

Returning starters to lead Wildcat soccer



Louisburg senior Cale Schneider (left) goes through some drills with teammates Noah Juarez (right) and Parker Cates during a team practice last week. The Wildcats return several starters from last season's team and will try and get off to a good start today when they host Fort Scott.

While most of the Frontier League is having to reshape their rosters thanks to losing big senior classes, the Louisburg boys soccer team hasn't had to do much – which might be a good thing.

The Wildcats return a large group of starters from a year ago and have added a little depth to go along with it. It is the sort of recipe that could lead to a big season for the Wildcats.

"You look at the top teams from a year ago like Ottawa that just had a huge senior class and they lost a lot of players," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "Then you see other teams like Baldwin that has already lost a game this year, lose a lot of talent. De Soto is kind of the same way and they have a new coach, so you don't really know what to expect for them. You know they are going to be good teams, you just don't know how good."

York is optimistic about his team's chances for 2015 as he has six seniors that return to lead this group, and all six started a year ago. Throw in an all-state player in Noah Juarez and the Wildcats return a strong core from their 8-win team last season.

With all that, York knows the potential is there for his team to have a successful season, but he realizes the players have to do it on the field and not on paper.

"I really like the group of guys that we have coming back," York said. "We have quite a bit of experience and you would like to think that translates into more wins, but you have to go out there and play well first.

"I think it is really important to start off strong, because it would really benefit this team to get some confidence going early. If we can get a signature win early in the year and maybe start the season 3-1 or 4-0 – that could really be huge for us."

Juarez, a junior midfielder, will be the focus of a lot of teams this season as he looks to try and run the offense. Juarez led the team in goals scored last season, but it could be getting others involved that can spark the Wildcats.

With a lineup that is senior heavy, York is looking to Juarez to keep the Wildcats focused on both sides of the ball.

"With the last two seasons Noah has had, he is even going to have a bigger target on his back this year," York said. "I am really looking to him to become a more emotional and vocal leader out there. I want him to do more facilitating and moving the ball around and I think that we have the talent to be able to do that this year.

"We have some good speed and talented players up top so if he can get them and the other midfielders involved more, I think we can be a better team. Don't get me wrong, he is still going

to get his goals, but if he can do a little more distributing, I think that will free him up a little bit and force the other teams to just not be focused on him.”

Those options for Juarez will be pair of seniors in Cale Schneider and T.J. Svoboda. Both players are moving to the forward spot this season as Schneider will move from his spot on defense to a more attacking opportunity up top.

Grant Ryals, Christian Scholtz and Herman Knipp will join Juarez in the midfield. Senior Jairus Brown will play both the midfield and forward spots, but will play mainly as a substitute for the first few games as he is slowly recovering from an injury. Raistlin Brewer will also see some time in the midfield.

Seniors Hunter Mitchell and Parker Cates will play in the back on defense and will be joined by underclassmen Curran Conklin and Scott Murphy.

Senior goalie Michael Minster will return as the team’s starting goalkeeper, but underclassman Ambrose Stefan will also see some time.

“Michael had a good year last year and I expect him to do well this year,” York said. “At the same time, I want to get Ambrose a little bit of work as well in certain spots.”

Louisburg gets its season started today when it hosts Fort Scott for a 4 p.m. start. The Wildcats return to action Thursday when they travel to Ottawa

2015 LOUISBURG HIGH SCHOOL BOYS SOCCER SCHEDULE

Sept. 1

Fort

Scott		4 p.m.	
Sept. 3			@
Ottawa		6 p.m.	
Sept. 8			
Paola		4 p.m.	
Sept. 10			@ Spring
Hill		6 p.m.	
Sept. 15			De
Soto		4 p.m.	
Sept. 17			@
Baldwin		4 p.m.	
Sept. 21			
Piper		4 p.m.	
Sept. 22			
Eudora		4 p.m.	
Sept. 24			@Bonner
Springs		5:30 p.m.	
Sept. 28			
	5 p.m.	Heritage Christian	
Oct. 1			@
Paola		6 p.m.	
Oct. 6			Spring
Hill		4 p.m.	
Oct. 8			@ De
Soto		6 p.m.	
Oct. 12			
Baldwin		4 p.m.	

Oct. 15

Eudora

@
6 p.m.

Oct. 22

Ottawa

4 p.m.