

Wildcats looking for leadership, identity



Louisburg's Sam Guetterman (right) and Alex Seufferling battle for a loose ball during a team scrimmage Thursday at Louisburg High School. The Wildcat basketball team concluded their week-long team camp Friday and will continue workouts throughout the summer.

It was never easy for Louisburg boys basketball coach Jason Nelson or his team last season.

The Wildcats had six wins a season ago and dealt with injury problems most of the way. Those injuries forced younger players to play roles on the varsity level before they were ready and it all trickled down.

However, the Wildcats hope going through those rough times will pay off in a big way for this coming year. Louisburg went to work last week and held its annual team camp at the high school as they prepare for what could be an exciting season.

Louisburg will do so with two new coaches in the fold. Kyle Conley and Jason Friesen take over as assistants in the program and replace former coaches Kyle Wright and Brian Keegan who resigned their spots.

"Camp was fantastic," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "We

saw the evolution of our leaders and the beginning of our identity as a group. It further served as a great introduction for our new staff members for our group. We gain a great deal of knowledge and experience with our new assistant coaches and we couldn't be more excited."

Along with two new coaches, the Wildcats are also in the process of finding new leaders. Last season's core of Corbin Wertz, Brady Lambeth and Nathan Moore graduated and Nelson is looking to this year's junior class, along with seniors Mitchell McLellan and Alex Dunn to provide that departed leadership.



Louisburg boys basketball coach Jason Nelson looks on during the Wildcats' week-long camp Thursday at the high school.

According to Nelson, juniors Grant Harding, Sam Guetterman and T.J. Dover are among the others who are looking to lead what is still a young team. In fact, Nelson is looking to Harding to lead the team on and off the floor this season.

Harding was an honorable mention all-Frontier League player a season ago and is the team's top returning scorer. Harding averaged 11.1 points a game to go along with nine rebounds. He

also averaged one block a contest.

“When Grant was a freshmen, we saw the potential in him,” Nelson said. “When he was a sophomore, we slowly integrated him into our plans so as to allow for a slow, steady evolution. As a junior, he’s ready to both lead by example and word.”

The Wildcats are putting in a lot of work in the offseason. Along with their team camp, they have workouts twice a week, weights twice a week and participate in a summer league at Rockhurst University to compete against several Kansas City area high school teams.

Nelson has already seen a growth from his team in summer league action, with a lot of it coming from his junior group.

“The junior class will most definitely reap the benefits of the experience they gained last year,” Nelson said. “The Frontier League is not conducive to a ‘trial by fire’ mentality, but all of our injuries from last year forced our hand. While it was wrought with difficulties, our then sophomores did a fantastic job overall and have the knowledge to step up without suffering from learning on the go.”