LHS baseball learns from tough season



Unfortunately for last season’s version of the Louisburg baseball team, the Wildcats spent a lot of time cutting their teeth in what was one of the toughest leagues in Class 4A.

Two Frontier League members battled it out for the Class 4A-Division I state crown, while Louisburg finished with five wins with what was a young, inexperienced group.

This season, the Wildcats hope to dish out some lumps instead of taking them.

Louisburg returns nine players that saw significant varsity time a year ago and the Wildcats have plenty of depth behind them. They have seven pitchers who will see time on the mound this season and return several position players as well.

“Going into last season, with no seniors and a very young team, we knew that we might take our lumps at times,” Louisburg coach Jeff Lohse said. “We are expecting to be much improved from last season with the leadership we have and all the experience coming back.”

That leadership starts on the mound with senior Lucas Smith as he was the Wildcats’ top hurler last season and an honorable mention all-Frontier League player. Smith will look to lead a group of young and experienced pitchers. Including the junior varsity program, Louisburg will have 17 to 18 different pitchers who will have the opportunity to see time.

“There are several underclassmen who have a bright future on the mound if they continue to work hard and get better,” Lohse said. “Lucas will be our No. 1 again this year and after him we have a bunch of players who could fill the rotation. I don’t think we will be real overpowering, by any means, but all these guys will throw strikes and compete.”



Louisburg senior Lucas Smith is the Wildcats’ top returning pitcher this season. Smith was an honorable mention all-league selection as season ago.

Along with Smith, the Wildcats will feature several pitchers that all saw varsity time on the mound to go along with one newcomer. Grant Harding, Cole Kramer, Colton Smith, Matt Risenhoover and Ethan Caldwell will fill out the Wildcat rotation along with freshman Dalton Stone.

In the field, juniors Alex Dunn and Kramer will provide solid defense up the middle. Dunn, who was an honorable mention all-league catcher a year ago, will handle the pitching staff.

Kramer, on the other hand, will man centerfield when he is not

on the mound. He also was an honorable mention all-league outfielder last season.

Also returning for the Wildcats is second baseman Mitchell Caldwell and Austin Henderson will be back at first base after missing half of the season last year with an injury. Lucas Smith and Risenhoover will share the shortstop position.

Colton Smith and Stone will alternate at third base, while Harding and Ethan Caldwell will play in the outfield. Korbin Hankinson, Blake Ruder and Mitchell Drew will also provide some depth off the bench.

Although the Wildcats have several returning players, their schedule will present a tough challenge just like a year ago. A schedule that includes state champion De Soto and runner-up Paola.

“Our league is a very good baseball league as well,” Lohse said. “My expectations are to go out and compete while giving ourselves a chance to win. We have got to do the little things to manufacture runs and be very solid pitching and defensively.”

Louisburg will get its season started Thursday when it travels to Paola. First pitch is slated for 4:30 p.m.

LOUSBURG HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL SCHEDULE

Apr. 2 @ Paola 4:30 p.m.

Apr. 7 @ Fort Scott 4:30 p.m.

Apr. 9 Prairie

View 4:30 p.m.

Apr. 14
Eudora 4:30 p.m.

Apr. 21 @
Baldwin 4:30 p.m.

Apr. 23 @Osawatomie
4:30 p.m.

Apr. 28 De
Soto 4:30 p.m.

Apr. 30
Chanute 4:30 p.m.

May 5
Ottawa 4:30 p.m.

May 11 @ Spring
Hill 4:30 p.m.