

Senior night special: Wildcats tame Cyclones



Louisburg senior Zach Jones locks arms with an opponent in the 152-pound match during Thursday's senior night dual against Ottawa. Jones recorded a 9-0 major decision and the Wildcats defeated Ottawa 41-33.

Louisburg couldn't have asked for a better ending on senior night as the Wildcat wrestling team took down Ottawa for a 41-33 dual win Thursday at Louisburg High School.

The way the Wildcats did it made it all the more special.

Louisburg got big victories from seniors and underclassmen alike in a dual that wasn't decided until the final match. It was the culmination of a special evening that honored eight seniors and managers.

Anders Vance, Dillin Roberts, Chris Turner, Bradley Trageser, Zach Jones and Jimmy Dolan, along with managers Paige Shaffer and Alyssa Ellifrits, were honored before the start of the varsity dual with their parents.

"This is a great senior class to work with," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I've had a chance to coach them all four years and I'm so proud of how they've grown. These guys have been a major part of the program foundation we've all been

working so hard to build. They've committed time in the off-season, they've been dependable leaders during the season, and they've made huge contributions to our season's success already."



Louisburg seniors that were recognized Thursday are (from left) manager Paige Shaffer, Chris Turner, Bradley Trageser, Dillin Roberts, Jimmy Dolan, Zach Jones, Anders Vance and manager Alyssa Ellifrits.

That success continued Thursday as the Wildcats improved their dual record to 10-3 on the season and they did it with contributions from up and down their lineup.

Ottawa was open at 106 pounds, so Louisburg freshman Hunter Bindi moved up to 113 pounds and scored a 12-1 major decision to give the Wildcats a few extra points and an early 10-0 lead.

After an open spot by each team, and a Cyclone pin at 126 pounds, Louisburg held a slim 16-12 advantage going into Turner's match at 138 pounds. The Wildcat senior provided a lot of excitement for the fans he was in a back-and-forth match with Ottawa's Dalton Welsh.

Turner found himself on his back many times during the match,

only to put Welsh on his back on several occasions. The scoring was so fast and furious that the official had to stop the match to sort out all the scoring.

In the end, Turner lost a 15-13 decision, but it was a key point in the dual for Turner not to let Welsh get the Cyclones more points with a pin.

“Chris lost a wild high-scoring decision, and the thing about that match is that he could have thrown in the towel and let himself get pinned several times,” Bovaird said. “He kept fighting the whole time.”

Next up, a pair of freshmen and a senior gave the Wildcats some breathing room.

Louisburg freshman Blue Caplinger won an 8-6 decision over Driestin Aho at 145 pounds, while Jones got the extra takedown at 152 points to score a 9-0 major decision. Freshman Austin Moore then responded with a 16 second pin of Tucker Mace at 160 to give Louisburg a 29-15 lead.

Ottawa made a comeback as they recorded three straight pins over Ben Hupp (170), Jacob Felder (182) and Lyndon Smith (195) to give it a 33-29 advantage. However, the Wildcats had the strength of their lineup waiting in the wings.



Freshman Hunter Bindi puts an Ottawa opponent on his back during the 113-pound

match Thursday.

Junior Mason Koechner, who is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A at 220 pounds, reversed Ottawa's Brent Hornbuckle and put him on his back for a second period pin to give Louisburg a 35-33 advantage.

Ironically, it was a senior that sealed the win for the Wildcats.

Vance, the team's heavyweight, made quick work of Ottawa's Chander Adamson for the 23 second pin and dual victory.

"The guys wrestled pretty well last night," Bovaird said. "There were a couple of matches I wasn't feeling too great about, but looking back, I saw lots of positives from them.

"Ben not only got the first takedown on his opponent – a pretty tough kid – he also locked up a cradle and put him on his back. The last time Ben wrestled that kid, he'd been dominated and lost a major decision. Hunter bumped up to get us more team points at 113, Blue held on for a tough decision at 145, and Zach went the extra mile at 152 to get a major decision instead of just a regular decision. We also got solid pins from Austin, Mason and Anders. It was a great team effort by all the guys."

Louisburg also scored a 24-21 victory in the junior varsity competition.

Tanner Belcher recorded a pin at 120 pounds to get Louisburg off to a good start and Jaylen Boileau won a 7-0 decision at 145 pounds. Brandon Cooper (152) and Garrett Caldwell (182) picked up pins while senior Dillin Roberts (170) won a 10-5 decision.

The Wildcats don't have much of a break as they travel to the Baldwin Invitational on Saturday, but then return to action next week for their final home appearance.

Louisburg will host Lawrence High at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday. Prior to the dual, the team will recognize Louisburg wrestling alumni for the team' wrestling homecoming event.