

Louisburg soccer claims regional crown



The Louisburg boys soccer team poses with its regional championship trophy following the Wildcats' 2-0 victory over Coffeyville-Field Kindley on Thursday in Coffeyville. The Wildcats advance to the state quarterfinals where they will meet No. 1 Rose Hill on Tuesday in Rose Hill.

Photo courtesy of Christy Svoboda

COFFEYVILLE – The Louisburg boys soccer team didn't strike fear in any one team during the start of the Class 4-3-2-1A playoffs.

The Wildcats entered the playoffs with only four wins and didn't win a match in their last five opportunities. It isn't exactly a recipe for postseason success.

Despite that, the Wildcats can now call themselves regional champion.

For the first time since 2010, Louisburg won the regional championship game with a 2-0 victory over Coffeyville-Field Kindley on Thursday in Coffeyville and advanced to the state quarterfinals. The Wildcats also had victories against Fort Scott and Independence earlier in the week that helped them advance to the title match.

“To be honest I am not that surprised,” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “Some people might be if they look at our record, but I know what our team is capable of. I am just so ecstatic for our guys because I know how hard they have worked to get to this point. We didn’t have a great start to our season, and there were times where things haven’t gone right for one reason or another, but they have stuck with it and now we are playing pretty well. It is a great feeling.”

Along with the Wildcats, senior Parker Cates seemed to catch fire at just the right time.

The Wildcat forward accounted for both Wildcat goals in Thursday’s regional title match and he finished with six goals over the three-game span.

“I am very happy for Parker because he, like a lot of other players, have had a rough year at times especially offensively,” York said. “But he has put in a lot of work over the four years and has made a commitment to get better. It is just good to see him have success. He, and the rest of the team, have had a good week-and-a-half of soccer.”

It didn’t take long for the Wildcats to get on the board as Cates scored the first goal two minutes into the contest and from there Louisburg (7-10-2) was able to take control of the possession.

The Wildcats put up 15 shots on goal for the match and held Coffeyville to just six attempts as Louisburg played solid defense thanks to senior goalie Michael Minster along with the defensive front of Jairus Brown, Hunter Mitchell, Cale Schneider and Scott Murphy.

“Coffeyville really didn’t have too many good looks at the goal and their shots came from pretty far out,” York said. “Still I thought that Michael made some good saves back there and our defense played well, too.”

Later in the first half, the Wildcats doubled their lead when sophomore Raistlin Brewer took a shot that bounced around near the goal and Cates was there to knock it in.

Louisburg's defense didn't allow many Coffeyville opportunities in the second half and the Wildcats left with their sixth regional title in the last 10 years.

"It was great to see the kids knock down that wall and get that big win that we have been looking for," York said. "Now they know what it feels like to win something big like this and it only helps us for later in the playoffs and also into next season."

It will get a lot more difficult for the Wildcats in their state quarterfinal match Tuesday. Louisburg will square off with Rose Hill, the No. 1 ranked team in the state and defending state champion. The match is set to begin at 7 p.m. at Rose Hill High School.

"They are a very good team and they are the No. 1 team in the state for a reason," York said. "They are a very experienced group with a lot of seniors that have played in a lot of big games. We are going to have our hands full, but I am excited about the opportunity and to see what our guys can do."