong play on both sides of the ball as he led the Louisburg offensive line at his left tackle spot. He was a force on defense with 80 tackles, 8.5 tackles for a loss and 6.5 sacks.

“Nathan had a very good year for us at the left tackle spot,” Harding said. “Nathan always played with an edge and was able to execute a variety of blocks for us very well. Our offensive line as a whole played well all year and allowed us to average over 33 points per game.

“On the defensive side Nathan made a ton of plays for us. He was very good against both the run and pass. Nathan switched positions for us from linebacker to defensive end and really excelled at his new spot.”



Rooney also earned honors on both sides of the ball as he was a first-team selection at his defensive tackle spot and second team on the offensive line. He finished the season with 36 tackles, a sack and a forced fumble.

“JR had a very good year at his right guard spot,” Harding said. “JR was asked a lot of times to pull and kick and he was very effective at that. He had the quickness to get to second level and make blocks for us to spring big plays.

“He was also rock solid on the defensive side as well. As a DT, he was able to take on blocks and demand double

teams. This allowed our linebackers to run free and were our leading tacklers on the team.”



A player card for Will Hutsell, a defensive tackle. The card features a background image of Hutsell in a purple jersey tackling an opponent in a white and orange jersey. On the left, a vertical purple bar contains the text "WILL HUTSELL | WILL HUTSELL | WILL HUTSELL | W". To the right of this bar is a statistics table. Below the table is a large white letter "L" with a purple outline. To the right of the "L" is the player's name "WILL HUTSELL" in white, with "ALL FRONTIER LEAGUE HM OL AND DL" below it. In the top right corner, there is a logo for "MIDBURY SPORTS ZONE".

TACKLES
39

TFL
3.5

TPG
4.3

F. RECD
1

**WILL HUTSELL**  
ALL FRONTIER LEAGUE HM OL AND DL

Hutsell was also another Wildcat lineman to earn all-league honors on both sides of the ball at right tackle and defensive tackle. Hutsell had 39 tackles on the year and 3.5 tackles for loss.

“Will was just solid for us all year long,” Harding said. “On both sides of the line we knew exactly what we were going to get from Will and that was consistency. Will is a kid who worked his butt off at all times and turned himself into a really good player.”



A player card for Caden Caplinger, a multipurpose player. The card features a background image of Caplinger in a purple jersey running with the ball. On the left, a vertical purple bar contains the text "CADER CAPLINGER | CADER CAPLINGER | CADER CAPLINGER | C". To the right of this bar is a statistics table. Below the table is a large white letter "L" with a purple outline. To the right of the "L" is the player's name "CADER CAPLINGER" in white, with "ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE HM MULTIPURPOSE PLAYER" below it. In the top right corner, there is a logo for "MIDBURY SPORTS ZONE".

CATCHES
12

YARDS
146

TD
2

**CADER CAPLINGER**  
ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE HM MULTIPURPOSE PLAYER

Also on offense, Caplinger turned in some big catches throughout the season and earned honorable mention honors at



the multi-purpose spot. He finished with 12 catches for 146 yards and two touchdowns.

“Caden came on late in the year,” Harding said. “I felt like his two best games were against Spring Hill and Bonner in the playoffs on the offensive side of the ball. Caden obviously made huge plays for us against Spring Hill in the 2 minute drill for the win. We are excited to have Caden back next year and hopefully see more of those plays.”

CATCHES	9
YARDS	93
AVG	10.3
DEF TD	1

**L**

**MACK NEWELL**  
ALL FRONTIER LEAGUE HM TIGHT END

LOUISIANA SPORTS ZONE

In his first year of varsity action, Newell was a big part of the Wildcat offense at tight end. Along with helping the offensive line, he also finished with nine catches for 93 yards.

“Mack was a good blocker for us,” Harding said. “He was able to downblock well as well as loop inside and lead up on linebackers. Mack was also a big body for us in the passing game. For him to make an all league team with this being his first time playing football since his freshman year was pretty cool to see.”



The Wildcats also thrived on defense as it was led by Moore at the linebacker spot. Moore, a sophomore, led Louisburg with 114 tackles on the season, including 12 stops for a loss.

“Ashton was able to make a lot of plays from his linebacker spot this year for us,” Harding said. “He was our leading tackler and made several plays behind the line of scrimmage including forcing a safety against Rogers-Heritage. Ashton has good speed and can make plays running sideline to sideline. We are excited to have Ashton continue to make those plays over the next two years.”



Hovey was also a defensive presence for Louisburg at his safety spot. The Wildcat senior finished with 58 tackles to go along with two interceptions, including one for a touchdown earlier in the year against Paola.



“Jase battled through a hamstring injury the entire year,” Harding said. “He wasn’t able to reach his top speed, but he still made a ton of plays for us. He was the eraser of our defense. Anytime a play was about to break free it seemed like Jase was there to make the tackle. When he did make tackles running the alley most times he packed a punch as well.”



Ryals was selected to three different positions on the all-league team, including a first team spot as a defensive multi-purpose player. He finished the season 46 tackles, including five for a loss.

The Louisburg senior was also named as the all-league second team kicker, and honorable mention punter. Ryals converted 5 of 7 field goal tries this season, with his longest coming from 43 yards. He was also 38 of 39 on extra points.

“Layne had an excellent all around year,” Harding said. “On the defensive side of the ball Layne was our brains out there. He did a terrific job communicating and getting everyone lined up where they should be. Layne could do a variety of things for us from lining up on the line of scrimmage to being out wide in coverage.

“He was also very good at pinning teams inside the 20 with punts this year and several times inside the 5. His punts lead to a safety against Rogers-Heritage and a blocked punt

for a touchdown against Baldwin. As far as kicking, Layne was a huge weapon for us. Most times teams were starting inside the 20 or at the 20 at best with his ability to kick touchbacks. He also was a weapon on extra points and field goals. Without his field goals we do not win the game against Spring Hill.”



Holland teamed up with Moore to provide strong linebacker play for Louisburg and finished second on the team in tackles. Holland ended the year with 89 tackles, including seven for a loss, two forced fumbles and one sack.

“Wyatt transitioned to playing linebacker for the first time this year and did really well,” Harding said. “Wyatt, just like Ashton, has a lot of speed and can make plays sideline to sideline. He was our second leading tackler and always plays with great energy and effort. We are excited to see Wyatt take another step next year.”



Heinrich provided the Wildcats with a strong return game on special teams as he was selected as an honorable mention.

“Hunter had several returns into plus territory for us this year,” Harding said. “Our kickoff return team was a good special team unit for us and Hunter was a big part of that. The biggest kickoff return for Hunter was against Bonner Springs in the playoffs. We preached all week about starting fast. Hunter took the opening kickoff and returned it into plus territory setting up our offense and we rolled from there.”

## ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL

### Offense

#### First Team

Quarterback: Declan Battle, Louisburg, junior

Running Back: Octavius Lyles, Eudora, senior; Colton Brusven, Tonganoxie, junior; Riley Van Eaton, Louisburg, senior

Wide Receiver: Isaiah Holthaus, Tonganoxie, junior; Mason Dobbins, Louisburg, senior; Adrion Seals, Eudora, junior

Tight End: Jaden Hamm, Eudora, senior



Offensive Line: Carter Meek, Spring Hill, junior; Nathan Vincent, Louisburg, senior; Eythen Moore, Eudora, senior; Kale Murdock, Paola, senior; Connor Cole, Tonganoxie, senior

Multi-Purpose: Ja'Veon Shepherd, Ottawa, senior; Landon Taylor, Paola, senior

## **Second Team**

Quarterback: Kole Manley, Eudora, junior

Running Back: Colton McKanna, Spring Hill, junior; Landon Taylor, Paola; Zion Woodin, Ottawa, senior

Wide Receiver: Sam Darnell, Baldwin, senior; Jace Kerley, Paola, sophomore; Hayden Currie, Ottawa, senior

Tight end: Cooper D'Albini, Spring Hill, junior

Offensive Line: Austyn McFadden, Ottawa, senior; Jake Van Horn, Baldwin, sophomore; J.R. Rooney, Louisburg, senior; Micah Barron, Eudora, senior; Charlie Nolting, Bonner Springs, senior

Multi-Purpose: Jackson Torrez, Spring Hill, sophomore

## **Honorable Mention**

Quarterback: Jack Harvey, Baldwin, junior; Talon Langford, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Jett Osbern, Paola, senior

Running Back: Peyton Parks, Bonner Springs, senior; Charlie Zeller, Paola, senior; Errol Siemon, Eudora, sophomore; Cody Buck, Baldwin, junior; Draven Pipkin, Spring Hill, senior

Wide Receiver: Nate Sims, Ottawa, freshman; Ryker Grossner, Baldwin, junior; Todd Brown, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Karen Streit, Bonner Springs, junior

Tight End: Mack Newell, Louisburg, senior; Junior Jara, Spring Hill, senior

Offensive Line: Derek Gomez, Ottawa, senior; Cole Rodden, Spring Hill, junior; Will Hutsell, Louisburg, senior; Thomas Cromer, Eudora, junior; Eli Richmond, Paola, junior; TJ Leeper, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Brett Davidson, Baldwin, sophomore; Carter Blann, Spring Hill, senior

Multi-Purpose: Caden Caplinger, Louisburg, junior

## **DEFENSE**

### **First Team**

END: Jaden Hamm, Eudora, senior; Mark Debiak, Spring Hill, junior

TACKLE: Kale Murdock, Paola, senior; JR Rooney, Louisburg, senior; Thomas Davis, Spring Hill, senior

Linebacker: Braylen Hoobler, Eudora, junior; Brandon Richardson, Spring Hill, senior; Jack Messersmith, Tonganoxie, senior; Ashton Moore, Louisburg, sophomore

Backs: Kale Hammerschmidt, Eudora, senior; Adrion Seals, Eudora, junior; Wyatt Harris, Tonganoxie, senior; Jase Hovey, Louisburg, senior

Multi-Purpose: Layne Ryals, Louisburg, senior

### **Second Team**

End: Nathan Vincent, Louisburg, senior; Jaiden Bender, Eudora, senior

Tackle: Kevin Whitten, Eudora, senior; Austyn McFadden, Ottawa, senior; Connor Cole, Tonganoxie, senior; Jay Flores, Bonner Springs, senior

Linebacker: Errol Siemon, Eudora, sophomore; Noah Anderson, Spring Hill, junior; Brody Stewart, Paola, senior; Wyatt Holland, Louisburg, junior

Backs: Nate Sims, Ottawa, freshman; Jack Harvey, Baldwin,

junior; Landon Taylor, Paola, senior; Talon Langford, Tonganoxie, sophomore

Multi-Purpose: Matt Magette, Eudora, junior

### **Honorable Mention**

End: Jake Van Horn, Baldwin, sophomore; Eli Richmond, Paola, junior; Nathen Smith, Tonganoxie, senior; Brett Davidson, Baldwin, sophomore; Keanu Tiafau, Spring Hill, junior; Tommy Evans, Ottawa, junior

Tackle: Will Hutsell, Louisburg, senior; Trenton Leeper, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Wade Enman, Paola, junior

Linebacker: Dylan Waggerman, Paola, senior; Matt Magette, Eudora, junior; Parker Huge, Ottawa, junior; Keegan Rimmer, Ottawa, junior; Wesley Martin, Baldwin, senior; Peyton Parks, Bonner Springs, senior

Backs: Hayden Currie, Ottawa, senior; Hagan Whitcraft, Spring Hill, junior; Charlie Zeller, Paola, senior; Desmon Williams, Bonner Springs, sophomore

Multi-Purpose: James Newton, Spring Hill, senior; Braeden McGrath, Bonner Springs, senior

### **Specialists**

#### **First Team**

Kicker: Jackson McWilliams, Tonganoxie, junior

Punter: Talon Langford, Tonganoxie, sophomore

Returner: Colton McKanna, Spring Hill, junior

#### **Second Team**

Kicker: Layne Ryals, Louisburg, senior

Punter: Zion Woodin, Ottawa, senior



Returner: Ja'Veon Shepherd, Ottawa, senior

### **Honorable Mention**

Kicker: Zion Woodin, Ottawa, senior; Ryan Jackson, Spring Hill, sophomore

Punter: Layne Ryals, Louisburg, senior

Returner: Nate Sims, Ottawa, freshman; Hayden Currie, Ottawa, senior; Hunter Heinrich, Louisburg, junior

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## **Week 10 Athlete of the Week: Riley Van Eaton**



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week ten of the fall sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones-Craig Holtzen.

### **RILEY VAN EATON, SENIOR, FOOTBALL**

Louisburg senior Riley Van Eaton was a big part of the offense for the Wildcat football team all season. On Thursday in the Wildcats' loss to St. Thomas Aquinas in the regional playoffs, Van Eaton tallied 139 yards of total offense and nearly 100 of those came on the ground.

The senior running back led the Wildcats in rushing on the season as he finished with 1,043 yards on the ground and another 188 yards receiving. He also tallied 15 touchdowns in 10 games.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Colin McManigal

Week 7: Allie Kennedy

Week 8: Declan Battle

Week 9: Cade Gassman



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# Wildcats' season comes to a

# close with loss to Aquinas



***Louisburg seniors Jase Hovey (left) and Layne Ryals team up to bring down a St. Thomas Aquinas player Thursday during the Class 4A regional playoffs at Wildcat Stadium.***

All seasons come to an end at one point or another, but for the Louisburg football team, the Wildcats weren't ready to be done.

That made it all the more difficult as they suffered a 40-0 loss to St. Thomas Aquinas on Thursday in the regional round of the Class 4A playoffs. The Wildcats watched as Aquinas celebrated on their own field – a celebration they were hoping to do themselves.

The Wildcats did their best to keep the Saints down, but just couldn't keep up with Aquinas – who moved down from Class 5A a year ago.

Still, Louisburg put together a season to remember as it reeled off eight wins in a row and earned its first Frontier League championship since 2018.

"It is a tough one, obviously, but I think in the next few days that people are going to be proud of the season we put together," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "To be league champions, when nobody picked us or expected us to do it, I think the kids put together a phenomenal season and it is something to be proud of."

Kansas Class 4A football has emerged as one of the toughest



classification to win a state championship.

A class that already features perennial power Bishop Miege and St. James Academy (who won the state title the last two years), added another this season with the inclusion of St. Thomas Aquinas.

All three play in the challenging Eastern Kansas League against all the Blue Valley programs – which mainly consist of Class 6A schools.

Each of the private schools were in Louisburg's part of the bracket and the Wildcats were going to have a difficult road. Unfortunately for Louisburg, the Wildcats could not get past Aquinas – the best team Louisburg has seen this season.



***Louisburg head coach Drew Harding talks to his team following the Wildcats' loss Thursday to Aquinas.***

"They are a really good team," Harding said. "They have a physical line up front and have some big backs that can run downhill well. They have an effective passing game too.

"They are a really good offensive team, but they are really good defensively as well. Their front is great, linebackers

are fast and physical and they have the best group of defensive backs that we have seen all year. All across the board, they are a good team and well coached."

It wasn't a high-scoring game in the first half as the Wildcat defense did their best to slow the Saints down. After Aquinas scored on their opening drive, the Wildcats had a chance to answer.

Louisburg put together a drive that lasted more than six minutes that included by runs by Riley Van Eaton and quarterback Declan Battle that took the ball to midfield.

Battle then tried to hit Mason Dobbins down the sideline for a pass, but Aquinas was called for pass interference to put the ball in Saints territory. Van Eaton then picked up a first down for Louisburg on a 14-yard run.

Aquinas sacked Battle on a third down at the 30, which set up a Layne Ryals field goal attempt. The 47-yard kick was blocked, but the Wildcats ran more than six minutes off the clock.



***Louisburg senior Will Hutsell (61) and sophomore Ashton Moore bring down an Aquinas runner Thursday.***

Louisburg's defense came up big and forced a 3-and-out thanks to tackles for a loss by Wyatt Holland and Jase Hovey. The Saints did the same to the Wildcat offense and got the ball back early in the second.

Nathan Vincent and Ashton Moore forced the Saints offense into a 3rd and 14 thanks to tackles for a loss, but quarterback Aiden Skinner completed a 25-yard pass to keep the drive alive. Three plays later, the Saints scored on a 20-yard run.

St. Thomas Aquinas would take advantage of short Wildcat punt on their next possession and Sean Carroll scored on a 2-yard run to go up 21-0 at halftime.

"I really think we had chances to put some points on the board, but when you make mistakes that is going to change the game and change the momentum," Harding said. "We just couldn't make those plays, and when you play a really good team, the mistakes you make get magnified and that is what happened."

Aquinas tacked on three more touchdowns in the second half and the Wildcats didn't get many looks at the end zone in the final two quarters.

Their best look came toward the end of the first half as Battle connected with Hovey and Van Eaton on pass plays. The Wildcats eventually got down to the Saints' 11-yard line, but their drive stalled there.





***Louisburg senior Riley Van Eaton avoids an Aquinas defender to gain some extra yards Thursday.***

Van Eaton led the Wildcat rushing attack with 97 yards on the ground and also had 42 yards receiving. Battle threw for 87 yards on the night and also had 31 yards on the ground.

Defensively, the Wildcats made some big plays throughout the night. Hovey led the Wildcats with 13 tackles and Moore finished with 10. Louisburg also combined to record seven tackles for a loss.

The loss also marks the end for 16 Louisburg seniors. Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman, Isaiah Whitley, Mack Newell, Jackson Kush. Carson Wade, Jase Hovey, Riley Van Eaton, Nathan Apple, Layne Ryals, Nathan Vincent, Hunter Moore, Will Hutsell, Jackson Rooney, Christian Golladay and Brayton Brueggen all played their final game as a Wildcat.

“We have 16 seniors and top to bottom they all contributed within their respective roles,” Harding said. “It is tough because they have put a lot into the program. While their playing days of Louisburg football might have ended, they will

always be Louisburg football players and a part of this program.”

## SCORING SUMMARY

**LOU 0 0 0 0 – 0**

**STA 7 14 6 13 – 40**

### First Quarter

S: Gianni Rizzi 32 run (Matt Seibolt kick)

### Second Quarter

S: Sean Carroll 20 run (Seibolt kick)

S: Carroll 2 run (Seibolt kick)

### Third Quarter

S: Jeremiah Penney 20 pass from Aiden Skinner (kick failed)

### Fourth Quarter

S: Carroll 17 run (kick failed)

S: Brogan Jaworski 35 run (Seibolt kick)

## STATISTICS

**RUSHING** – Riley Van Eaton 22-97; Declan Battle 11-31; Jase Hovey 1-7; Ashton Moore 1-0

**PASSING** – Declan Battle 8-20-87

**RECEIVING** – Riley Van Easton 3-42; Mason Dobbins 3-31; Jase Hovey 1-10; Mack Newell 1-4

**TACKLES** – Jase Hovey 13, Ashton Moore 10, Wyatt Holland 8, Layne Ryals 7, Will Hutsell 5, Caden Caplinger 4, Nathan



Vincent 4, Declan Battle 2, Isaiah Whitley 2, J.R. Rooney 2, Mason Dobbins 1, Mack Newell 1, Brady Hickey 1, Carson Wade 1

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# Wildcats open state playoffs with shutout of Bonner Springs



***Louisburg senior Nathan Apple (left) celebrates his first varsity touchdown with teammate Layne Ryals late in Friday's shutout of Bonner Springs.***

The last time Louisburg and Bonner Springs squared off in September, the Wildcats found themselves down by a point at halftime before reeling off more than 40 points in the second half to get the win.

This time around, Louisburg left no doubt who was going to win the game.

Louisburg scored seven touchdowns and held Bonner Springs scoreless in a 48-0 win Friday in the first round of the Class 4A state playoffs at Wildcat Stadium.

"We talked all week that it was a 7-6 game at halftime last time we played them and they were ahead," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "We had to start out fast and play like the

second half of the first meeting we had. Right off the bat we started with a good kick return to give us good field position and we never looked back from there.”

Everyone contributed for the Wildcats (8-1) as they reeled off their eighth consecutive victory. Six different players scored touchdowns and quarterback Declan Battle distributed the ball well.

Battle had three touchdown passes on the night and all three to different receivers. The Louisburg junior finished with 132 yards through the air as the Wildcats jumped out to a 35-0 lead at halftime.



***Louisburg senior Riley Van Eaton sheds a Bonner Springs defender Friday at Wildcat Stadium. Van Eaton rushed for more than 100 yards and two touchdowns.***

“This is the first game where I think we really spread the ball around,” Harding said. “We had catches by five or six different receivers and our backs were getting good carries.”

On the game’s opening kickoff, the Wildcats put themselves in

good position. Junior Hunter Heinrich returned the kick 59 yards, and the Wildcats found the end zone on a 4-yard run by senior Riley Van Eaton.

It was the first of two touchdowns for Van Eaton, who finished the game with 116 yards on the ground on just 17 carries.

After the Wildcats forced a Bonner three-and-out, a shanked Braves punt gave Louisburg the ball on the Bonner Springs 34-yard line. A 24-yard pass to Mack Newell from Battle set the Wildcats up inside the 5, and there Battle hit senior Corbin Hamman for a 3-yard touchdown pass.

On the Wildcats' next possession, Battle found junior Caden Caplinger on a 22-yard touchdown pass as Louisburg took a three score lead into the second quarter.



***Louisburg senior Mason Dobbins hauls in a long touchdown pass in the second quarter of Friday's playoff game against Bonner Springs.***

Louisburg's passing game continued to thrive as Battle hit senior Mason Dobbins for 57-yard touchdown pass, then

sophomore Ashton Moore had a 14-yard touchdown run before halftime to give the Wildcats a 35-0 lead.

Van Eaton scored a touchdown on a 2-yard run in the third quarter, and then with a running clock, the Wildcat reserves had a chance to score in the fourth.

It turned out to be a special moment, as with under a minute left in the game, backup quarterback Alex Saad hit senior Nathan Apple for a 24-yard score as it was Apple's first varsity touchdown.

"That was the highlight of the night for me," Harding said. "There are not enough good things you can say about Nathan Apple and the kind of kid that he is. He works so hard every single day. He was supposed to go to Scholar's Bowl on Thursday, but he stayed back so he could stay on special teams and be with his teammates. For him to get a touchdown was awesome."

Defensively, the Wildcats shined as well. Louisburg held Bonner Springs to just 133 yards of total offense and forced a turnover.

Moore led the Wildcats with nine tackles on the night, while senior Nathan Vincent finished with seven, including three tackles for a loss and a sack.





***Louisburg senior Isaiah Whitley chases down the Bonner Springs quarterback Friday in the team's 48-0 win.***

Senior Isaiah Whitley also recorded a sack, while Heinrich led the team with three pass deflections. J.R. Rooney, Caplinger and Whitley each had a forced fumble, while Will Hutsell had a fumble recovery.

"Defensively, different people were making plays and we got a shutout, so that is always good," Harding said. "It was a lot of fun to see their success."

Christian Golladay, Hutsell, Rooney, Jaymes Melton, Vincent and Brayton Brueggen all played on the offensive line and controlled the line of scrimmage. Defensively, Rooney, Hutsell, Newell, Whitley and Vincent did the same.

"The big boys up front played well," Hardin said. "We had a couple new guys step and start as we had some guys gone for FFA and missed practice. They new guys like Christian Golladay were able to get in there and then the starters were able to get back in after a bit. We had some good depth and they all played well."



The Wildcats have a big test ahead of them in the regional round of the playoffs as they will host St. Thomas Aquinas. The game has been moved up to Thursday from Friday due to inclement weather in the forecast. Kickoff is still set for 7 p.m.

Harding knows it will be a challenge for his group as Aquinas is ranked No. 1 in Class 4A by the Kansas Football Coaches Association, but his players are prepared and excited to get back on the field.

"They are a good team," Harding said of Aquinas. "I think they are ranked No. 1 in the state, but if we have learned anything about the kids that we have is that they battle no matter the circumstances. We will have a game plan ready, get prepared and come out and compete."

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

**LOU 21 14 7 6 – 48**

**BON 0 0 0 0 – 0**

### **First quarter**

L: Riley Van Eaton 4 run (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Corbin Hamman 3 pass from Declan Battle (Ryals kick)

L: Caden Caplinger 22 pass from Battle (Ryals kick)

### **Second quarter**

L: Mason Dobbins 57 pass from Battle (Ryals kick)

L: Ashton Moore 14 run (Ryals kick)

### **Third quarter**

L: Van Eaton 2 run (Ryals kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Nathan Apple 24 pass from Alex Saad (run failed)

## STATISTICS

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 17-116; Declan Battle 5-43; Ashton Moore 3-24; Wyatt Holland 2-23; Logan Henry 3-13; Russell Wiseman 2-10

PASSING – Declan Battle 7-9-132; Alex Saad 3-4-43

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 2-67; Mack Newell 1-24; Nathan Apple 1-24; Caden Caplinger 1-22; Myles Vohs 2-19; Riley Van Eaton 2-16; Corbin Hamman 1-3

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 9, Nathan Vincent 7, Wyatt Holland 6, Caden Caplinger 4, Isaiah Whitley 3, Will Hutsell 3, J.R. Rooney 3, Mason Dobbins 2, Corbin Hamman 2, Mack Newell 2, Jackson Kush 2, Layne Ryals 2, Brayden Yoder 2, Declan Battle 1, Reid McCaskill 1, Brady Hickey 1, Carson Wade 1, Brayton Brueggen 1

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## Week 8 Athlete of the Week: Declan Battle



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week

eight of the fall sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones-Craig Holtzen.

## **DECLAN BATTLE, JUNIOR, FOOTBALL**

Louisburg junior quarterback Declan Battle helped the Wildcat football team to a big victory in their final regular season game of the year. Battle drove the Wildcats 80 yards, and completed an 18-yard touchdown pass to Caden Caplinger in under a minute to give Louisburg a 20-17 come-from-behind win over Spring Hill. The victory gave the Wildcats their first Frontier League championship since 2018.

Battle had a pair of big touchdowns in the game. He scored the team's first touchdown in the third quarter on a 27-yard run that tied the game at 10-all and then followed with the game-winning pass late in the fourth. In all, Battle finished with 205 total yards on the night and guided the Wildcats to their seventh straight victory.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Colin McManigal

Week 7: Allie Kennedy



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# Last-minute score secures league title for Wildcats on Senior Night



*Members of the Louisburg football team celebrate their Frontier League crown with head coach Drew Harding following the Wildcats' 20-17 come-from-behind win Friday over Spring Hill.*

With just over a minute left in regulation Friday, Louisburg was staring at the possibility of their first league loss and was watching an outright Frontier League title slip away.

Spring Hill scored a touchdown and took a four-point lead with 1 minute and 12 seconds left. Things were looking bleak for the Wildcats.

As it turned out, 52 seconds was all the Wildcats needed to pull off one of the season's most memorable moments. Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found junior Caden Caplinger in the endzone on an 18-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds remaining to give the Wildcats a 20-17 victory.

The win was the Wildcats' seventh straight on the season and clinched the team's first Frontier League championship since

2018.

“There weren’t a lot of people who thought we could be league champions,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “I don’t think it was anything that people expected out of us, and the Frontier League is really good. For this group to come to work, get better every day and to see success is pretty sweet.”

Battle, Caplinger and the rest of the Wildcat offense put together a drive to remember – a drive that gave them a league title and undefeated record in league play.



Louisburg junior Caden Caplinger fights for some extra yards Friday on the Wildcats’ final drive against Spring Hill.

Louisburg started on its own 20-yard line, but the Battle to Caplinger connection was used early and often. Battle hit Caplinger for a 30-yard pass to midfield on the first play of the drive.

The Wildcats found themselves in a big hole after Battle was sacked at the 45 and Louisburg faced a 3rd and 14 with under a



minute remaining. Battle completed a screen pass to Riley Van Eaton and Spring Hill was called for roughing the passer on the play, which gave Louisburg new life.

Louisburg (7-1) took advantage as Battle found Caplinger again for an 18-yard pass to the 18-yard line, which set up the go-ahead score on the next play.

"At first I just stood there, I almost felt frozen as I took in the fact that he caught it," Battle said. "J.R. (Rooney) was next to me and we both started shaking each other celebrating."

The Battle and Caplinger combo accounted for 66 of the 80 yards on the drive, but it wasn't the first big play for the duo. Last season, Battle hit Caplinger for a game-tying score against Tonganoxie that forced overtime in an eventual Wildcat win.

"Declan and Caden have been playing together for a long time," Harding said. "They hooked up for a big play against Tonganoxie as well last year, so for them to be able to do it again was pretty cool."

Another big obstacle for the Wildcats to overcome on the final drive was the Bronco defense, which had stymied the Louisburg offense up to that point. Still, the offensive line of Will Hutsell, Rooney, Jaymes Melton, Brayton Brueggen, Nathan Vincent and Mack Newell helped put together a drive when their team needed it the most.

"Spring Hill had a lot of big guys up front and all week our coaches prepared us for them and put us in a good position to do our job on Friday," Vincent said. "As far as the final drive, we knew we would have to give Declan the best protection he's had all season because we knew Spring Hill was going to send a lot of pressure."

With 20 seconds remaining, Spring Hill would have one more

opportunity, but the Broncos fumbled the kickoff and Caplinger recovered it to seal the victory.

The win was extra special for 16 Louisburg seniors as they were also able to celebrate that league title on Senior Night.

Jackson Kush, Nathan Apple, Carson Wade, Isaiah Whitley, Riley Van Eaton, J.R. Rooney, Will Hutsell, Brayton Brueggen, Christian Golladay, Nathan Vincent, Jase Hovey, Mack Newell, Hunter Moore, Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals all got to end their final regular season home game with a win.

“The Frontier League title means so much to me and this team,” Rooney said. “As a team before the season, the seniors wrote down our goals, and league champs was on everyone’s list. To clinch it on senior night was amazing. Going undefeated at home, to win it on our field in front of our town – it was an indescribable feeling.”



***Louisburg senior Declan Battle breaks free for a 27-yard touchdown in the third quarter of Friday’s game against Spring Hill.***

The Wildcats were forced to play from behind early as Spring Hill jumped out to a double-digit lead in the second quarter and took a 10-0 advantage.

Layne Ryals gave the Wildcats a little momentum going into halftime with a 27-yard field goal, but they still trailed 10-3.

Battle came up big in the third quarter for Louisburg as he found a rare wide-open look at the end zone when he broke loose for a 27-yard touchdown run down the sideline.

Ryals then came through again as he converted a 43-yard field goal later in the quarter to give the Wildcats their first lead at 13-10. In all Ryals, put eight points on the board in what was a tight game throughout.

“Three points was the difference, so all of his kicks were big for us,” Harding said. “Layne was able to put six points up on the board for us on field goals, and then some extra points as well. He is a huge weapon for us and we have all the confidence in the world in him to go out there and put a field goal through.”



***Louisburg senior kicker Layne Ryals celebrates after making a 43-yard field goal to give the Wildcats the lead.***

Midway through the fourth quarter, the Wildcats were forced to punt deep in their own territory and gave the ball back to Spring Hill with a three-point lead.

The Broncos put together a strong drive of their own that ended with Colton McKenna's second touchdown of the night and Spring Hill was up 17-13.

Despite giving up the touchdown on the Broncos' final drive, the Wildcat defense limited Spring Hill's chances and gave up just 10 points through the first three quarters. It also allowed just 179 yards of total offense.

Sophomore linebacker Ashton Moore led the team with 12 tackles. Junior linebacker Wyatt Holland added 10 to go along with a sack and a forced fumble. Jase Hovey and Hutsell each finished with nine stops on the night.

That final Spring Hill touchdown set up the heroics from the Wildcat offense and the rest is history.

"Coming onto the field at the 20 yard line with very little time is never a good feeling for most people," Battle said. "But I was confident because we practice 2 minute drills every week. I knew we just had to execute our assignments and it would end in our favor."





***Louisburg's J.R. Rooney (left) and Wyatt Holland douse head coach Drew Harding with the water bucket after the Wildcats' 20-17 win.***

It was one of the more difficult victories on the season for Louisburg, which saw an improved Spring Hill team from the beginning of the year.

"It was a grind, for sure," Harding said. "Spring Hill is a really good team and they are just getting better and better as the season goes on. We knew it was going to be a battle.

"We started off the game about as bad as you can be, didn't play well in the first half and it was a struggle offensively through most of the game. But to see no one hang their head when we were down, then put a drive together and come back and win was just awesome."

Now starts a new season for the Wildcats as they enter the postseason as the No. 3 seed in Class 4A. Louisburg will host No. 14 Bonner Springs at 7 p.m. this Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

"Everybody knows we're playing for one more game, it's just



that one week at a time mentality that we've had all season long," Vincent said. "I know the seniors are going to give it everything we have to keep playing and so will the rest of the team."

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

**LOU 0 3 10 7 – 20**

**SH 3 7 0 7 – 17**

### **First Quarter**

S: Ryan Jackson 23 FG

### **Second Quarter**

S: Colton McKenna 1 run (Jackson kick)

L: Layne Ryals 27 FG

### **Third Quarter**

L: Declan Battle 27 run (Ryals kick)

L: Ryals 43 FG

### **Fourth Quarter**

S: McKenna 1 run (Jackson kick)

L: Caden Caplinger 18 pass from Battle (Ryals kick)

## **STATISTICS**

**RUSHING** – Riley Van Eaton 13-69; Declan Battle 7-32; Jase Hovey 4-13

**PASSING** – Declan Battle 13-21-173

**RECEIVING** – Caden Caplinger 3-66; Ashton Moore 2-33; Mason

Dobbins 2-28; Corbin Hamman 2-26; Jackson Kush 2-11; Riley Van Eaton 2-9

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 12, Wyatt Holland 10, Jase Hovey 9, Will Hutsell 9, Nathan Vincent 7, Layne Ryals 5, Mack Newell 4, Mason Dobbins 3, Isaiah Whitley 3, J.R. Rooney 3, Hunter Heinrich 2, Brady Hickey 1, Carson Wade 1, Caden Caplinger 1

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## Wildcats record second straight shutout with win over Ottawa



***Louisburg's Mack Newell (10) celebrates his fumble return for a touchdown with teammate Jase Hovey (22) on Friday in Ottawa. The Wildcats shutout the Cyclones, 44-0.***

OTTAWA – Louisburg head coach Drew Harding was a little concerned with how his team would come out in Friday's road contest at Ottawa.

The players had been out of school for two days, and for some teams, routine is everything.

Turns out, there was nothing to be worried about.

Louisburg jumped on the Cyclones from the start and never looked back in a 44-0 shutout. It was the sixth straight

victory for the Wildcats and their second straight shutout.

"I thought we played well overall," Harding said. "We were a little out of our routine with parent-teacher conferences leading to the players being out of school the last two days. You always worry about a slow start when that happens, but I thought we started pretty fast."

The Wildcats (6-1) scored on their opening drive as senior Riley Van Eaton found the end zone on a 3-yard touchdown run and Louisburg jumped out to a 7-0 lead.

Louisburg added another touchdown a few minutes later when junior quarterback Declan Battle scored on an 11-yard run to put the Wildcats up 14-0.

That was more than enough for the Wildcat defense as the Cyclones never threatened to score. It was the second straight week with a shutout, and after their victory against Tonganoxie on Oct. 7, have now won the last two games by a combined score of 93-0.



***Louisburg's Ashton Moore (21) and Will Hutsell (61) bring down***

***an Ottawa player on Friday.***

The Wildcats forced a lot of big plays to help themselves on defense.

Senior Nathan Vincent forced two fumbles on the night to go along with a sack. Carson Wade, Brady Hickey, Hunter Moore and Mack Newell all had fumble recoveries.

It was Newell's fumble recovery in the second quarter that led to a Wildcat touchdown.

Louisburg was up 17-0 after a 28-yard Layne Ryals field goal. On the Cyclones' next possession, Vincent sacked the Ottawa quarterback and Newell picked it up and ran it in for the 7-yard touchdown to put the Wildcats up 24-0 at halftime.

In all, the Wildcats held the Cyclones to just 139 yards of total offense and forced four turnovers.

Sophomore linebacker Ashton Moore led the Wildcats with 12 tackles on the night, including two for a loss. Sophomore Caden Caplinger was second on the team with seven, while Nathan Apple and Vincent each had six.

"Defense has been playing well," Harding said. "They have been forcing turnovers to give the offense short fields and have done a good job reading their keys and flying around. I think we are getting closer to playing that complete game. There are always things you can improve on, but we are moving in the right direction."



***Louisburg receiver Hunter Heinrich breaks free for a 20-yard reception Friday at Ottawa.***

Van Eaton helped the Wildcats put the game away in the second half with two touchdown runs of 11 and nine yards. He finished the game with 154 total yards and had three scores.

Battle scored his second touchdown of the night late in the third quarter on a 6-yard run. He finished with 89 yards rushing, along with 115 yards through the air.

Special teams also played a big role in the win as Ryals converted on five extra point attempts. He was 1 for 2 in field goal attempts, with the lone miss being blocked.

Ryals also set up Cyclones deep in their own territory with several touchbacks, including an 80-yard touchdown back where he kicked off from his own 20-yard line.

“I thought special teams were good,” Harding said. “One focus we had this week was we knew our kickoff team needed to be good. Ottawa has returned several kicks for touchdowns this year and several others into plus territory. We were able to



limit that with either Layne kicking it out of the endzone or our coverage guys flying down and making tackles.”



***Louisburg’s J.R. Rooney (left) and Brayton Brueggen get off the line for the Wildcat offense.***

Louisburg will play to win the Frontier League title outright as the Wildcats host Spring Hill this Friday for Senior Night. The Wildcats are currently undefeated in league play and know they have a tough challenge ahead of them against the Class 5A school.

“Spring Hill is a team that just seems to keep getting better and better,” Harding said. “They are pretty big up front on both sides of the ball. They are able to platoon and keep people fresh so they will pose a big challenge for us. It’s a big week for us and we will need to have a good week of preparation.”

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

**LOU 14 10 20 0 – 44**

**OTT 0 0 0 0 – 0**

### **First quarter**

L: Riley Van Eaton 3 run (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Declan Battle 11 run (Ryals kick)

### **Second quarter**

L: Layne Ryals 28 FG

L: Mack Newell 7 fumble return (Ryals kick)

### **Third quarter**

L: Van Eaton 11 run (kick failed)

L: Van Eaton 9 run (Ryals kick)

L: Battle 6 run (Ryals kick)

## **STATISTICS**

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 16-102; Declan Battle 10-89; Jase Hovey 1-11; Darby Van Eaton 1-1; Ashton Moore 2-0

PASSING – Declan Battle 10-15-115

RECEIVING – Riley Van Eaton 3-52, Jackson Kush 3-30, Hunter Heinrich 1-20, Mack Newell 1-10, Corbin Hamman 1-9, Mason Dobbins 1-4

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 12, Caden Caplinger 7, Nathan Apple 6, Nathan Vincent 6, Wyatt Holland 5, Brady Hickey 4, Jase Hovey 4, Layne Ryals 4, Isaiah Whitley 3, Mack Newell 3, Will Hutsell 3, Christian Golladay 3, Hunter Heinrich 2, Carson Wade 1, Conlee Hovey 2, Hunter Moore 2, Brayden Yoder 2, J.R. Rooney 2, Mason Dobbins 1, Corbin Hamman 1, Reid McCaskill 1, Jackson Kush 1, Lane Cunningham 1, Erik Lien 1, Josh Holtzen 1.

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# Wildcats take sole possession of Frontier League with shutout of Tonganoxie



*Louisburg seniors Isaiah Whitley (left) and Nathan Vincent celebrate a big play during Friday's 49-0 homecoming win over Tonganoxie.*

With just one team left between Louisburg and being all alone atop the Frontier League standings, the Wildcats made sure they got that top spot all to themselves.

By time Friday's game with Tonganoxie was over, the Wildcats left no doubt who is the top team in the league.

Both Louisburg and Tonganoxie entered the Wildcats' homecoming contest undefeated in league play, but it was the Wildcats who stayed that way as they rolled to a 49-0 rout of the Chieftains.

"One of our goals was to win a league title," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "This was an undefeated league team that came in and obviously we had to win to keep those hopes alive. The boys really stepped up to the challenge."

It started on the defensive end for the Wildcats as the pitched a shutout and never gave the Chieftains a good look at

the endzone. Louisburg forced two turnovers and also had two sacks on the night.

Senior safety Jase Hovey recorded an interception, while senior Nathan Vincent got a sack and a forced fumble, that was recovered by Mack Newell. Vincent led the Wildcats with 10 tackles, including four for a loss, and Newell also finished with sack.

Junior linebacker Wyatt Holland was second on the team with eight stops. As a team, the Wildcats also had 11 tackles for a loss.



***Louisburg junior Wyatt Holland brings down a Tonganoxie runner Friday.***

"I think we are negative this year in the turnover battle, so this week we made it a priority to win the turnover battle," Harding said. "We got a lot of short fields out of it and that obviously helps the offense."

Special teams also played a factor as Holland got a hand on a punt that gave Louisburg a short field to work with. Kicker



Layne Ryals was 7-for-7 on extra points and also had a punt downed inside the 5.

Combine that with more than 350 yards of offense, and the Wildcats put together one of their more complete performances of the season.

"I think it is close," Harding said of his team playing a complete game. "We still have things that we can improve upon, but that has been our goal all year is to play a complete game. We played well tonight on offense, defense and special teams. We started the game strong in the first half and just carried it over in the second."

The Wildcats forced a punt to open the game and Holland tipped the ball to give Louisburg good field position to start. Quarterback Declan Battle put Louisburg up early with a 5-yard touchdown pass to senior Mason Dobbins.



***Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle breaks free for a long run Friday. Battle rushed for 204 yards in the contest.***

It was the first of several touchdowns for Battle and the



Wildcats. Battle, along with senior running back Riley Van Eaton, finished with three touchdowns each as Louisburg took control early.

Battle broke free for several runs and finished 204 yards on the ground on 10 carries and two rushing scores. Van Eaton had 82 yards rushing to go along with his three touchdowns.

Louisburg controlled the line of scrimmage despite missing starting right tackle, Will Hutsell, who was out with an injury. Senior Christian Golladay filled in and joined J.R. Rooney, Jaymes Melton, Brayton Brueggen, Vincent and Newell paved the way for the Wildcat attack.

The Louisburg defensive front did the same as the Wildcats were able to control all the action at the line.

"Offensive line did a good job of firing out and we were able to just run down hill," Harding said. "Defensively, I think we really controlled the line of scrimmage and limited their ability to get explosive plays in the run game. The big boys up front played well."

The Wildcats took a 21-0 lead at the end of the first quarter on scores that were helped by two Tonganoxie turnovers. The Hovey interception led to a 5-yard touchdown by Van Eaton.



***Louisburg's Ashton Moore (left) and Jase Hovey team up to bring down a Tonganoxie player Friday at Wildcat Stadium.***

Vincent's strip sack would help set up a 10-yard touchdown by Van Eaton and the Wildcats had a firm hold of the game from there.

In the second quarter, Battle broke free for a 45-yard run that set up a 3-yard score by Hovey, and after another Van Eaton touchdown, the Wildcats took a 35-0 halftime advantage.

Battle had a big third quarter as he scored on runs of 65 and 27 yards to ice the game for Louisburg.

"We had some really good individual performances, but as a team we played really well," Harding said. "Our defense played phenomenal and really complemented our offense. Special teams was phenomenal and I just felt like our guys were selfless. They were excited for the team success over their individual success and if we keep doing that then I think we can be pretty good.

Louisburg, which has now won five straight, will try to make

it six this Friday when the Wildcats travel to Ottawa. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

“We still have work to do,” Harding said. “We are getting closer to the playoffs and it is time for us to peak. I think we took a step in that direction.”

## SCORING SUMMARY

**LOU 21 14 14 0 – 49**

**TON 0 0 0 0 – 0**

### First quarter

L: Mason Dobbins 5 pass from Declan Battle (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Riley Van Eaton 5 run (Ryals kick)

L: Van Eaton 10 run (Ryals kick)

### Second quarter

L: Jase Hovey 3 run (Ryals kick)

L: Van Eaton 1 run (Ryals kick)

### Third quarter

L: Battle 65 run (Ryals kick)

L: Battle 27 run (Ryals kick)

## STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 10-204; Riley Van Eaton 15-82; Jase Hovey 1-3; Darby Van Eaton 2-1

PASSING – Declan Battle 9-14-67

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 4-35; Jackson Kush 1-13; Caden

Caplinger 1-10; Mack Newell 1-5; Riley Van Eaton 2-4

TACKLES – Nathan Vincent 10, Wyatt Holland 8, Ashton Moore 6, Brayden Yoder 6, Isaiah Whitley 5, Mack Newell 5, Erik Lien 5, Reid McCaskill 4, Brady Hickey 4, Carson Wade 3, Conlee Hovey 3, Mason Dobbins 2, Layne Ryals 2, Christian Golladay 2, Hunter Heinrich 1, Jase Hovey 1, J.R. Rooney 1

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## Harding named Kansas City Chiefs Coach of the Week



***Louisburg head coach Drew Harding poses with his team for a picture after he was awarded the Kansas City Chiefs Coach of the Week award prior to Tuesday's practice.***

If winning an overtime game on the road last week wasn't good enough, the Louisburg football team got even more good news Tuesday – more specifically the coaching staff.

Louisburg head coach Drew Harding was named as the Kansas City Chiefs Coach of the Week for the state of Kansas after he led his team to a 28-27 overtime win over previously unbeaten Eudora last Friday.

Harding has guided the Wildcats to four consecutive wins after losing their first game of the season to Rogers Heritage (Ark.). Louisburg now sits atop the Frontier League standings

with a 4-0 record in league play.

Former Kansas City Chiefs player Gary Spani presented Harding with the award prior to the team's practice Tuesday and the Louisburg first-year coach knows this is more than just about himself.



***Drew Harding shakes hands with former Kansas City Chiefs player Gary Spani on Tuesday, who came to present him with the coach of the week award.***

"I would say I was surprised to receive the award and it is an honor," Harding said. "However, this is much more of a team award than it is a me award. The award should go to the players who worked hard all week to learn and execute the game plan on Friday night.

"All the assistant coaches should also be highlighted as they were the ones who taught the game plan to players throughout the week. We are happy to receive this award to highlight the players' hard work and preparation for last Friday's game."

With the honor, Harding received a plaque from the team, along



with a signed ball from Chiefs head coach Andy Reid.

It didn't stop there.

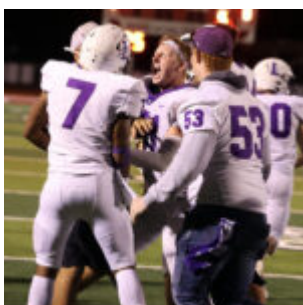
Louisburg High School will receive a \$500 grant from the Hunt Family Foundation. Harding is now qualified for the Eric Driskell Coach of the Year Award, which will be voted on later this fall. The Eric Driskell Coach of the Year Award is selected by a panel comprised of the Missouri and Kansas Boards from the Greater Kansas City Football Coaches Association.

In its 26th season, the 2022 High School Coach of the Week is a joint initiative of the Kansas City Chiefs and the National Football League. This program is designed to recognize and reward Kansas City area high school coaches for superior performance on a weekly basis while honoring individuals who are shaping today's youth and tomorrow's leaders.

The Kansas City Chiefs partner with PrepsKC to select Coaches of the Week from Missouri and Kansas each week.

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## **Louisburg                      knocks                      off undefeated Eudora in overtime thriller**



***Louisburg senior Nathan Vincent celebrates with his teammates after the Wildcats earned a 28-27 overtime victory Friday at Eudora.***

EUDORA – As Layne Ryals took the field with just seconds left in regulation Friday in Eudora, he was ready to convert the ultimate walk-off.

Louisburg drove down the field against Eudora to set up what would be a game-winning 55-yard field goal to cap what would be an epic win for the Wildcats. Ryals lined it up and gave it his best shot.

“I have made a 55-yard field goal in practice, so I knew I had the capability to do it so I went out there telling myself I can make it,” Ryals said. “If you don’t believe in yourself being able to do it then you definitely won’t make it.”

The belief was there, but the kick sailed just wide to the right and the game – which had big Frontier League implications – went to overtime. It wasn’t more than 10 minutes later and Ryals had the chance again to win the game for his team.

After Eudora scored first in the overtime and failed on its 2-point conversion, Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found Mason Dobbins in the corner of the end zone for a 4-yard touchdown pass to tie it up.

It gave Ryals one more chance to win it for his team, this time from a much closer distance. The Louisburg senior converted the extra point and the Wildcats captured the 28-27 overtime win and gave the Cardinals their first loss of the season.



***Kicker Layne Ryals celebrates with holder Corbin Hamman (4) after making the game-winning extra point.***

“Standing on the sideline, it’s nerve racking for sure, but once I step out on the field and take a couple of practice swings I forget everything and just focus on kicking the ball,” Ryals said.

The kick put the Wildcats (4-1, 3-0) atop the Frontier League standings as they vie to get their first league title since 2018.

“This game wasn’t easy and it was a challenge for both teams,” Dobbins said. “Eudora is a really good team and we came in knowing that. We just had to play sound defense and play well on offense and that is what we did.

“It is an amazing feeling, almost surreal. I wanted to win really badly and I know the rest of the team did as well. To make that come true, it really meant a lot.”

It was a contest full of big plays, twists and turns and a number of opportunities – for both teams – to win the game.

For awhile, it didn't appear to be the Wildcats' night.

Louisburg turned the ball over three times, had a number of penalties and couldn't take advantage of a Eudora muffed punt late in the fourth quarter. It had all the markings of a game the Wildcats weren't supposed to win.

"It felt like we were spoiling opportunities that were given to us," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "We had like three turnovers, there was a muffed punt that we couldn't take advantage of and there were so many things that weren't going our way. For our players to keep battling, for our coaches to keep battling, it was awesome and I'm very proud of all these guys."



***Louisburg's Isaiah Whitley (7) and Will Hutsell (61) teammate up to bring down Eudora's Octavius Lyles.***

Despite the mistakes, the Wildcat defense kept Louisburg in the game as they held Eudora to just one touchdown in the final three quarters. Louisburg came up with big stops and limited the Cardinals' explosive plays.

Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore led the team with tackles from the linebacker spot with 18 on the night, including 11 solo stops. Junior Wyatt Holland also registered double digit tackle numbers with 11.

Senior Nathan Vincent finished with nine tackles and a sack, while senior Mack Newell also recorded a sack. Battle and Ryals each forced a Eudora fumble.

"We gave up some big plays and they are a really explosive team," Harding said of Eudora. "Their backs are fast and their offensive is such where all 11 guys on defense have to do their job, and if you don't, they are going to get a big play. That happened a couple times, but for a majority of the night the defense did a phenomenal job. Coach (Ty) Pfannenstiel and the rest of the assistants did a good job preparing them and getting ready for his test."

Eudora scored on the first play of overtime as tight end Jaden Hamm made a juggling 10-yard catch in the corner of the end zone on a pass from quarterback Kole Manley to give the Cardinals the lead. Eudora, however, failed on its 2-point conversion, and left the door open for Louisburg.





***Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore dives into the endzone for a touchdown Friday at Eudora.***

The Wildcats took advantage, and after a pair of Jase Hovey runs, Battle found Dobbins on the 4-yard touchdown to tie it on a third down.

“Coach called the play, and at first I thought that I was going to have to run it in,” Battle said. “But Mason really sold the post corner on that and I was just able to float it into his arms and he made the play.”

Dobbins wasn’t about to drop the pass in what was pivotal moment in the contest.

“When coach called the pass play, I knew I had the talent to beat the corner,” Dobbins said. “When Declan threw that ball up, I just told myself that this was game. I practice every day to catch balls and make big plays like that. Before the game, our group always breaks down on ‘playmakers’ and that is what I was trying to be.”

Then came Ryals’ extra point, which to many of the players and

coaches, seemed more like a formality than anything else.

"I knew we won," Dobbins said. "I trust Layne 100 percent and he is a great kicker. It was great to celebrate after he made it."

Still, there might have been a little uneasiness with the game on the line.

"I was very nervous," Harding said. "Eudora usually gets a good rush and they have some athletic kids over there, but to see it go through and see all the kids celebrating, was a lot of fun."

Eudora opened the game with the touchdown when Manley found Hamm for a 32-yard touchdown pass to put the Cardinals up 7-0. The Wildcats put together a drive of their own late in the first quarter, and after a couple of long completions to Dobbins, scored on a 1-yard run by Hovey to tie it up.

The Cardinals quickly grabbed the lead back as Octavius Lyles broke free for a 77-yard touchdown run as time expired in the first quarter.



***Louisburg senior receiver Mason Dobbins stiff arms a Eudora defender for some extra yards Friday.***

Louisburg would tie it up again in the second quarter when Moore scored on a 7-yard touchdown run to even the score at 14-all and it remained that way till halftime.

The Wildcats opened the second half with another strong drive that ended on a 1-yard touchdown by Riley Van Eaton and gave Louisburg a 21-14 advantage. It was also the first time Eudora had trailed all season.

Late in the third, the Cardinals responded when Manley found Brayden Hoobler for a 33-yard touchdown pass to tie it 21. It stayed that way till the overtime.

There was still big moments in the fourth quarter when a Louisburg punt hit off the back of a Eudora player and Moore recovered the loose ball to give the Wildcats new life.

Although they wouldn't score, the Louisburg defense held firm and gave the offense another chance to score on Ryals' long field goal attempt to the end the fourth quarter.

"We felt like we had a better chance of him making that than trying a Hail Mary," Harding said. "I think he had the leg on it, but it was just a little bit to the right. That is obviously a really tough kick to make, but to bounce back and make the extra point with everything on the line was huge."

The Wildcats will try for their fifth straight win this Friday when they host Tonganoxie (3-2) for homecoming, who is also unbeaten in the league standings.

"Hopefully this just gives us more confidence," Harding said. "We have not played a complete game yet and that is something we are striving to do. We have another great test against Tonganoxie coming up, and they are also undefeated in league, so another big game next week and we have to be ready to go."

## **SCORING SUMMARY**

**LOU 7 7 7 0 7 – 28**

**EUD 14 0 7 0 6 – 27**

### **First quarter**

E: Jaden Hamm 32 pass from Kole Manley (kick good)

L: Jase Hovey 1 run (Layne Ryals kick)

E: Octavius Lyles 77 run (kick good)

### **Second quarter**

L: Ashton Moore 7 run (Ryals kick)

### **Third quarter**

L: Riley Van Eaton 1 run (Ryals kick)

E: Braylen Hoobler 33 pass from Manley (kick good)

### **Overtime**

E: Hamm 10 pass from Manley (2-point failed)

L: Mason Dobbins 4 pass from Declan Battle (Ryals kick)

## STATISTICS

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 17-58; Jase Hovey 10-54; Ashton Moore 5-23; Declan Battle 5-17

PASSING – Declan Battle 11-19-123

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 5-77; Riley Van Eaton 2-22; Caden Caplinger 2-16; Jackson Kush 1-5; Mack Newell 1-3

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 18, Wyatt Holland 11, Nathan Vincent 9, Jase Hovey 6, Isaiah Whitley 5, J.R. Rooney 5, Caden Caplinger 4, Declan Battle 3, Layne Ryals 3, Mason Dobbins 2, Carson Wade 2, Mack Newell 1, Will Hutsell 1.