Wildcats gear up to host regional tourney



For some wrestlers, this weekend's Class 4A regional tournament will mark the end of the season.

As for Louisburg, it hopes it will have several wrestlers compete a week longer. Louisburg will host the regional tournament beginning at 3 p.m. today and will continue at 11 a.m. Saturday.

Sixteen teams will compete at the two-day tournament in which the top four in each weight class will qualify for next weekend's state tournament in Salina.

"We are very excited," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "This is my first being involved in hosting a regional tournament, and I think it's been a long time since we've ever hosted, if we've ever hosted one at all. The team is excited to have this tournament in our home gym. We'll have a home crowd, lots of fans and family members here to cheer us on."

After not qualifying anyone for the state tournament the last two seasons, the Wildcats are primed to break that streak this year and have a chance to send several. Regional seedings were recently announced and Louisburg has seven wrestlers seeded in the top 6.

Louisburg senior Brenton Wrigley, who is currently the No. 5-ranked wrestler in the state at 195 pounds, is the No. 1 seed in his weight class. Junior heavyweight Anders Vance is the

No. 2 seed at 285 pounds.

Nathan Keegan (No. 3, 113 pounds), Ryan Adams (No. 3, 138), Mason Koechner (No. 4, 220), Thad Hendrix (No. 5, 106), Zach Knox (No. 5, 132) and Lyndon Smith (No. 6, 182) all have put themselves in position to qualify if they wrestle well.

“I’m excited for the kids,” Bovaird said. “They’ve been working so hard for this. After all we’ve had to overcome this season, I want nothing more than for their hard work to pay off. We’ve been talking about mindsets the last few weeks. There are three principles we’ve been focusing on: we don’t care who we wrestle, we can beat anyone and there’s nowhere else we’d rather be than right here and right now. This is the fun and exciting time of the season. All the guys need to do now is step on the mat, pull the trigger, and do the things they know how to do on the mat.”

The regional will be a very competitive one, however. Teams making the journey to Louisburg are: Labette County, Chanute, Coffeyville-Field Kindley, Columbus, Fort Scott, Frontenac, Anderson County, Independence, Iola, Prairie View, Osawatomie, Ottawa, Paola, Parsons and Spring Hill.

Three of those teams are also ranked in the top 10, including No. 1 Chanute, No. 3 Prairie View and No. 10 Osawatomie, along with numerous state-ranked wrestlers.

“Independence has several ranked wrestlers, along with Spring Hill and Columbus,” Bovaird said. “It’s a tough regional, all right. Regionals in Class 4A are always very tough. Each year, we see kids not qualify when they had been ranked all year, they were qualifiers last year, or even state placers last year.”

The order of events has been set for today and will proceed as follows: first round, quarterfinals, consolation round one and then championship semifinals. The rest of the tournament will resume tomorrow morning.

Louisburg Sports Zone will also be in attendance taking pictures of all 16 teams. For those interested in purchasing photos, they will available at louisburgsportszone.smugmug.com a few days following the tournament.