

Wildcat wrestlers rally for win in front of alumni



Louisburg junior Lyndon Smith works for a pin as he puts his opponent on his back during the 195-pound match Wednesday against Lawrence High School. The Wildcats won the dual 42-35 and did so in front of several alumni.

As wrestlers from Wildcat past looked on during Wednesday's dual against Lawrence, they were treated to a good showing from the current Louisburg wrestling team.

After approximately 25 LHS wrestling alumni were honored halfway through the varsity dual, the current Wildcats wanted to make sure to leave a lasting memory for those in attendance. Louisburg did that as it rallied from 14 points down to defeat Lawrence 42-35 in its final home appearance of the season.

The Wildcats got a strong performance from their upper weights as they won four of the last five matches to get the win. The victory also boosts Louisburg's dual record to 11-3 on the season.

"I'm pretty happy with that," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I love how the team is starting to figure things out when it comes to dual competitions. I'm also especially happy

with the fact that we were able to put together a solid performance in front of the alumni. I wanted our team to be able to show them that Louisburg wrestling is as tough as ever.”

Louisburg certainly did that as it got some crucial pins when it needed it the most. Lawrence had two open weights to start the dual, which gave Louisburg an early 12-point lead, but the Lions went on to win five consecutive matches and took a 26-12 advantage.

Wildcat senior Zach Jones stopped the bleeding at 152 pounds as he won by pin to cut the deficit to eight points. Lawrence won by decision at 160 pounds to push the lead back to 11, but the Wildcats responded in a big way.

At 170 pounds, junior Ben Hupp rallied to win by pin in the second period and cut the Lawrence lead to five. They were six big points for Louisburg as Lawrence would win by pin at 182 pounds and it allowed the Wildcats to remain close going into the final three matches.

Junior Lyndon Smith came through for Louisburg as he won by pin at 195 pounds and again cut the Lion lead to five.

“Those were two key wins for us,” Bovaird said of Hupp and Smith. “Ben was a little thrown off by the fact that his opponent was visually impaired. He’d never wrestled a kid with visual impairment before, so the rule requiring him to make contact at all times made him have to adjust his style at the last minute.

“Lyndon did great. He didn’t let the pressure get to him and he just went out and did his thing.”

Fellow junior Mason Koechner gave the Wildcats the lead for good as he won by pin at 220 points, and since Lawrence was open at the heavyweight spot, Koechner sealed the win for Louisburg.

It was perfect ending for the Wildcats as they saw several familiar faces return to watch the program. Following the 145-pound match, Bovaird had the alumni come onto the mat to be recognized in front of the home crowd, including the program's first head coach – Don Meek.



The LHS wrestling program's first head coach, Don Meek, steps forward to be recognized in front of the crowd Wednesday at LHS.



Alumni (from left) are Dan Cook, Duane Scott, Dereck Kerr, Sonny Ewalt Sr., Jamie Watrous



From left: Tom Dozier, Tom York, Don Meek, Matthew Golladay



From left; Greg Hink, Mike Hink, Rick Elliott, Kerry Anglin, Kaelee Allen, Chris Kelly



From left: Jimmy Allen, John Martin, Bruce Caldwell, Fletch Kelly, Brenton Wrigley, Shea Cox

Those who returned for the event were Don Meek, coach and

founder; Dee Graham, coach; Rodney Kasitz, coach; Sonny Ewalt Sr., wrestler and coach, 1971; Duane Scott, wrestler, 1972; Pat York, cheerleader, 1972; Tom York, wrestler and coach, 1973; Fletch Kelly, wrestler, 1975; Dan Cook, wrestler, 1977; Chris Kelly, state qualifier, 1979; Rick Elliott, wrestler, 1982; Tom Dozier, state finalist, 1985; Jimmy Allen, wrestler, 1990; Bruce Caldwell, wrestler, 1990; Mike Hink, 3-time state qualifier, 1990; John Martin, wrestler, 1990; Matt Golladay, wrestler, 1993; Kerry Anglin, wrestler, 1994; Jamie Watrous, manager, 1997; Shawn Crossley, 3-time state qualifier, 1998; Dereck Kerr, 4-time state qualifier, 2000; Brock Elliott, wrestler, 2010; Kaelee Allen, wrestler, 2014; Shea Cox, wrestler, 2015 and Brenton Wrigley, state qualifier, 2015.

Bovaird was happy with the turnout and he is hoping for even bigger showings in the future.

"I didn't get confirmation about the Lawrence dual until the middle of January, and that only gave me three weeks to get the word out," Bovaird said. "Almost all the alumni who made it out are from the Louisburg area, but I've heard from alumni all over and they wished they could make it. Mark Eggleston lives in Ireland, Terry Scott lives in Nebraska, and David Dysart lives in Arizona, and those are just three of the guys I heard from.

"We had lots of wrestlers, four former coaches, managers and cheerleaders who were so excited to be there. Plus, lots of them brought their families, many of whom were LHS alumni. Next year, we know for sure that we have two home duals, so the plan is to get this organized better and get it on the calendar so we can draw in some folks from further away. I'd like to keep this a tradition for many years to come. This is the 47th year of LHS wrestling, and I'd like to build up to a big event for the 50th anniversary in a few years."

Although he is excited for what future events can hold, Bovaird is still focused on this season as the postseason

nears. It begins this Friday for the Frontier League Dual Tournament at Spring Hill High School.

The two-day tournament begins at 4 p.m. on Friday and will start up again at 10 a.m. on Saturday.