

Wrestlers take on heavy lifting at camp



Louisburg High School senior Bradley Trageser flips a large tire during the Wildcats' wrestling team camp last week at Louisburg High School. The Wildcat wrestlers spent a day going through a strongman workout.

Coming off its best season in years, the Louisburg wrestling team isn't one to rest on its laurels.

So when the Wildcats got together for their annual team camp last week, they had the mindset to get smarter on the mat, but also to get bigger, faster and stronger. To do that, head coach Bobby Bovaird decided to use one of his camp days to get off the mat and go outside for some unique conditioning.

Bovaird called on friend Corey Scott, a personal trainer in the Kansas City area, to work with his wrestling team through a strongman workout. Whether it was flipping large tires, lifting atlas stones or working on the ropes, all of the wrestlers saw a different way of conditioning.

"It turns out that his strongman lifts are similar in nature to what Coach (Kyle) Littrell has been implementing for the football preseason weights. They're awesome lifts – atlas stones, prowler machines, ropes, tire flipping – that break up

the monotony of lifting in the weight room,” Bovaird said. “They’re total body lifts that are perfect for wrestlers because that’s what we do in our sport. So many lifts that the guys do in the weight room are for their ‘vanity muscles,’ as Corey calls them.

“Corey’s lifts are ones that make you a stronger athlete all-around. I think the kids enjoyed the fact that we got outside and did something new. I like some of these lifts enough that I’d like to look into making some purchases so that we can add them into our regular training regimen.”

Of course, the Wildcats couldn’t spend their entire week of camp flipping tires or lifting large stones – they needed to get better on the mat. Bovaird had good numbers for his advanced camp that met four days last week as 31 signed up and 27 more attended the beginner’s camp.



Nathan Keegan throws a tire over his head last week during a strongman workout.

After qualifying five for the state tournament last season, Bovaird wanted to use a different method on working with his high school wrestlers – one that will help his wrestlers remember what they learn at camp and be able to transition that into the first day of practice in November.

He introduced the wrestlers to Strobel Drilling, which was named for former Lehigh University wrestlers coach Greg Strobel.

“Last summer I’d seen some videos of his and I liked how he layered his instruction in different levels,” Bovaird said. “I took notes and modified it to a system I plan to use much more frequently next season. I introduce a technique or maneuver, then I allow the kids to get more hands-on with it. There are three levels of application. First, the wrestlers focus on the fine details of a move – the left hand goes here, the right foot steps there, shoulder pressure in this spot, etc. Then, level two involves application where there’s more movement based on the technique or there’s some slight competition between the wrestler and his partner. Level three involves controlled live wrestling where the move is applied and both wrestlers find themselves in match situations.

“Without daily application of these moves, the wrestlers will forget them quickly, so my main goal was to introduce them to my philosophy; to give them a preview of how things will go next season.”

The Wildcats still have a busy summer ahead as they will depart for Valentine, Neb., next week for the Outdoor Challenge Camp for the second straight year. The camp features clinicians from college coaches along with team building activities.

Bovaird also said he has had several wrestlers interested in participating in the Sunflower State Games in Topeka on July 11, while sophomore, and returning state qualifier Ryan Adams is pondering a trip to Dallas to compete for Team Kansas in a big dual tournament later this month.

Adams has also been wrestling in a summer league in Topeka where he went 13-1 and made the all-tournament team for the Top City Summer Wrestling League.

There is excitement within the Louisburg team after its success a year ago. The Wildcats return four of their five state qualifiers and they hope for even more next season as the numbers in the program continue to rise.

However, the road back to state begins with summer workouts.

“There’s definitely more enthusiasm from the group,” Bovaird said. “During the summer months, I understand that their minds are elsewhere – the pool, football, baseball, summer jobs, etc. – but I’m pretty happy with the variety of kids who’ve been coming in during open mat sessions. I have a small number of kids who wrestle year-round, which is to be expected considering the limitations of not having a practice facility dedicated to the wrestling program.

“I’m looking into more options to set up off-season wrestling opportunities within Louisburg so that these numbers grow. There’s a saying in the wrestling community, ‘Summer wrestlers make winter champions.’ If you look at our guys who had the most success last season, they all did their fair share of summer wrestling.”