



OPINION: 2017 was a banner year for Louisburg

Having the opportunity to cover Louisburg High School athletics, for what has been almost 10 years now, I have seen a lot of different highs and lows.

I have been lucky enough to cover state championship teams and watched several athletes perform at the highest level. However, this last year has to be one for the record books when it comes to success at Louisburg High School.

For Wildcat athletics, 2017 was a banner year for many reasons.

Louisburg qualified for the state tournament in three different sports – volleyball, girls soccer and boys basketball – and the first two each placed in the top four.

The volleyball team was just a point away from winning the school's first state title after the Lady Cats finished second to defending state champion Rose Hill, and tied for the best finish in school history.

The Wildcat girls soccer team qualified for the state semifinals in just its second year of existence and suffered a heartbreaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals to eventually take fourth overall.

In boys basketball, the Wildcats qualified for the state

tournament for the first time in 12 years despite getting knocked out in the first round by defending state champion Bishop Miege.

Most schools would love to have that success with their athletic programs, but for Louisburg, that was just the tip of the iceberg. As special as the seasons were for those three programs, the Wildcats also thrived in a few other sports.

Louisburg's cross country program, which has been around for 19 years, had the best season in its history – by far. Not only did the Wildcats have three state medalists for the first time ever, but it had a year that featured the school's first female league champion in Trinity Moore and the best league finish by a male, Wyatt Reece, who took second.

Tim Smith continued the Wildcat success as he became the school's first regional cross country champion, and Moore, Reece and Smith each went on to win a state medal. Moore and Smith also set school records for the fastest time.

The Wildcats also qualified the girls team for the first time in school history as Moore, Carlee Gassman, Reilly Alexander, Isabelle Holtzen, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily Williams took third at regionals and eventually 10th at state.

The Wildcat wrestling team tied a program best by qualifying eight for the state tournament and came back with a medal by Ryan Adams, who finished sixth.

Louisburg's track and field team persevered and qualified for state in 10 events and had two regional champions in Quinn Rigney and Chris Williams. Isabelle Holtzen and T.J. Dover each brought home their first state track medals.

The boys soccer team was one goal away from making its second consecutive trip to the state semifinals, but their run was halted by a loss to McPherson in state quarterfinals. Still, the Wildcats won a regional title, which was the seventh in

team history.

Freshman Calvin Dillon led the Wildcat golf team this past year and recorded the program's first state medal in more than decade as he took 10th overall.

All these things and more I described in detail when releasing [my top 10 stories of the year](#) and what a year it was.

Obviously, I haven't had a chance to look through all the results, but I can't imagine a more successful year for LHS when you are talking about athletics. There may have been years in the 70s, 80s and 90s that I don't know about, but I find it hard to imagine one that tops 2017.

Sure, the 2010-11 school year featured two state championship teams in football and boys track and field and that was a fantastic time to be Wildcat, but as far as calendar years go, 2017 was one to remember.

Even outside the sports world, Louisburg High School put together many great accomplishments as the Wildcat Marching Band was selected to participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade and put on a great show for the nation on New Year's Day.

Then in October, the FFA Food Science team of Hallie Hutsell, Faith Seuferling, Addie Katzer and Hattie Harris won a national championship, while Hutsell and Seuferling placed second and third in the nation, respectively.

I don't get a lot of opportunities to cover programs or groups outside the sports world, but these are fantastic accomplishments and deserved to be recognized.

For me, 2017 was a whirlwind. It seemed around every corner, school history was being made and there aren't many schools around the state that can boast about the successes Louisburg has experienced.

It was an honor for me to cover many of these historic runs in Wildcat history and I hope you all realize how lucky you have it. Louisburg is a school filled with great coaches who care about the student athletes.

Believe me, I know how fortunate I am to be able to be a part of something special and this place is it. If 2018 is half of what 2017 was, it will be a fun ride.

I can't wait for what 2018 has in store and hopefully you all will follow along to see what these Wildcats can accomplish.



KSHSAA releases 2017-18 classifications

The Kansas High School Activities Association released the classifications for the 2017-18 season on Tuesday morning, and for Louisburg High School, much remains the same.

The Wildcats are currently a Class 4A-Division I program with 532 students, but after this season the classification system will change. Class 4A will get rid of the divisions and 4A will have just 36 schools. Louisburg is still expected to be in 4A for the foreseeable future.

However, several schools across the state made classification changes.



Holloway excited for new role as LHS activities director

Louisburg High School activities director Jeremy Holloway is looking forward to his new position as he starts his 17th year in the USD 416 school district.

Growing up, Jeremy Holloway wasn't one to stay in a place for too long.

Holloway spent most of his childhood and young adult life moving from place to place. He wasn't the type of person who envisioned himself putting down roots.

"I was a constant migrant," Holloway said.

That was until he moved to Louisburg with his wife Megan. Now instead of a migrant, Holloway is deep-rooted in a town he loves.

It made his decision, almost two months ago, an easy one.

Back in June, Holloway was hired as the new Louisburg High School activities director and assistant principal, following the resignation of former activities director Darin Gagnebin. Holloway, who has spent the last 16 years as a teacher at Louisburg Middle School, is ready for the new challenge.

"I am really looking forward to it," Holloway said. "I have been here in Louisburg for 17 years. I never lived anywhere for more than four years in my life until I came to Louisburg. I never knew what it was like to be a part of a community and when I got here I just fell in love with the town. I was excited to become a part of it and Louisburg became important to me. The teaching was great and getting to know all the kids and see them grow up all the way through college was fun. Now I see some of my former students teaching in the building here and it is an amazing feeling. It just felt like home to me."

Fate seemed to step in at the right time for Holloway. He entered the summer still planning to teach history at the middle school, but the dominoes quickly started to fall into place.

Holloway was well on his way to getting his administration degree this past school year as he was planning on holding on to it until something in Louisburg came open. He didn't have to wait long.

"I had to get recertified, so I talked with my wife and I said why get an education masters if it is just going to move me on the pay scale," he said. "Why not get an administration degree to have options? There are other places near here that are looking for people, but that isn't what I want. The only move I would make is to stay in Louisburg. I happened to be down in Eureka Springs on vacation and I got a text in middle of night that Gagnebin had resigned. I had just got my diploma the day before we left. I applied and it turned out well and hopefully it was a good thing."

Louisburg USD 416 superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann had to sift through more than 20 different applicants for the job, but he believes Holloway is going to do great things in the position.

"Jeremy has been a loyal and dedicated teacher and coach in

our community for 17 years,” Dr. Biermann said. “Jeremy possesses many strong leadership attributes that will allow him to be a strong, instructional leader at Louisburg High School. He is passionate about education, has a strong work ethic and is committed to our community.

“Jeremy is all about building positive relationships with students, staff and the community. For 17 years he has been building these relationships. Now, he will be able to build upon his unique skill set in a leadership position in our district. I am excited to see the great things Mr. Holloway can contribute to our district and community in this new role.”

One of the first things Holloway wanted to do was to get to know his new coaching staff. Several new coaches were hired this past school year and he wanted to see what they were all about.

“I just want them to feel comfortable with me and let them understand that I am approachable,” Holloway said. “That relationship piece is huge. I am getting to know where they are from, how many kids they have and I want them to feel comfortable coming to me. We do lose some great experience, but we have gained some capable coaches and a lot of enthusiasm. I just want to be a positive impact for them.”

Since he started officially on July 24, Holloway has been hard at work in several different areas, but one of the bigger things going on now is the shuffling of the Frontier League.

The league, which will be at seven schools this year, will move up to nine starting for the 2018-19 school year. Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Piper will join the league, while De Soto will depart.

Baldwin, an original league member, is concerned the school will move down to Class 3A starting in 2018-19, thanks to [changes in the classification system](#). If it happens, it will

create scheduling conflicts for football.

“The biggest conflict right now is Baldwin is right on the edge of becoming 3A and they think it will happen,” Holloway said. “If Baldwin is in our league, which is what we plan on, they are required to play five district games for football, which only leaves them three league games. If only three league teams play Baldwin, then the rest of the league teams have to find another team to play. I have schools from Lansing, Independence, Coffeyville, Chanute and other schools calling me trying to lock up games. There are so many different scenarios so we just have to wait and see. That is one thing that I am really working on right now.”

With the activity season fast approaching, Holloway is excited for everything to get underway. He is also looking forward to getting to know the fan base more.

“I have always been highly impressed of Louisburg and the support of its teams and the turnout we will get, especially for football games,” Holloway said. “I encourage Louisburg to continue the tradition of being a class act. I think that every town has its own culture and a lot of it starts with the coaches. If your coaches are harassing refs, your players are probably going to start to learn that they can do that and that will trickle down to the parents and crowd. Without pointing fingers, there are certain places where that is the climate. I think Louisburg has been great. There are always going to be situations, but I would encourage fans and parents to support our coaches and let them coach.

“I am looking forward to an exciting year. We have great coaches, that are experienced and they are very innovative. They are organized and they all seem truly excited about what is going on. The community can rest assured that the coaches that are in place right now have the best interest of the kids and the programs.”



Gagnebin steps down as LHS activities director

Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin presents the Wildcat girls soccer team with their regional championship trophy last month. Gagnebin resigned his post earlier this month to take a similar position in Paola.

Darin Gagnebin has a fondness for Louisburg High School, his coaches and students.

That made it all the more hard to say goodbye.

Gagnebin resigned his post as LHS assistant principal and activities director earlier this month to tentatively take the same position at Paola High School. His last day in Louisburg was last week.

Gagnebin spent a total of 17 years in the Louisburg school district, with the last six spent as activities director. He was also a teacher and coach for 11 years.

Family was the biggest reason he decided to make the move. Gagnebin and his family currently reside in Paola and his two children attend schools in Paola.

“People have come and gone, but it is still family here,” Gagnebin said. “I am comfortable here and Louisburg has done a lot for me. I just can’t pass up an opportunity to be where my kids are at. I know I could have brought my kids here, but my wife and I made that decision a long time ago of where we were going to live because of where she taught and I taught. I never thought back when we first moved to Paola and when we had kids, that we would be in this position.”

It was a difficult decision for Gagnebin as he leaves behind a group of coaches, several of whom he recently hired. The Louisburg district had a number of new coaches come on board for the upcoming school year.

“We have gone through some trials in the last couple of years and that is with any school,” Gagnebin said. “I told my wife, that if this was going to happen the way it did and I could pick the time, I wish the timing would have happened two years down the road. I would have loved to see what this young group of teachers and coaches are going to do coming in.

“I told my wife that I was really excited about coming back next year and I felt we made some good hires. We have a passionate coaching staff coming on and they are great people with new ideas. It just happened out of the blue.”

The opening came when former Paola High School principal Phil Bressler took the new principal job at Pittsburg High School. Paola assistant principal and activities director Jeff Hines was elevated to the Paola principal position, which left the Panthers needing an activities director.

It can be traced back even further when the Pittsburg High School journalism class wrote an investigative piece that ousted its newly hired principal, which forced the school to reopen the position and eventually hired Bressler.

“Had Pittsburg’s journalism class not done their job, we wouldn’t be sitting here talking right now,” Gagnebin said.

The Paola position was an opportunity Gagnebin just couldn't pass up as he will have an opportunity to watch more of his children's events and work closer to home.

"I have missed a lot of my own kids' stuff," he said. "But the people here have been really great, (Principal) Tammy (Thomasson) now and Dave (Tappan) before her, to let me try to get to as much stuff as I can. I still miss things. These opportunities don't come around very often and I just figured this would be a great fit for me and my family.

"But I couldn't ask for a better group of coaches here in Louisburg. They are good and passionate about what they do. I really have developed some good bonds over the years. I know some have left and some have stayed on, but the coaches and staff I have had has been great."



Changes to classification system will impact Louisburg

Member schools in the Kansas State High School Activities Association sent ripples across the state last week when they passed two proposals that will affect high school athletics beginning in the 2018-19 season.

For football, the two 4A divisions and Class 2-1A have been eliminated. They have been replaced with 32 team

classifications in 4A, 5A and 6A, while 3A and 2A will have 48-team classifications. The remaining schools will play in 1A.

The second proposal was for all other sports. Other than football, classes 4A, 5A and 6A will have 36 teams in each division. Classes 3A and 2A will have 64 schools each, while the remaining schools will be in 1A.

The football proposal passed with a vote of 215-73 and the all-sports proposal passed with a 207-145 majority. All of the classes, except 6A and 1A, were in favor.

With those new proposals comes a different playoff system for many of the sports.

Louisburg High School, which is a Class 4A school, will see changes in five sports programs – football, basketball, baseball, softball and volleyball.

In football, Louisburg will no longer have district play as the playoffs will begin in week nine. Class 4A will play an eight-game regular season and then each side of the state will be seeded in a bracket from 1 through 16, based on their record.

Given the fact the Frontier League currently has nine teams after recently adding three schools in Tonganoxie, Bonner Springs and Piper, the Wildcats will no longer have to play a non-league opponent. De Soto recently chose to leave the Frontier League following the 2017-18 season to join a new league made up of 5A schools.

“Normally we go out in October to Salina, we would redistrict for 2018 and 2019,” Louisburg activities director Darin Gagnebin said. “I don’t even know that we will have to go cause our league has nine teams, so we would play eight league games and the ninth game gets assigned to you for the playoffs. As of right now in football, we will no longer have

any out of conference opponents as long as we maintain nine in the league.”

Another change will be in basketball. For the postseason, there will no longer be substates, instead the 18 teams on each side of the state will be bracketed out by record beginning with two play-in games.

From there, the bracket will be sized down to four-team pods, with the higher seed hosting the game. Teams will have to win two games to reach the state tournaments. Pods will be 1-16-8-9 seeds, 4-13-5-12, 2-15-7-10 and 3-14-6-11. The eight pod winners will advance to the state tournament.

“Depending on where we fall, it could increase travel depending on where we are seeded,” Gagnebin said. “We could have to drive down to Coffeyville or drive up to Atchison, you just don’t know until the end of the year.”

Basketball schedules will also be different with the addition of the new league teams in 2018-19. There will no longer be double round-robin schedules. There will be eight league games, six tournament games and athletic directors will have to find a way to fill the other six.

“We will start in August about building the new league schedule and it will be tough,” Gagnebin said. “One thing you will see is we won’t have double round-robin’s anymore because we can’t play everyone twice. I think there will be traditional rivalries that are held to where we would play those twice due to proximity. Quite frankly, it wouldn’t be smart for Louisburg not to play Paola, Ottawa or Spring Hill twice due to higher attendance numbers and proximity. It will probably increase travel costs because you are playing more non-conference opponents.”

Baseball and softball will be similar as there will no longer be regionals. Like basketball, there will be two play-in games with the same pod structure. The top four overall seeds will

each host all games in their pod on the same day.

In volleyball, there will be four substates across the state, broken into eight brackets. There will also be nine teams in each substate, which will require a play-in game. Teams will need to win two games to qualify for state.

Postseasons for wrestling, track, soccer, cross country and golf will remain the same.

However, even with the new changes, the proposals don't address the competitive balance issue between public and private schools that many members have been talking about for the last several years.

Although he likes the new playoff system, the fact these changes don't address the problem is one of the reasons Gagnebin voted no on the new proposals.

"It was a shock because I didn't think it was going to pass," Gagnebin said. "Other than the playoff system, in my opinion, it doesn't do anything for Class 4A. All the work that went into splitting 4A into two divisions is now gone. I feel bad for those schools because they put in a ton of work. It doesn't really affect us because we are locked into 4A and we are right in the middle of the pack.

"I didn't see how it benefited Louisburg or 4A, other than the playoffs system where it should ensure you have more competitive teams at state. Since you are seeding them out now, you shouldn't have a substate of teams with losing records. They could have done that without this."

Although private schools like Bishop Miege, which have won several state titles in the last few years, could find itself moving up a classification with the new measures, it isn't a permanent solution according to Gagnebin.

"Enrollment could bump some private schools up a class, but

that doesn't fix the problem," Gagnebin said. "Private schools can control enrollment. According to (Miege) they are losing enrollment and could be back in 4A. It doesn't impact the private issue at all and that is why I didn't vote for it. It is not fixing what the 80 percent of athletic directors polled in Kansas asking what the biggest problems in classifications are. It doesn't address the real problem."



Four Louisburg baseball players awarded all-league

Louisburg junior Garrett Caldwell was one of the Wildcats' best hitters last season and for that he earned second team all-Frontier League honors recently. Caldwell was one of four Louisburg players selected to the team.

It may have not had the season it had hoped for, but the Louisburg High School baseball team still had several players that ended the 2017 season strong.

The Wildcats, who finished with a 7-14 record on the season, earned four selections to the all-Frontier League baseball team, including a spot on the second team.

Junior Garrett Caldwell was named to the utility spot on the

second team and three other Wildcats earned honorable mention honors. Seniors Dalton Stone, Grant Harding and Korbin Hankinson were each recognized by the Frontier League coaches for their season.

Caldwell led Louisburg with a .396 batting average as he served as one of the team's catchers. Caldwell also had a team-high two home runs to go along with three doubles, a triple and 14 RBIs.



(From left) Louisburg seniors Grant Harding, Dalton Stone and Korbin Hankinson were named to the all-league honorable mention team.

Hankinson was an honorable mention selection in the outfield as he was the team's starting centerfielder all season. He committed just one error in the 21 games.

At the plate, Hankinson had a good year from the leadoff spot as he batted .366 with a team-high 26 hits, including eight doubles and 12 RBIs.

Harding and Stone were both named to the honorable mention team as infielders.

Stone finished the season with a .318 average to go along with 14 hits, including three doubles and a home run. Harding batted .283 with 17 hits, three doubles and a triple.

In the field, both players committed just five errors on the season, while Harding and Stone were the Wildcats' top two pitchers. Harding led the Wildcats with 27 strikeouts and

Stone had 24.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

FIRST TEAM

Catcher: Chandler Bloomer, Ottawa, junior

Pitcher: Blaine Hanf, Paola, senior; Zach Curry, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Donovan Sutti, Paola, senior; Keegan Finch, Ottawa, senior; Adam Carlson, Baldwin, senior; Dalton Rankin, Paola, senior

Outfield: Blaine Ray, Ottawa, senior; Josh Craig, Baldwin, senior; Max Barger, De Soto, senior

Utility/DH: Jack Barger, De Soto, junior

SECOND TEAM

Catcher: Trevor Boehm, Paola, senior

Pitcher: Conner Mackey, De Soto, junior; Trenton Ferguson, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Nash Dreiling, Paola, junior; Kaleb Shaffer, Ottawa, junior; Chance Montgomery, De Soto, senior; Cody Lucas, Spring Hill, junior

Outfield: Khalil Thrasher, Eudora, junior; Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Jackson Burell, Spring Hill, junior

Utility/DH: **Garrett Caldwell, Louisburg, junior**

HONORABLE MENTION

Catcher: Caleb Ostronic, Eudora, junior; Garrett Borth, Baldwin, junior; Tony Slaughter, De Soto, junior

Pitcher: Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Connor Quick, Baldwin, freshman; Caden Bressler, Paola, freshman; Nathan Patterson, De Soto, senior

Infield: **Dalton Stone, Louisburg, senior; Grant Harding, Louisburg, senior;** David Hornberger, Eudora, senior

Outfield: **Korbin Hankinson, Louisburg, senior;** Ty Kempf, De Soto, senior; Sean King, Spring Hill, senior; Monti Enriquez, Eudora, senior

Utility/DH: Brock Huddlestun, Ottawa, senior; Dylan Sanderson, Spring Hill, senior



All-Frontier League baseball, softball and girls soccer

Here are all-Frontier League teams for baseball, softball and girls soccer for the 2016-17 season. Congrats to all the recipients who earned the honors.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS SOCCER

FIRST TEAM

Tarah Phongsavath, De Soto, senior

Bailey Belcher, Louisburg, junior

Aly Hargrove, De Soto, senior

Taylor Cawley, Baldwin, senior

Tanith Beal, De Soto, senior

Mackenzie Scholtz, Louisburg, freshman

Sara Watson, Spring Hill, junior

Madisen Simpson, Louisburg, senior

Josie Boyle, Baldwin, freshman

Maddie Plake, De Soto, senior

Goalie: Taylor Rogers, De Soto, junior

SECOND TEAM

Carmen Rush, De Soto, senior

Kaylen Dawson, Spring Hill, freshman

Anna Burnett, Baldwin, freshman

Mackenzie Mohl, De Soto, freshman

Caitlyn Countryman, Baldwin, sophomore

Anna Watson, Spring Hill, junior

Camdyn Clark, Louisburg, sophomore

Mallory Smith, Spring Hill, sophomore

Morgan Laplante, De Soto, sophomore

Savannah Reinhart, Louisburg, junior

Goalie: Emery Mounce, Spring Hill, freshman

HONORABLE MENTION

Ashley Panagakis, De Soto, sophomore

Amanda Wray, Ottawa, junior

Clara Cowden, Baldwin, senior

Alex Schemmel, De Soto, junior

Goalie: Shay Whiting, Louisburg, junior

Goalie: Riley O'Rourke, Baldwin, senior

Goalie: Sutton Jung, Ottawa, junior

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

FIRST TEAM

Catcher: Chandler Bloomer, Ottawa, junior

Pitcher: Blaine Hanf, Paola, senior; Zach Curry, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Donovan Sutti, Paola, senior; Keegan Finch, Ottawa, senior; Adam Carlson, Baldwin, senior; Dalton Rankin, Paola, senior

Outfield: Blaine Ray, Ottawa, senior; Josh Craig, Baldwin, senior; Max Barger, De Soto, senior

Utility/DH: Jack Barger, De Soto, junior

SECOND TEAM

Catcher: Trevor Boehm, Paola, senior

Pitcher: Conner Mackey, De Soto, junior; Trenton Ferguson, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Nash Dreiling, Paola, junior; Kaleb Shaffer, Ottawa, junior; Chance Montgomery, De Soto, senior; Cody Lucas, Spring Hill, junior

Outfield: Khalil Thrasher, Eudora, junior; Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Jackson Burell, Spring Hill, junior

Utility/DH: **Garrett Caldwell, Louisburg, junior**

HONORABLE MENTION

Catcher: Caleb Ostronic, Eudora, junior; Garrett Borth, Baldwin, junior; Tony Slaughter, De Soto, junior

Pitcher: Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Connor Quick, Baldwin, freshman; Caden Bressler, Paola, freshman; Nathan Patterson, De Soto, senior

Infield: **Dalton Stone, Louisburg, senior; Grant Harding, Louisburg, senior;** David Hornberger, Eudora, senior

Outfield: **Korbin Hankinson, Louisburg, senior;** Ty Kempf, De Soto, senior; Sean King, Spring Hill, senior; Monti Enriquez, Eudora, senior

Utility/DH: Brock Huddlestun, Ottawa, senior; Dylan Sanderson, Spring Hill, senior

ALL FRONTIER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

FIRST TEAM

Pitcher: Jordan Johnson, Paola, junior; Sarah Brown, Spring Hill, senior

Catcher: Sierra Sanderson, Spring Hill, senior

Infield: Allison Daggett, Paola, senior; Jordan Flakus, Eudora, senior; Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, junior; Matti Morgan, Paola, senior

Outfield: Audrey Flowers, Baldwin, sophomore; Sieana Hall, Baldwin, sophomore; McKinley Markley, Baldwin, sophomore

DH/Utility: Regan Smith, Spring Hill, junior

SECOND TEAM

Pitcher: Kayla Etter, Eudora, sophomore; **Allyssa Griggs, Louisburg, senior**

Catcher: Amayah LaTessa, Baldwin, senior

Infield: **Madison Svoboda, Louisburg, sophomore;** Rian Geere, Baldwin, freshman; Mackenzie Smith, De Soto, senior; Betsy Parmeley, Baldwin, senior

Outfield: Elizabeth Hays, Spring Hill, junior; Devon Purcell, Eudora, junior; Jordan Diehl, De Soto, sophomore; Jasmine Thevarajoo, Eudora, senior

DH/Utility: Payton Faddis, De Soto, sophomore

HONORABLE MENTION

Pitcher: Kinley Burton, Baldwin, senior; Mary Kate Hale,

Spring Hill, senior

Catcher: Sydney Igert, Paola, junior; **Emalee Overbay, Louisburg, senior**

Infield: Jenna DeVore, Ottawa, junior; Kelsey Kroutch, Spring Hill, senior; **Molly Rison, Louisburg, sophomore;** Kellee Wiggins, Baldwin, sophomore; Lydia Brown, Eudora, freshman

Utility/DH: **Karson Griggs, Louisburg, sophomore;** Peyton Weatherbie, Paola, senior



Spring Hill takes two from Wildcat baseball

Louisburg senior Korbin Hankinson puts a ball in play during a game earlier this season. The Wildcats played their final regular season games on May 8 in Spring Hill and came up short in a 12-2 and 13-8 loss.

It was a rough six days for the Louisburg baseball team.

After getting swept by Ottawa on Senior Night, the Wildcats found themselves on the wrong side of the sweep again on May 8 at Spring Hill. Louisburg fell 12-2 in the opener to the Broncos and then came short in the nightcap in high-scoring

affair, 13-8.

The two games ended the Wildcats' regular season with a 7-13 record as they head into the postseason.

Spring Hill jumped on the Wildcats' pitching early in the first game as it scored 11 runs in the first four innings to take a big lead it wouldn't relinquish. Louisburg scored a pair of runs in the fifth when junior Garrett Caldwell tripled home Blake Ruder and Christian Tosterud.

Caldwell led the Wildcat offense with two hits and had a big day at the plate in the doubleheader. He had five hits and 5 RBIs in the two games, including a 2-run home run in the nightcap to give the Wildcats a 2-0 lead early.

The Broncos responded to Caldwell's home run with four runs in the first inning and then six more in the fourth inning to take a 10-2 lead.

Louisburg battled back with six runs of its own in the top of the fifth inning to cut the Spring Hill advantage to two, but the Broncos scored three in the sixth to pull away.

Senior Grant Harding recorded a pair of hits, including a triple and an RBI, to help the Wildcat bats. Tosterud and junior Nate Swenson also finished with two hits, a double and a run batted in each. Beckett Rasmussen also tallied a pair of singles for Louisburg.

Although the Wildcats have lost four in a row, they have a chance to start fresh today when it competes in the Class 4A-Division I regional tournament in Ottawa. Louisburg, the No. 4 seed, will play No. 1 Ottawa at 4 p.m. today.

If the Wildcats advance, they will play the winner of No. 2 Paola and No. 3 Fort Scott later in the evening.



Ottawa dampens Louisburg senior night with sweep

Louisburg senior Blake Ruder runs down a fly ball in right field Tuesday during the Wildcats' game with Ottawa at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats lost both games to the Cyclones on Senior Night, 15-1 and 7-2.

It wasn't the night the seven Louisburg baseball seniors hoped for when they stepped onto the Lewis-Young field for the final time.

Louisburg celebrated Senior Night on Tuesday, but Ottawa decided to dampen those plans. The Cyclones, who are ranked No. 5 in Class 4A-Division I, downed Louisburg 15-1 in the opener and 7-2 in the nightcap.

Despite the loss, it was a special night for seniors Korbin Hankinson, Dalton Stone, Grant Harding, Ben LaJoie, Sam Guetterman, Blake Ruder and Kylan Harper as they were each honored in-between the doubleheader games.

"This senior class brings a lot of experience with them," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "They are a hard working group that strive for the best in everything they do. These seniors are a talented group and are passionate about the

games they play. These young men will be successful in their pursuits because of the traits that they bring with them.”

In the opener, the Wildcats (7-11) took a 1-0 lead into the second inning before the Cyclones scored two in the second and third innings, and then five runs in the fourth and fifth to pull away.



Louisburg seniors (front row, from left) are Blake Ruder, Ben LaJoie, Kylan Harper, Grant Harding, Dalton Stone, Sam Guetterman and Korbin Hankinson.

Louisburg junior Christian Tosterud was perfect at the plate for the Wildcats and drove in their only run. Tosterud, who finished the game with three hits, tripled home Hankinson after he led the first inning off with a double. Hankinson added a pair of hits in the loss.

Stone started the game for Louisburg and pitched three innings, before Harper and Nate Swenson came in for relief.

However, none of the three Wildcat pitchers could cool off the Ottawa bats.

“In the first game we started out well, we got on the board first and had some success at the plate,” McGhee said. “Then the struggle to find the strike zone began. Once we started walking batters we couldn’t find our way out of the hole. Ottawa is a solid team and took care of business at the plate and in the field.”

The nightcap started off like the first as Louisburg opened the scoring in the first inning, but this time the Wildcats held their one-run lead into the fifth inning. Ottawa answered with four runs in the fifth and three more in the seventh to earn the sweep.

Harding, Stone and Swenson each had a pair of hits, while Harding added a double to his line. Harding and Mitchell Drew both had RBIs as well for Louisburg.

It was Harding who kept Ottawa scoreless through the first four innings, before Ottawa came through with fourth runs in the fifth. Guetterman came on in relief for the final two frames.

“Ottawa got the hits they needed to get runners on,” McGhee said. “We were unable to get the hits we needed and had several quick innings which helped to build momentum for Ottawa. We responded late in the game, but were unable to overcome the deficit.

“Ottawa is a good team and they take advantage of the little mistakes that are made throughout a game. They executed the plays they were asked to and put us in some spots where a tough play had to be made.”

Louisburg will wind down its regular season today when it travels to Spring Hill for a doubleheader. The Wildcats will then compete in the regional tournament next week at Ottawa.



Wildcats score 29 runs in sweep of Anderson County

Louisburg senior Grant Harding winds up for a pitch during the Wildcats' April 25 doubleheader against De Soto. The Wildcats defeated Anderson County on Thursday, 12-5 and 17-5.

GARNETT – Apparently all the Louisburg baseball team needed was a trip to Garnett.

It certainly fixed what ailed them.

The Wildcats, who had lost four of their last five games, turned it around in a big way as they scored 29 runs during their doubleheader Thursday, en route to a 12-5 and 17-5 victory over Anderson County.

“The sweep was much needed,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “We’ve had number of close games that took a wrong turn throughout the year and we definitely needed to come out and take both games. We had solid games offensively, and took care of things on defense. When the scores evened out, we put pressure on and added runs as we needed to.”

It was a team effort, especially in the opener, as every player in the Wildcat lineup got a hit and all but one had a

run batted in. Louisburg jumped out to a 5-0 lead after three innings and used a five-run sixth to pull away after Anderson County tied it the inning before.

Korbin Hankinson, Christian Tosterud, Garrett Caldwell, Dalton Stone and Ben LaJoie each had two hits to lead the Wildcats, while Tosterud, Grant Harding, Nate Swenson and Stone all had 2 RBIs. Tosterud and Hankinson both added a double in the win.

“As a team we had great night at the plate,” McGhee said. “Overall we combined for a .435 average. Everyone was seeing the ball well, whether they were getting hits or being selective at the plate and drawing walks. We also did a great job on the base paths. We left quite a few runners on base, but managed to get runners on later in the game to make up for those.”

Freshman Madden Rutherford started the game for the Wildcats (7-9) and went five innings and gave up two earned runs on seven hits. He ran into a little trouble in the fifth inning when Anderson County tied the game with four runs in the frame, but Swenson came on in relief and pitched two innings and allowed no hits.

The Wildcats got going offensively in the sixth to break open the tie game as Caldwell, Stone, Swenson and Hankinson each had RBI singles to give Louisburg the lead back and all but seal the win.

In the nightcap, Louisburg found itself tied with Anderson County after three innings, but the Wildcats used back-to-back seven run innings to get the run-rule victory.

Hankinson did a lot of damage with the bat in the nightcap. He went 4-for-5 with 5 RBIs, including a pair of doubles. Dalton Stone hit a 2-run home run to break open a tie game in the fourth inning.

Harding, Mitchell Drew and Beckett Rasmussen each had a 2-hit

game to lead the Wildcats, while Stone, Drew and Harding each had 2 RBIs. Harding was also busy on the base paths with five stolen bases.

Senior Kylan Harper started the game for Louisburg and pitched into the fourth inning as he gave up five runs, two earned runs and had three strikeouts. Fellow senior Sam Guetterman came in to record the final two outs to preserve the run-rule victory.

“Madden and Kylan gave us quality starts and put us in the position to win the games,” McGhee said. “Rutherford is very efficient when he pitches, and has given us quality starts in each of his outings. Of the 27 batters he faced, 20 of them saw 3 or fewer pitches. We can rely on Harper to give us a solid start and carry us deeper into a game, which helps with managing our pitchers.

“Sam and Nate both made quick work of the batters they faced and Guetterman got us out of a tough spot in game two with four pitches. Both pitchers come in and fill up the zone and let their defense work behind them.”

Louisburg returns to action today when it hosts Ottawa on senior night. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m. at Lewis-Young Park.

Louisburg drops two games to De Soto

On April 25, Louisburg hosted De Soto for a doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park and came up short in a 7-3 loss in the opener. The Wildcats forced extra innings in the nightcap, but fell 6-4 in eight innings.

In the second game, the Wildcats were patient at the plate and drew seven walks and turned several of those into runs. Louisburg scored two runs in the sixth to tie the game, but De Soto answered with two in the eighth to get the win.

Although they walked seven times, Louisburg had just five hits, one of which was a double from Mitchell Drew. Freshman Madden Rutherford had a pair of singles and 2 RBIs.

Grant Harding started the nightcap and pitched six innings. He gave up three earned runs and had three strikeouts. Nate Swenson came in for the seventh and got Louisburg out of a jam to help send it to extra innings.

“Nate threw strikes and worked to quickly to get outs,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “The defense did a solid job behind him and we had an opportunity to take the game into extra innings. We gave ourselves a chance, but came up short.”

In the opener, Louisburg jumped out to a 3-1 lead before De Soto scored three in the fifth, two in the sixth and another in the seventh to secure the victory.

Junior Garrett Caldwell had a big day at the plate. Caldwell went 3-for-3, including a pair of doubles and an RBI. Swenson also recorded a pair of hits and an RBI.

Senior Dalton Stone pitched into the sixth inning and gave up three earned runs and had three strikeouts.