

Eighth-grade football finishes with winning record



LMS eighth-grade running back Ben Wiedenmann runs past a defender during a game earlier this season. The Wildcats finished their season with a 4-2 record.

The Louisburg Middle School eighth-grade football team faced a lot of adversity during its season, but the Wildcats battled through it to finish what was a successful campaign.

The Wildcats ended their season with a 4-2 record and rattled off three wins in their next four games after suffering a season-opening loss to county rival Paola.

“The kids have a lot of talent on the eighth-grade level and if they can stick together throughout high school they have the potential to do great things,” Louisburg coach Greg Darrington said.

After falling to Paola, the Wildcats bounced back with a 16-6 win over Spring Hill and then put together its best performance against Wheatridge in Gardner. Louisburg’s offense came alive in the win, especially running back Ben Wiedenmann as he rushed for close to 100 yards and had three touchdowns.

Unfortunately, the Wildcats also lost several starters for the season in that game, but still managed to lose only one game the rest of the year.

Louisburg used its defense to help get a 14-8 win over Eudora in its next game as Eli Johnson and Andy Hupp each made big plays defensively.

The Wildcats lost a 22-14 contest to Trailridge before responding to shutout Baldwin 8-0 to get a little revenge in the process.

"We were able to stop one of the biggest backs in the league that game," Darrington said of the Baldwin win. "Baldwin was the only team to beat these eighth-graders last year. The kids got up and played the best defensive game of the year."

A fifth win was in the Wildcats' sights against Pioneer Ridge, but inclement weather forced the postponement and the game was not replayed.

Members of the eighth-grade football team are Ethan Shaffer, Gunner Young, Kevin Parmely, Dawson Barnes, Trevin Lohse, Luke Dudzik, Justin Collins, Eli Johnson, A.J. Drew, Ben Wiedenmann, Jay Scollin, Andy Hupp, Chad Barnes, Cole Evans, Will Patterson, Matt Madison, Keaton Light, Braden Aiken, James Nelson, Jace Rader, Xander Chennault, Charlie Hutson and Kyle McChesney.

Seventh-grade wins final two games of season

The Louisburg seventh-grade football team may have hit a rough stretch during the middle part of its schedule this season, but the Wildcats responded to win their final two contests to finish the season with a 3-4 record.

"We had two hard losses coming down to the last plays of the game," Louisburg coach Andy Wright said. "The team was competitive and put up a tough fight in every game. The team worked hard all season, they learned some valuable lessons about playing together as a team and finished strong."

Louisburg opened its season strong with a 13-7 win over rival Paola, but went on a four-game losing streak that featured a two-point loss to Spring Hill (14-12) to start and an overtime loss to Wheatridge (18-12).

The Wildcats lost to Eudora (28-14) and Trailridge (20-8), but responded with a 35-6 blowout win over Baldwin and followed that up with a 28-12 victory over Pioneer Ridge in the season finale.

Members of the seventh-grade team are Michijah Pankau, Aiden Barker, Gage Stamm, Brandon Doles, Bryce Gage, Tyler Owens, Carson Kern, Kolby Kattau, Hayden Feikert, Thomas Koontz, Reid Justesen, Isaiah Shrock, Chase Pritchard, Nathan Hamilton, Remington Rice, Carter Stiles, Reece Gorley, Gavin Whisenhunt, Luis Rios and Terrance Foster.

LMS football ends season on strong note



Louisburg Middle School seventh-grader Elijah Johnson hurdles a Eudora player during the Wildcats' season finale Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium. The seventh-grade team finished the year with a 6-1 record.

The Louisburg Middle School seventh-grade football team had a chance to have a little fun in its final game of the season.

The Wildcats piled up 30 points in the first half Tuesday in their final home game against Eudora and they never looked back. Louisburg went on to win 30-8 over the Cardinals to finish their season with a 6-1 record.

Following their 30-point outburst, Louisburg had a chance to play its reserves for much of the second half and Louisburg coach Kyle Wright saw a lot of positives from everyone during this game and the season.

“Overall, I am very proud of the boys for an outstanding season,” Louisburg coach Kyle Wright said. “This is a hard working group with some talent that also is coachable as they listen and always want to improve and keep getting better. The results on the field reflected that as we had a lot of success and kept getting better each week.”

Louisburg opened the game with a score on its first possession when Elijah Johnson took the snap from center and found Ben Wiedenmann for a long touchdown pass to put the Wildcats up 6-0.

Kicker Luke Dudzik then went for onside kick on the ensuing kickoff and teammate Justin Collins recovered to give Louisburg the ball back.



Louisburg seventh-grade quarterback Dawson Barnes finds some running room Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium.

The Wildcats drove the ball down the field and it ended with a 2-yard touchdown run from Johnson. Quarterback Dawson Barnes then found Johnson for the 2-point conversion and a 14-0 lead.

In the second quarter, Johnson had his second rushing touchdown of the day on a 15-yard run. Louisburg got Braden Aiken involved for the 2-point conversion as the normal lineman took the handoff and barreled in the endzone for the conversion.

Louisburg's defense came up big late in the first half when Jay Scollin recovered a fumble to set the Wildcats up with good field position.

All it took was one play for Louisburg to score as Johnson rumbled for a 31-yard touchdown run. Barnes ran in the 2-point conversion to complete the Wildcat scoring.

It was a good way to end the season after the Wildcats suffered their only loss of the season the week before against Baldwin. Louisburg an early lead, but it eventually fell 22-20 on a furious comeback by the Bulldogs.

Despite the loss, the Wildcats finished with a strong season and ended on a high note.

“I’m excited to see what this group can do in the future because they have a lot of potential if they continue to work hard and dedicate themselves to being athletes,” Wright said.

Eighth-grade team shines in finale

The LMS eighth-grade football team also had quite a bit of fun in its last game of the season as it traveled to Eudora on Tuesday.

The Wildcats racked up several touchdowns on their way to a 54-0 victory over the Cardinals. The win also gave Louisburg a winning season as it finished with a 4-3 record after going 1-6 a year ago.

“This team deserved to have some success,” Louisburg coach Brian Keegan said. “We had some athletes step up this year that did not contribute as seventh graders. We stayed healthy and kept our focus. This was a fun year. We all wanted to go undefeated, but bouncing back after last year’s season is a great feat. These boys will be a fun group to watch in high school.”

It was a team effort for the Wildcats in their season finale.

Running back Charlie Koontz recorded three touchdowns and each of those were more than 45 yards. Fellow running back Dallas Newberry also finished with a pair of scores, including a 75-yard touchdown run.

Quarterback Madden Rutherford found a way to score through the air as he hit receiver Michael Waldron for a 45-yard touchdown pass.

Rutherford wasn’t done either as he returned a punt 45 yards

for a touchdown, and he also had a 65-yard quarterback keeper for a score. Dalton Hilt also added several 2-point conversions for the Wildcats.

On defense, Waldron and Andrew Krause recorded interceptions for Louisburg. The Wildcats also controlled the line of scrimmage thanks to the play of Drake Varns, Hunter Millbern, Collin Hamilton, Garrett Harding, Tyler Bussard and Brayden White, holding Eudora to four first downs.

“The kids did a great job of putting everything together for their final game of the season,” Keegan said. “I could not be prouder of how they responded to adversity and challenges that they encountered during the season.”

White selected to represent USA Football in bowl



Louisburg Middle School eighth-grader Brayden White (92) goes out onto field at Hall of Fame Stadium as one of the team captains during the National Development Team game in early July in Canton, Ohio. White was recently selected to represent the United States and participate in the 2016 International Bowl in Dallas.

Brayden White lives for the game of football.

It started when he attended his first Kansas State football game at the age of 2 months and has since grown into something most athletes his age only dream about. Brayden is ready to take the field on the national stage – as an eighth-grader.

Brayden, a student at Louisburg Middle School, has been selected to represent the United States 15-and-under division team for USA Football and participate in the 2016 International Bowl against Canada on Feb. 3 in Dallas. If the stage wasn't big enough, he also will be playing in one of the biggest venues in the National Football League – AT&T Stadium – home of the Dallas Cowboys.

“It is something I have never felt before, it is just amazing,” Brayden said after finding out of his selection to the International Bowl. “To play down in Dallas will be a lot of fun and I am looking forward to it.”

To get to this point, Brayden put in a lot of work and his road to USA Football started in late May with a simple tryout. Brayden and his family were made aware of a tryout at Piper High School that would allow him to be able to compete for a spot on the USA National Development Team.

Standing at 6 feet, 2 inches and weighing around 215 pounds, Brayden didn't look like the prototypical eighth-grader.

“Some of the people there thought I was a sophomore in high school,” he said.



Brayden White (left) played a lot of defensive end during his time with the USA National Development Team in Canton, Ohio.

The offensive and defensive lineman certainly made an impression on some of the coaches at the tryout as he was consistently going up against freshmen and sophomores during drills.

“We were doing 1-on-1 and 7-on-7 type drills going down the line and I was going up against sophomores and I was winning,” Brayden said.

Just days later, Brayden got the news he was hoping for as he was selected for the National Development Team. He, along with his family, made the trip to Canton, Ohio, for the six-day camp that ended with a game at the Hall of Fame stadium in early July.

“I have never seen anything like it,” he said. “There were over 400 kids there and not a lot of them were from Kansas. There might have been 20 at most. There were tons of California and Texas kids and just a lot of really good players.”

Brayden worked on both sides of the ball, and although most of his time was spent as a defensive end or tackle, he also played some right tackle on offense.

To start his week, Brayden and his teammates practiced three times a day and watched film. There were a total of four developmental teams, and on the third day, the teams played each other in mini 20-minute games during the jamboree setting.

Of course, the week ended with an actual contest as Brayden's "White" team went up against the "Red" squad. The game was broadcast on the Internet which gave his family and friends a chance to see how he stacked up against the rest of the competition.

The announcers listed Brayden as one of the "Top 5 Players to Watch" on his team. He also was selected as one of the team captains.

"I was in there with freshmen and sophomores and I thought I did OK against them," he said. "There were times where the running back would get away but those were some of the fastest kids that I have ever seen.

"It was just amazing. I wasn't really scared of those kids. I wanted to make them scared of me."

His performance during the week-long camp left his parents, Nick and Melissa, with some memorable moments.

"I couldn't have been prouder," Nick said. "We have been in a lot places and played a lot of games and there have been times where I look at the other teams and I feel like we are too small town and we might be in a little over our head, but he has always pulled through and shined. In Canton he turned it on and it was great to see."

Then in early September the news Brayden had been waiting for finally came – he was headed to Dallas to represent the United States in the International Bowl.

The International Bowl, which will be broadcast on ESPN3, has

featured alumni that have went on to play in the NFL, such as Tampa Bay quarterback Jameis Winston and St. Louis running back Todd Gurley.

Although the game isn't until early February, the players will travel to Dallas a week early for practice, before competing in a series of jamborees and official international games.

It is an opportunity Brayden knows doesn't come around often and one that he put a lot of effort into.

"Some people have said that this opportunity was just handed to me, but that is not the case," Brayden said. "I earned and worked for everything. I am going up against a lot of really talented players and I am holding my own against kids older than me."

Brayden will still be one of the younger players on his 15-and-under team when he travels to Dallas, but he is not worried about any of that. He just wants to play the game, do his best and hopefully it leads to something bigger in the future.

"My goal is to play at a Division I school somewhere and I don't really care where," he said. "I just love football. That is my dream."

Eighth-grade football snaps losing skid



Louisburg's Madden Rutherford intercepts a pass during Tuesday's home contest with Ottawa at Wildcat Stadium. The Wildcats ended a two-game losing streak with a 24-6 win over Ottawa.

The Louisburg Middle School eighth-grade football team broke its two-game losing skid Tuesday and did so with strong performances on both sides of the ball.

The Wildcats were able to force turnovers and they turned those into scores as they downed Ottawa 24-6 at Wildcat Stadium thanks to a big second half. Louisburg scored 24 unanswered points to even its record to 2-2 on the season.

Louisburg forced three second-half turnovers, which gave the Wildcats a spark after watching long drives in the first half come up empty.

Madden Rutherford came up with two second-half interceptions, and Kaden Oehlert recovered a fumble for the Wildcats. The Wildcat defensive line of Brayden White, Garrett Harding, Hunter Millbern and Drake Varns put pressure on the Ottawa quarterback.

"They dominated the line of scrimmage," Louisburg coach Brian Keegan said of his defense. "They worked hard all week on pursuing the ball and pressuring the quarterback. The defense won this game."

Down 6-0, the Wildcats opened the third quarter with the fumble recovery and turned that into an 8-yard touchdown run from Charlie Koontz. Rutherford, the Wildcat quarterback, ran it in for the 2-point conversion to give Louisburg an 8-6 lead.

On Ottawa's next drive, Rutherford intercepted the Cyclone pass. Then a couple of plays later, Koontz rumbled for a 38-yard touchdown run and Dallas Newberry recorded the 2-point conversion to put the Wildcats up 16-6.



Louisburg eighth-graders Charlie Koontz (left) and Kaden Oehlert bring down an Ottawa running back Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium.

The Wildcats put the game away late in the third quarter when Rutherford intercepted his second pass of the half and returned it 50 yards for a touchdown. Koontz followed with the 2-point conversion run to seal the win.

Rutherford got the interception thanks to the defensive line pressure as White hit the Ottawa quarterback as he threw and Rutherford was there to pick off the floater.

It was nice win for the Wildcats after they suffered a 42-22

loss to Wheatridge on Sept. 15. Louisburg held a 2-point halftime lead in the contest, but Wheatridge recovered an onside kick to start the second half, and later scored to take the momentum and the game.

Koontz, Newberry and Michael Waldron scored the Louisburg touchdowns.

“They outplayed us in the second half,” Keegan said. “They had a pretty impressive running back who became just too strong as the game went on. The kids were in the right positions to make a play but we could not bring down their big back.”

Seventh-grade remains undefeated

The Louisburg Middle School seventh-grade football team continued its stretch of strong play Tuesday when it traveled to Ottawa and ran away with its fourth win of the season.

The Wildcats downed Ottawa 30-8 as they shut down the Whirlwinds in the second half and put together some drives of their own.

Elijah Johnson led Louisburg with two rushing touchdowns. Quarterback Andy Hupp and running back Ben Wiedenmann also found the endzone. Johnson and Wiedenmann also had 2-point conversion runs as well.

Louisburg also had a strong defensive performance against the Cyclones despite allowing an early first half touchdown. Cornerback Trestan Carlson led the way with an interception and a fumble recovery for the Wildcats.

“Before the game we challenged the offensive line to step their level of play up, do all the fundamentals right and control the line of scrimmage and they responded with their best game of the year,” Louisburg coach Kyle Wright said. “Ottawa came out and fired up and their first drive they

looked sharp and we looked a little slow defensively.

“At halftime I challenged the defense to play more physical and faster and they certainly answered by shutting them out the rest of the night. The one thing we talked about as a team at practice that we need to improve on now is playing a littler crisper and cleaner as we were penalized over 100 yards last game. Overall, it was the best game we’ve played on the year. It’s great to see the improvement from game to game as we keep taking steps forward and getting better.”

On Sept. 15, the Wildcats hosted Wheatridge and came away with a 14-0 victory that saw all the scoring come in the second half.

To start the game, Louisburg kicker Luke Dudzik executed an onside kick and was recovered by teammate Justin Collins. The Wildcats used the momentum when Wiedenmann scored a touchdown and Johnson added the 2-point conversion to put Louisburg up early.

Johnson added another touchdown in the second quarter and the Wildcats led 14-0 at halftime.

Louisburg’s defense held strong most of the night as it recorded its second straight shutout. Trevin Lohse had a second quarter interception that stopped a Wheatridge drive.

The Wildcats also got good play from Braden Aiken on both lines, along with Ethan Shaffer at wide receiver and cornerback.

“Wheatridge is a good team with some talented players but I was very pleased with how hard our kids played,” Wright said. “The effort was outstanding and this is a group that when they play hard and stick together, the result is a positive one.”

LMS football off to good start to season



It may be only two games into the season, but the Louisburg Middle School seventh-grade football team is off to a dominant start.

The Wildcats have won two straight to begin the year, including a 28-0 shutout of Spring Hill on the road Tuesday. On Sept. 3, Louisburg outlasted rival Paola in its home opener, 14-6, thanks to two first half touchdowns.

In their most recent victory, the Wildcats jumped on Spring Hill early and the defense took care of the rest.

Louisburg did its damage on the ground as it got three touchdown runs from Elijah Johnson and another from Ben Wiedenmann to give the Wildcats a big lead. The Wildcats also converted on two 2-point conversions when quarterback Andy Hupp found Trevin Lohse on both occasions.

Spring Hill was in danger of breaking up the shutout late in the contest, but defensive end Justin Collins made a touchdown saving tackle to preserve the shutout.

“The kids have done a nice job playing both ways,” coach Kyle Wright said. “Matt Madison is a great leader on the offensive line at center and he is also making plays at linebacker.

Keaton Light is doing well on both the offensive and defensive lines and Braden Aiken, who missed the first game with an illness, had a great second game on the line as well. Jay Scollin is also doing a nice job at tight end and safety.”

Against Paola, the Wildcats scored two touchdowns in the first half, which was all they needed. Hupp and Johnson scored on touchdown runs to put the Wildcats up 14-0.

The Panthers scored early in the third quarter, but the Wildcat defense held firm to get the season opening win.

Eighth-grade splits first two games

The LMS eighth-grade football team couldn't have asked for a better beginning to its season as it rose to occasion with a 22-0 shutout of rival Paola on Sept. 4 in Paola.

Louisburg returned home Tuesday to face off with Spring Hill and nearly came away with its second straight win. However, Spring Hill rallied from 10 down at halftime to defeat the Wildcats 32-26 in overtime.

Against Paola, the Wildcats ran all over the field on the Panthers. Charlie Koontz put Louisburg up 14-0 with two long runs for scores, thanks in part to the blocking of his offensive line, led by Brayden White, Garrett Harding, Anthony Davis, Collin Hamilton and Sam Kratochvil.

The Wildcat defense held strong as they forced the Panthers to turn the ball over on downs in the redzone to prevent the Panthers first score. Louisburg put the game on ice a few minutes later when Dallas Newberry scored the Wildcats' third touchdown, which was set up by a long run from quarterback Madden Rutherford.

In its matchup with Spring Hill, Louisburg had a 10-point lead at halftime, but the Broncos opened the second half with a 60-

yard touchdown drive to cut the lead to two.

Louisburg responded right back when Rutherford found Michael Waldron on a 40-yard touchdown pass that led to an eight-point lead. Spring Hill eventually tied the game late in the fourth to force overtime and found the endzone to seal the win in the extra time.

Koontz led the Wildcats with three long touchdown runs in the contest, and could have had a fourth, but the play was brought back on a holding penalty.

“I told the players at the beginning of the season that I did not care about wins and losses,” coach Brian Keegan said. “I told them that if they gave all they could that the wins would take care of themselves. We focused a lot on mistake response and I thought after a few mental errors the kids did a great job of responding and never got their heads down. A loss like this hurts but they should not feel disappointed in their effort. The mistakes we made are things we can work on and correct. I feel very confident going into the next game because the kids are starting to believe in each other and work together as a team.”