

Wildcats take fifth at strong Eudora meet



Louisburg High School junior Mason Koechner works for a pin during a 220-pound match Saturday at the Eudora Tournament of Champions. Koechner finished third at 220 pounds and the Wildcats finished fifth overall as a team.

EUDORA – Every time Bobby Bovaird has taken his Louisburg High School wrestling team to the Eudora Tournament of Champions, the Wildcats tend to get a little better.

This year was no exception.

The Wildcats recorded their best team finish at Eudora in the program's history as they finished fifth overall with 182 points. Rossville won the tournament with 287 points and Maize South was second with 221.

Louisburg also brought its most wrestlers ever to the tournament as it just had one open weight class and several of those found their way to the medal stand. The Wildcats medaled eight over the two-day tournament that began on Friday and finished up Saturday.

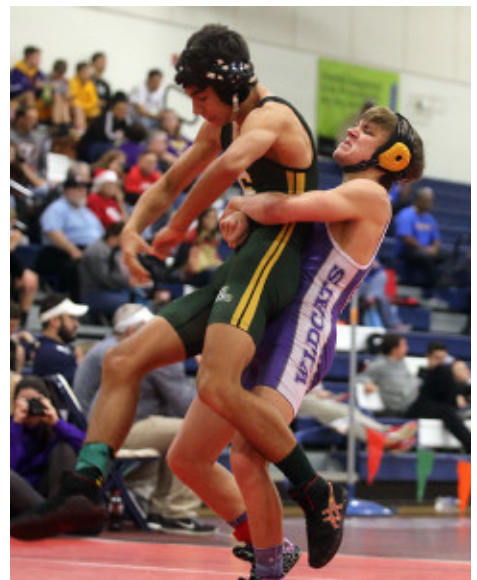
“I thought we did pretty well last year when we took sixth and that was the highest Louisburg had finished since Eudora went to the 2-day, 24-team format,” Bovaird said. “This year, I was

very pleased with our team effort and had our highest finish ever.

“This year we were open at 195, but we were able to fill the rest of the lineup. Everyone scored points and contributed to our placing, even if they didn’t win a match. That’s what I like about a tournament like this one. It encourages and rewards teams who have full rosters. Four years ago, we brought seven wrestlers to this meet; only a few were ready for it. This year, we brought 17 wrestlers.”

Freshman Hunter Bindi (106 pounds), junior Mason Koechner (220) and senior Anders Vance (285) all found themselves a win away from reaching the championship match. Unfortunately, all three had tough losses in the semifinals.

However, all three wrestlers battled back to finish third overall to lead the Wildcats individually.



Junior Nathan Keegan lifts an opponent during a 120-pound match Saturday at the Eudora Tournament of Champions.

Vance matched up against Spring Hill's Sam Christy in the semifinals and lost a 2-1 decision in the ultimate tie breaker, but rebounded to pin Lansing's Khalil Austin in the second period of the third-place match to finish his tournament with an 8-1 record.

As for Koechner, he ran up against Rossville's Kale Devoren in the semifinals and lost a 5-1 decision. But Koechner responded with back-to-back wins, including a pin of De Soto's Lawson Marshall in the third-place match to end his run with a 5-1 record.

Bindi also had a big day for Louisburg as he rattled off four straight victories before meeting up with Buhler's Adam Whitson in the semifinals. Whitson won by a 13-5 major decision, but Bindi bounced back to win by major decision over Fort Scott's Tyler Gorman and then defeated Wellsville's Ryan Ware by an 8-3 decision in the third-place match.

Shortly before his semifinal match, Bindi watched as his brother, David Bindi, suffered a concussion during his 126-pound match. David was unconscious for a few seconds and was taken to a hospital to run tests. Other than the concussion, David should be OK, according to Bovaird.

"Hunter's semifinals loss was shortly after his brother's injury happened," Bovaird said. "That had to have taken his mind off his game. We were all pretty shaken up by it.

"Anders got caught in double-overtime, which is frustrating. Mason came up against a tough, physical kid from Rossville who had a wrestling style that Mason struggled with. We've got a lot to learn, but I'm glad to be so competitive in these tough matches this early in the season."

Juniors Nathan Keegan (120), Ben Hupp (170) and senior Bradley Trageser (285) each finished fifth overall and ended their tournament on a win.

Keegan defeated Fort Scott's Mannie Gonzales by a 3-1 decision in the fifth place match and ended the tournament with a 4-3 record. Hupp also won some big matches at 170 pounds, including a pin of Maize South's Koy Willms to ensure himself of at least a fifth-place spot.

Trageser won four matches on the day, including pins of Ottawa's Chandler Adamson and De Soto's Jalen Christianson.

Senior Dillin Roberts (160) and junior Connor Green (170) each finished sixth overall, while David Bindi was eighth at 126 pounds. Roberts, Hupp and Trageser all wrestled unattached for the Wildcats as they already had wrestlers in their respective weight class, but all three came up big.

"We had three unattached wrestlers place in the top six," Bovaird said. "They didn't score any points for us, but they still blocked other teams from scoring. It's great that we have that kind of depth. All three of those unattached kids had several pins, too. Those would have been nice team points."

Louisburg will have one more tournament before the Wildcats depart for the holiday break. The Wildcats travel to Tonganoxie on Saturday for the Randy Starcher Memorial Tournament.