

# Wildcats take first at Parsons Duals



Louisburg sophomore Austin Moore tries to roll his opponent during at 170-pound match earlier this season. Moore was one of seven wrestlers who were undefeated Friday in Parsons as the Wildcats took first place.

PARSONS – Last season, the Louisburg High School wrestling team left the Parsons Duals one victory short of a championship.

Even this year, the Wildcats have finished runner-up in all three tournaments they have competed in and have been looking to bring home that top honor for quite some time.

Louisburg was able to do that Friday.

The Wildcats traveled to the Parsons Duals and left with their first team championship of the season and had to beat some tough competition along the way. Louisburg upended No. 6-ranked Santa Fe Trail 45-28 in the championship dual.

“This team championship has been a long time coming this season,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “We’ve been so close this season, taking second at Fort Scott, Eudora, and our home tournament, and I’m confident that we could have placed high as a team at the two tournaments that were canceled.

“It’s a great feeling winning a tournament like this. We came out strong, wrestled tough matches, got some more individual wins for the guys, and perhaps the best is we extended our dual win streak to nine matches.”

Louisburg improved its dual record to 10-1 on the season, and along with its win against Santa Fe Trail, defeated Labette County 66-18, a team of unattached wrestlers 75-0, and Lebanon, Mo., 48-18.

The Wildcats also had seven wrestlers go undefeated. Nathan Keegan (120 pounds), Tucker Batten (132), Ryan Adams (138), Austin Moore (170), Austin Raetzel (195) and Mason Koechner (285) all finished with four wins, while Adams, Moore and Raetzel had four pins each.

Senior Owen Staver wrestled unattached at 170 pounds and was 3-0 with three pins.

Junior Thad Hendrix (106), sophomore Blue Caplinger (160) and senior Dylan Meyer (145/152) each had just one loss, which came in the Santa Fe Trail dual. Junior Kyle Allen (126) also finished 3-1 on the day.

Seniors Ben Hupp (182) and Terry Allen (220) each finished the day 2-2 and Alec Maler (145/152) was 1-3.

“Thad, Blue and Dylan lost tough matches against Santa Fe Trail, but earlier in the evening they all looked pretty dominant,” Bovaird said. “Kyle was looking great at 126, going 3-1 with two pins. His one loss was a rough one – losing 11-10 in the final seconds. He fought off his back twice and came back strong, but it was a late escape and some scoring confusion by the official that cost him the match.”

Santa Fe Trail proved to be a tough dual for the Wildcats, but they won all the key matches – and the ones they lost didn’t give up extra points.

The highlight of the dual came in the heavyweight match between Koechner and Santa Fe Trail's Jake Hastings. Koechner entered the match ranked No. 2 in 4A and Hastings was No. 4.

It was a quality match as the two went into overtime, but Koechner dominated the extra period to win by a 6-1 decision.

"I wasn't sure how we would match up with Santa Fe Trail," Bovaird said. "I knew they've been ranked in the top-10 all season, but my experience with them is that they've always been a very tough team. This goes back when I was in school competing against them as a wrestler up through the last 17 years I've been coaching. They are strong competitors who don't give up and their coaching staff is top-notch.

"This season, they will have several individuals place high at state. Head-to-head in a dual, we matched up pretty well with them. We won the matches we needed to win, and against their tough kids, we held on and didn't give up bonus points."

The win also helped Koechner move his way toward the top of the Wildcat record books as he recorded his 113<sup>th</sup> career win and puts him in the No. 3 position all-time. He is six wins behind Tim Dozier for second and he is also up to 98 career pins.

With his four wins, Keegan also moved his way up the career wins list as he is now 18<sup>th</sup> all-time with 72.

"This weekend was a great outing for Mason," Bovaird said. "His last match of the day was a solid 6-1 overtime victory over the No. 4 wrestler in the state and a kid who has placed third and sixth at state the last two years."

Louisburg returns to action Thursday when it travels to Ottawa as it tries for its 10<sup>th</sup> straight dual victory. The Wildcats will also compete in the Baldwin Invitational on Saturday.